

News and views that inform, inspire, and connect the Drummond Island and De Tour Village communities and points west.

K-9 Flash Becomes a Hero!

Photos and text by Julie Covert

Emergency service and law enforcement personnel use canines to help in many of their duties. These dogs, often referred to as K9s, can cost between \$10-45,000 for obtaining a dog and then there is also the additional costs of care, food, medical care, and training. Those costs don't go away once a K9 retires; and there is no governmental organization to continue to take care of retired K9s.



Jason Johnson and his canine hero companion Flash at the Drummond Island Elementary School.

Jason Johnson, son of Drummond Island residents, Deb and George Johnson saw this need and decided to do something about it.

Jason Johnson was a K9 handler in Yakima, WA and was a "Field Canine Coordinator for the U.S. Government, where he provided program oversight and subject matter expertise to law enforcement canine teams and federal canine teams."

With the help of his canine partner, Flash, he created a non-profit organization ProjectK9Hero.org to raise awareness and funds for the continued care of retired canine heroes. Their vision statement is "to ensure the best quality of life for our nation's retired Military Working Dogs and Police K-9 Heroes through providing assistance with medical costs, food, and end of duty services."

Flash recently won the American Humane Hero Dog Award – Law Enforcement/Arson Division sponsored by American Humane.

During the beginning of August the Hallmark Channel visited Drummond Island to visit the Johnson family, Flash, and the kids of Drummond Island and film a story about Flash, the work she does and...



Kids and parents eagerly wait to meet Flash and Jason and hear her tale.

...about winning her Law Enforcement award.

About 80 kids, parents, and grandparents showed up at the Drummond Island Elementary School and Library where one of the classrooms was turned into a movie set. It was standing room only, which spilled into the hallway. There Jason and Flash read to the kids and did a question and answer session. Afterwards each child received an autographed copy of Flash's book "*K-9 Flash Becomes a Hero!*"



Flash's book and t-shirts are available online at <http://projectk9hero.org>. Donations can also be made online.

Here's Flash's story as posted on American Humane's Hero Dog Award website:

"K-9 Flash was found in an animal shelter when she was only 9 months old. She was picked up on the streets of Everett, WA, with no home, no name, and no family. We were starting a Narcotics K-9 course at the Washington State Patrol Academy in Sept of 2005, when we were evaluating dogs in shelters who possess a good hunt, air scent, retrieve, and prey drive.

Flash excelled in all of those areas, so we took a chance on her and included her in the class just one day before she was to be euthanized. Once she had her chance, Flash excelled in Narcotics detection and graduated as the only dog to score 100% on her certification. She was assigned as the first Narcotics K-9 on Patrol at the Yakima Police Dept. while assisting to two DEA Narcotics Task Force Teams, Regional SWAT Team, and the Patrol Division, K-9 Flash had over 3000 deployments in her career with over 2200 Narcotic related finds and seizures.

When Flash retired in 2013, she was just getting started. Because of her fortitude of surviving and her will to be so successful, she inspired her handler to start a national nonprofit to take care of retired K-9 Heroes like her with medical assistance, food, and end of duty services.

Most people don't know that when K-9 Heroes like Flash retire they lose all funding from the agencies they served. Therefore in 2016, K-9 Flash was the sole inspiration for the start of Project K-9 Hero, she now has her own children's book and travels the nation reading it at schools inspiring children."



Jason Johnson and Flash doing what they love - telling Flash's story to school kids!



The Drummond Island Elementary School is transformed into a tv set as kids line up for the “show.”

The Hero Dog Awards show will be broadcast the last week of October on the Hallmark Channel. This was the fourth year that producer Frank Moran, from Los Angeles, has been filming the dogs’ stories. He told me it was his favorite assignment of each year. “This is about celebrating these dogs. Dogs can do more than we know.”

As of press time, you can still **vote** for Flash to become the **overall HERO Dog of the Year** with the American Humane Hero Dog Awards at: <http://herodogawards.org/dog/k-9-flash/>

For more information, to order a book or shirt and to support Flash, her friends and Project K-9 Hero see <http://projectk9hero.org>

or contact:
Project K-9Hero
 535 Griswold St. #111-105
 Detroit, MI 48226



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