

Press Release



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Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio welcomes a professional therapy dog to Summit County Juvenile Court, Meet Tater Tot!

Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio recently welcomed Tater Tot, a professional therapy dog, to Summit County Juvenile Court, located at 650 Dan Street in Akron. Tater Tot's role at the court will be to provide comfort and support to children participating in court proceedings.

Tater Tot is a highly trained assistance animal that understands approximately 56 commands. Outside of court proceedings, the three-and-a-half-year-old Border Collie mix will be working alongside his owner and handler Geoff Auerbach.



Auerbach is a licensed social worker who is employed by the Summit County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program, an organization located on the 2nd floor of Summit County Juvenile Court. The Summit County CASA Program works to protect and advocate for the best interests of abused, neglected and dependent children involved in the Summit County child welfare system.

Prior to being acquired by Auerbach, Tater Tot completed an 18-month training program, facilitated by Canine Assistance Rehabilitation Education & Services, while being fostered by an inmate program participant at the Ellsworth Correctional Facility in Kansas.

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“Tater Tot has been trained to provide comfort and companionship to individuals he senses to be in emotional distress,” said Geoff Auerbach. “His ability to put people at ease never ceases to amaze me!”

According to the National Institute of Health, interacting with animals has been shown to decrease levels of cortisol (a stress-related hormone) and lower blood pressure. Other studies have found that animals can reduce loneliness, increase feelings of social support, and boost your mood.

“Participating in court proceedings can be an extremely emotional and stressful experience for children,” said Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio. “The more that we can do to alleviate the stress and apprehension they feel, the more likely we are to obtain the information needed to make difficult and sometimes life-altering decisions.”

In addition to serving the Summit County CASA Program, Tater Tot will also be focusing his efforts on comforting court-involved youth receiving services through Restore Court, a certified specialized docket at Summit County Juvenile Court that exists to divert juvenile victims of human trafficking and those at high risk from the juvenile justice system to a safe, supportive, and comprehensive system of restorative care.

“No matter the population being served, I trust that Tater Tot will do what he does best, provide non-judgmental and unconditional support to those in need,” added Judge Teodosio. “I would like to thank Geoff Auerbach and the Summit County CASA Program for presenting the court with this incredible resource!”

For more information on the services being provided by Summit County Juvenile Court visit, juvenilecourt.summitoh.net. To learn more about the Summit County CASA Program visit, summitcasagal.org or call 330-643-2928.

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