



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Amy Martoche
Administrative Judge
Eighth Judicial District**

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AKC-Certified Therapy Dog to Join Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court

The Unified Court System's first AKC-certified therapy dog whose handler is an OCA employee will join the "Six Paws for Heroes" Program, providing crucial support to veterans.

BUFFALO, NY—As we approach Veterans Day, the Eighth Judicial District is proud to announce a significant enhancement to its therapeutic environment for court-involved veterans with the debut of Toby, an AKC-certified therapy dog. Toby will officially begin providing comfort and support on Tuesday, November 18 as part of the Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court's (BVTC) "Six Paws for Heroes Therapy Dog Program."

Comprising the Western New York counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming, the Eighth Judicial District places great importance on holistic support for its participants.

This launch marks a historic milestone for the District and the entire court system, with Toby's handler, BVTC Resource Coordinator Pamela LaMancuso, the first Office of Court Administration employee to serve as a certified therapy dog handler. Securing funding for the program, Resource Coordinator LaMancuso spent countless hours to ensure that Toby met all training requirements in attaining his therapy certification.

"I can't over-emphasize my enthusiasm for this initiative—a crucial component of the BVTC's therapeutic environment. I am pleased and excited as Toby joins the program, and thankful to Resource Coordinator LaMancuso for her commitment and hard work in preparing Toby for his new and vital court role," said Administrative Judge Martoche, who oversees the District's operations.

"The process of navigating the courts can be profoundly stressful, especially for veterans who may be dealing with complex trauma," said Coordinating Judge of the Eighth Judicial District's Problem-Solving Courts Betty Calvo-Torres, underscoring the program's healing focus. "Toby offers a unique support that immediately lowers anxiety and helps our participants feel grounded and safe. This program isn't just about justice; it's about healing, and we believe Toby will be instrumental in that journey."

Toby is registered and insured through RocDog, a respected Rochester-based organization that supports therapy teams statewide and has been active in the Rochester SAFE Court since 2022.

The Eighth Judicial District celebrates the Six Paws for Heroes program in honoring the service and sacrifice of members of our nation's military and helping those veterans served by the District reacclimate to civilian life.



AKC-Certified Therapy Dog Toby

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