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District Attorney Court Dog Volunteer Recognized for Helping Victims in Court

SD Crime Commission Recognizes Senior Volunteers at Awards Luncheon

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that one of the DA's Court Dog Program volunteers is being honored for her work by the San Diego Crime Commission at its 10th Annual Senior Volunteers Awards Luncheon. Janet Kinnon, 60, and her dog Wellington ("Welly") volunteer with the San Diego District Attorney's Office Court Dog Program, which provides support and comfort to child victims of physical and sexual abuse and other vulnerable adult victims or witnesses. Janet and Welly joined the program in 2015 and since then, have supported countless victims. Since 2017, Janet and Wellington have helped 45 victims and provided nearly 250 hours of volunteer service.

"For the child victims of abuse, testifying in court against their abuser is frightening because they have to face their abuser and describe the horrors they have faced in front of complete strangers," said District Attorney Summer Stephan. **"Thanks to volunteers like Janet and her dog, Wellington, victims find the courage to go through the court process and have an extra, incredible layer of support."**



Janet and Welly's job starts before the victim or witness even gets to the courtroom. They meet the victim or witness in the waiting room and sit with them for hours during interviews, keeping them comfortable through activities involving the dog. In court, Welly accompanies the victim or witness to the stand, laying at the witness' feet while they testify.

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office was one of the first DA's offices in the nation to use a therapy dog in 2007, and it officially established the Court Dog Program in 2009. The program has grown to include 13 dogs, which are comprised of a seasoned

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volunteer dog handler and their canine partner. Learn more about the Court Dog Program, in [this video](#).

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue justice and support victims daily across San Diego County. DA Summer Stephan has devoted her life to protecting children and families and providing justice to the voiceless and most vulnerable. She is a national leader in the fight against sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and has served as a Deputy District Attorney in San Diego County for 28 years.

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