

October 2018

Hello Hans Herr Elementary School staff, students and parents:



My name is SSD Eagle, and I'm super excited about the great news I have for everyone. I will be starting at Hans Herr Elementary, and my buddy, SSD Gabby, will be starting at Lampeter Elementary on Monday, October 15th.

I was born on July 2, 2016. I come from a long line of Susquehanna Service Dogs. My mother, grandmother, and great grandmother have all been from SSD! All of the puppies in my litter are named after the birds of Pennsylvania. I have siblings named Martin, Chickadee, Cardinal, Wren, and Heron.

I have been training with Susquehanna Service Dogs, based out of Grantville, Pa, all of my life. I started out with my puppy raiser, Melissa, for the first 18 months of my life. She raised me on the Millersville University campus and in her family's home. I even got to go to student teaching with her and work with her at a camp over the summer! I got to meet a lot of people and do some really cool things. I learned that I love working with kids. While I was busy training, some Lampeter-Strasburg staff members began the process of bringing three new facility dogs into the district to join SSD Maya. They created the PAWS team and received permission from the school board to raise money and begin the process with SSD. Fundraising efforts by PAWS, Dollars for Dogs, and Girls on the Run were a huge success!

I was lucky enough to be part of "Meet the Dogs" day at SSD in May and was matched as partners with Hans Herr Elementary School. I couldn't have been happier to know that I would continue to work in a school. I have spent the last six months in advanced training where I practiced old skills and learned new cues specifically for staff and students at the school. I am so very excited to show you what I am able to do. Some basic cues I am really good at are sit, down, heel, lap, pressure, and come. If you drop my leash, don't worry I can pick it up myself, and I am great at retrieving items for you. I might add that I am an excellent listener and will rest my head on your leg and let you pet me if you need a friend. It is also noteworthy to report that in order to do my job I have to have excellent manners and a calm, friendly temperament. In addition, I am in excellent health and fully socialized.

You may be wondering why I will be working in the school. Well you see, when a facility dog is involved, people, especially children, often respond more positively and enthusiastically. I can help students learn empathy, sharing, and patience. In some instances, I am able to help calm a person simply by letting them pet me or by applying some light pressure to them. The staff at Hans Herr Elementary School are awesome, but sometimes kids feel more at ease talking about upsetting situations when I am around. I can make difficult tasks seem more attractive, interesting and enjoyable too when I am there to assist.

In the beginning, I will be spending a lot of time with Mrs. Henry, Mrs. Parise, Mrs. Musser, & Mrs. Bohanan, who have been trained as my handlers and have earned public access certification with me. Once I get settled in though, I will be able to meet students in many more classrooms and around the school. You may see me in the hallways or the bus loop. I will be wearing a green vest to indicate I am a fully trained service dog. Although I love human interaction and attention, please ask my handler for permission before petting me and/or giving me cues, for this could confuse me, and I would not want to be a distraction in the educational process.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Smecker. This is going to be such a great adventure. I am so excited to finally get to use all of my gifts with so many great people at Hans Herr Elementary School. I can't wait to make a lot of new friends.

Thank you, SSD Eagle

