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New York City Emergency Management

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HERO DOG HONORED: 9/11 FIREFIGHTER'S SERVICE DOG RECEIVES NYC'S FIRST-EVER SERVICE ANIMAL AWARD

NYC Emergency Management's inaugural Salty and Roselle Service Animal Recognition Award given to Halona, a service dog who helped a family in a house fire and now assists a 9/11 firefighter

Award issued at NYCEM's Annual Pet Preparedness Fair in Union Square during National Preparedness Month



September 12, 2024 – New York City Emergency Management recognized the essential, life-saving contributions of service animals at a press conference on Thursday, September 12, 2024. NYCEM honored service dog Halona, who helped a family to safety when their house caught fire, with its inaugural Salty and Roselle Service Animal Recognition Award. Halona now assists retired New York City Firefighter Tom Prin, a first responder during the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. Canine Companions, the nation's first and largest service dog organization, matched Halona with Prin. The award is named for guide dogs Salty and Roselle, credited with saving the lives of their owners and others on 9/11. Halona will also be receiving a shopping spree from Petco, one of the city's Cooling Center partners.

NYCEM issued the award at its annual emergency preparedness event for pets and service animals at Union Square Park in Manhattan. The pet fair was a collaboration with the City's Animal Planning Taskforce and partners such as the Mayor's Office of Animal Welfare, VISIONS, Canine Companions, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities, the American Red Cross of Greater New York, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who attended the event to share information with residents on preparing their pets and service animals for emergencies.

"Today we issued our first-ever service animal recognition award to honor four-legged first responders providing invaluable assistance daily and during emergencies," said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol**. "Roselle, Salty, and Halona embody bravery, loyalty, and dedication. We thank them, and all service, working, and guide dogs, for their contributions to our mission to ensure every New Yorker is prepared for disaster events."

"When it comes to emergency preparedness, we're all in this together -- including the animals in our lives," said **NYCEM Deputy Commissioner of Community Engagement Herman Schaffer**. "In September, we celebrate National Preparedness Month where we encourage everyone to take that next step to be prepared for any emergency. NYC Emergency Management has planned a full month of both fun and educational events where you can get involved."

"Service animals and guide dogs play a vital role in the lives of individuals with disabilities, offering independence, companionship, and life-saving support in times of crisis," said **NYC Mayor's Office of People With Disabilities Commissioner Christina Curry**. "The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities is proud to partner with NYC Emergency Management in honoring these extraordinary animals and their critical contributions to the safety and independence of New Yorkers. Halona's actions are a powerful reminder of the strength of the bond between service animals and their handlers, and we celebrate this partnership today."

"Human and animal well-being go hand-in-paw," said **Director of the Mayor's Office of Animal Welfare Alexandra Silver**. "Thank you to Commissioner Iscol and New York City Emergency Management for recognizing and honoring the essential role animals can play in our lives, and thank you to Halona, Roselle, Salty, and service animals everywhere for their dedication and bravery."

"My life and my family's life is forever changed for the better because of Halona and the selfless people at Canine Companions," said **Tom Prin, retired FDNY firefighter**, matched with service dog Halona by Canine Companions.

"Canine Companions is so proud of Tom Prin and Halona, and the NYC Emergency Management Department could not have picked a better service dog team to honor!" said **Debra Dougherty, Canine Companions Northeast Region executive director**. "Tom exemplifies the finest attributes as a hero with FDNY in the aftermath of 9/11, and also in his daily job saving lives with Ladder 112 in Brooklyn. After a career filled with service to others that was cut short because of a devastating injury, we are proud Tom choose Canine Companions to serve him at a time when he needed help the most. Halona, a hero in her own right, is the perfect match for Tom. Her innate compassion for Tom and his family have been life changing, and Tom is a wonderful ambassador for Canine Companions and all people with disabilities."

"As a guide dog handler, I celebrate the tremendous benefit that moving in this world with a well-trained guide dog brings to my level of confidence," said **VISIONS Executive Director Sylvia Perez**. "VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired has an incredible team of Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists that provide instruction on how to safely and independently navigate to school, work and within the community. This training is key to the ability to become a good guide dog handler."

At the event, City agencies and partner organizations distributed a range of emergency materials and shared preparedness tips with pet owners. Residents learned about the items to include in their pet's Go Bag as well as how they can incorporate their pets into the family's emergency plan. Representatives from Canine Companions, PAWS NY, and Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC) were also on hand to help prepare New Yorkers and their pets for emergencies.

PET PREPAREDNESS TIPS:

- Create a Go Bag for your pet should you need to evacuate in a hurry. Your pet's Go Bag should include an extra leash, collar, food, any medication your pets require, and extra identification tags.
- Keep your pet's license number and a photo with copies of your other important documents, such as your lease, mortgage, and a copy of your social security card. Having your pet's information will help you find your pet should they become lost during an emergency
- Practice your evacuation plans to familiarize your pet with the process and increase its comfort level.
- Identify a trusted friend, neighbor, or pet sitter to care for your pet should you find yourself unable to return home during an emergency. This person should have a set of your house keys, be familiar with your home and pet, know your emergency plan, and have your contact information.
- Put stickers on the main entrances to your home to alert rescue workers of the number and types of pets inside. Update the information on the stickers every six months. To learn more about preparing your pet or service animal for emergencies visit, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/pets.page>.

National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month is recognized each September to promote family and community disaster and emergency planning now and throughout the year. During the month, NYC Emergency Management will team up with City agencies and community partners to organize and promote a number of events for the entire family, including children, older adults, and pets, as well as inform New Yorkers and their communities about the steps they can take to prepare. For more information on this month's events and resources, visit on.nyc.gov/prepare24.

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