



## PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

David Doak, Sheriff

The Portage County Sheriff's Office and the Dog Warden have combined efforts to rescue homeless shelter dogs through our new program, "Paws on Probation."

"Paws on Probation" is a program designated to saving the lives of dogs that have been abandoned, abused or spent most of their lives at the Shelter. Dogs that are chosen will be placed with carefully selected inmates. Inmates participating in the program will meet twice a week with a certified professional trainer from Park Place K-9 Training, LLC. Park Place K-9 Training uses training methods that recognize and reward good behavior. The goal is for the dogs to feel safe while learning so they are better equipped to achieve the goals that are important to prospective adoptive families. Proper guidance and management are stressed along with teaching the dog skills that promote self-imposed self control. The inmates will also be educated in handling skills, basic health care, pet manners and the skill of keeping the dog's mind engaged. There have been purebred and all American mixed breed dogs successfully "graduate" from the program. Some have even been able to earn Canine Good Citizen status, an AKC program consisting of ten items that the dog and handler must be able to successfully complete to receive that certificate. The dogs that are chosen for this program receive what would amount to hundreds of dollars of training. This training improves the chances of these dogs being adopted and becoming a valued member of a family rather than being returned to a shelter.

The positive-reward based method of training also allows the inmates participating in the program to experience a sense of accomplishment while developing valuable as well as marketable job skills, and the opportunity to return something positive back to their community.

We are very proud of our "Paws on Probation" program as the benefits are multi-faceted—for the inmates, the community and most importantly, for the dogs that would have otherwise remained in a shelter without the love of a family.

"Paws on Probation" has proven to be a win, win situation for both K-9 and inmate.