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**VETERANS AND HOMELESS DOGS HEAL TOGETHER
IN SAFE HUMANE CHICAGO'S NEW VALOR PROGRAM**

CHICAGO, Illinois – 15 August 2014 – Safe Humane Chicago (SHC), in conjunction with the Veterans Project at Thresholds, launches the pilot phase of VALOR (Veterans Advancing Lives of Rescues) in autumn 2014. Based on SHC's successful experience working with incarcerated youth, VALOR is an eight-week training program at Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC). The 'rescues' are SHC Court Case Dogs who were taken into the legal system because of cruelty or neglect, paired with veterans who are clients of Thresholds, one of the oldest and largest providers of mental health and recovery services in Illinois.

During VALOR sessions, veterans will get one-on-one time with their dog teammates, helping the animals develop good manners and socialization. At the same time, the human participants will get individualized instruction and support, spend time connecting with resilient animal companions, enjoy camaraderie with their peers, develop a sense of empowerment by helping dogs grow more adoptable, and gain skills for employment working with pets.

"We've seen the bond that grows between dogs and youth offenders whom the rest of society has discarded. A compassionate relationship between humans and pets makes a huge difference for both," says Cynthia Bathurst, SHC Executive Director. "Chicago Animal Care and Control and the law enforcement community, where many veterans including CACC Executive Director Sandra Alfred are employed, are wholeheartedly behind this new program, and we're all excited to see it kick off and grow to serve more of our military veterans and homeless animals."

VALOR veterans who are willing and able to adopt a dog at the program's conclusion will receive help with the adoption and long-term financial and behavioral support for the animals. Also, veterans will have the opportunity to continue volunteering with SHC and CACC.

Safe Humane Chicago, a 501(c)(3) established in 2000, is dedicated to creating safe, humane communities. **Individual donors have provided some funds for the launch of the VALOR program. Visit <https://www.crowdrise.com/safehumanevalor/fundraiser/safehumanechicago> to help VALOR reach its pilot fundraising goal.**

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