

Burlington County Times

Mount Laurel Animal Hospital launches fundraiser for township K-9

By George Woolston

@gcwoolston

Posted Oct 18, 2019 at 7:21 PM

Mount Laurel Animal Hospital announced this week it was raising \$75,000 on the online fundraising platform gofundme to help get the Mount Laurel Police Department a third K-9 unit.

MOUNT LAUREL — A local animal hospital has launched a fundraiser to help bolster the township's police department.

Mount Laurel Animal Hospital announced this week it was raising \$75,000 on the online fundraising platform gofundme to help get the Mount Laurel Police Department a third K-9 unit.

The police department's current K-9 units are trained for patrol — aiding officers in apprehending suspects or finding people — and for narcotics.

If the fundraiser is successful, the third K-9 unit would be trained for explosives detection.

“Their goal was to have an explosives dog in light of everything going on these days, they really want to be able to protect us,” said Dr. Robert Mankowski, co-owner of Mount Laurel Animal Hospital. “We said how we can help?”

Mankowski said staff at the animal hospital have formed a close relationship with the police department through the treatment of the department's two K-9s.

“It's awesome to have some support,” said Mount Laurel Police Public Information Officer Kyle Gardner. “It's a great opportunity, and we appreciate businesses stepping up to plate and backing us.”

Gardner said the township's K-9 unit was resurrected in 2015 after a long hiatus by Cpl. Christopher O'Prandy and is 100% funded by donations.

Behind the leadership of O'Prandy, the department was able to raise enough funds through donations from the community to bring on and train two K-9 teams, one being O'Prandy and his K-9 Gunner, who recently received top honors at a national competition.

Mount Laurel Animal Hospital hopes to raise \$75,000 to provide the patrol car, K-9, training and other equipment needed to establish a third K-9 unit.

"We certainly know other departments do their own fundraising for their K-9 units ... we wanted to help as a private company because we're very community-involved company and dogs are special to us," Mankowski said.

Gardner said the addition of a third K-9 unit would allow the police department to add another tool to its tool chest used to keep the community safe.

"It allows us to have more resources to provide better service to our community and the surrounding communities," Gardner said. "We have a large, growing community ... to know that we have that dog where we can do sweeps of building and make sure they are safe for events would be great."

Gardner added that dogs also help promote the police department, and are often the face of the police force at public events.

The fundraiser has already received some support from local businesses such as Kerbeck Automotive and Lockheed Martin, Mankowski said.

To donate, visit <https://mlahvet.com/bombdog/>. Mankowski said the animal hospital is offering sponsorship opportunities, with the top sponsorship offering naming rights of the K-9.

For more information on the sponsorship opportunities available, visit https://mlahvet.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MLPD_Final-compressed.pdf