



Dallas Fire-Rescue K-9 Program

Meet our Accelerant Detection Canine Teams

CANINE ASHLY

Handler: Section Chief Debbie Mullins



Ashly is a Labrador and Border Collie mix that had been abandoned and was rescued by two Department members when she was 6 months old in 2002. After canine psychological profiling to determine if she would be adept as a service dog, Ashly was trained in-house and placed into service in January 2003 after obtaining certification through the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office.

Ash is a hybrid trained accelerant canine. While most are food or toy reward, she is treat and praise reward. She eats freely but only receives her favorite treats if she works for them. Ash is certified by the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office and the North American Police Work Dog Association. The team is also a member of the United States Police Canine Association. She was also the first Accelerant Detection Canine to be accepted into the National Kids and Cops Campaign that distributes trading cards to children at monthly events.

At her very first fire, Ash found a 2 square foot pour pattern in a 1500 square foot unit under one foot of debris, including the spilled contents of a refrigerator. She also discovered the can of charcoal lighter fluid thrown in the trash and the families missing kitten hiding in a closet. She has been featured in the Dallas Morning News, and on all the local television stations. Ash has made guest appearances at many local events such as the Dallas Auto Show, The Dallas Sidekicks game, Subaru of Dallas grand opening, Interstate Battery Expo and Boo at the Zoo.

CANINE GUNNAR

Handler: Captain Sam Stephenson



The heavy workload of fires in Dallas readily justified the need for an accelerant detection canine. It became apparent that with one canine, you had to pick and choose the priority cases to not overtax the team (yes, just like paramedics, but they don't make overtime).

Sam Stephenson had been transferred to Arson as a Lieutenant and after a year of working fire scenes and seeing the canines, he became interested in the program and volunteered to assist. Sam had purchased an English-bred Chocolate Labrador and had begun his training for field trials. He decided his time and Gunnar's talents could be better served with Dallas Fire-Rescue. Sam obtained a Training Grant from Walmart in 2004 and the team quickly passed all the requirements for certification.

Gunnar has a natural ability and talent for this type of work and has impressed many of the Texas teams with how readily he learns and adapts. Gunnar was started as a toy reward service canine. He has such strong drives and willingness to please that he was also adapted to food reward which in some fire scenes is more workable. Gunnar has since passed certification as both toy reward and food reward, which is a first in the North American Police Work Dog Association and the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office.

He has been used to assist several other cities in the Metroplex area. He has been used in Richardson, Quinlan, Royce City and Duncanville as a Mutual Aid response to other cities.