

OPERATION BLANKETS OF LOVE DONATE TRAINING SCENT WHEEL TO K-9 UNIT

GIFT HONORS LATE PROBATION SECRETARY HEARTHA LEE

It's heartwarming and humbling to donate the training Scent Wheel to the Probation Department in Heartha's name. It's very special. Her spirit continues with us."
- Operation Blankets of Love Founders Eileen and Brad Smulson

On Friday, November 18th, the Los Angeles County Probation Department's K-9 Unit recognized "Operation Blankets of Love" (OBOL) for generously donating a training Scent Wheel to their unit.

In a heartfelt ceremony, the K-9 team acknowledged OBOL Founders Eileen and Brad Smulson for their generous donation of the high-tech training tool, which they presented in honor of Ms. Heartha Lee, who worked with the LA County Probation Department as a Secretary for more than 27 years.

Ms. Lee passed in June 2022. She was an animal lover that volunteered much of her time with OBOL serving as the Chair of their "Pets for the Homeless" program. Ms. Lee collected pet supplies from OBOL and staffed their booths at various "Homeless Connect Day" events. She would ensure that homeless animals were provided with food, leashes, harnesses, toys, and blankets. After retiring, Ms. Lee would often return to probation's K-9 training facility and spend quality time with the K-9 partners and Officers. She informed OBOL about the unit, and they began donating pet necessities to the team whenever needed.

After learning of the need for the scent wheel, OBOL raised funds and donated the training wheel in Ms. Lee's honor. "Whenever we go out, we always think of Heartha," expressed OBOL Founders Eileen and Brad Smulson. "She was the best for many years, and we miss her terribly." Ms. Heartha Lee's name is beautifully engraved on the Scent Wheel and surrounded by Hawaiian flowers. Shipped from the Netherlands, the Scent Wheel provides the K-9 unit with a state-of-the-art scientific approach to training.

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SDPO Perico, DPO II Robinson, Gary Lee (Heartha Lee's husband), DPO II Ochoa, K-9 Pablo, OBOL Founder Brad Smulson, OBOL team member, and OBOL Founder Eileen Smulson

OPERATION BLANKETS OF LOVE DONATE TRAINING SCENT WHEEL TO K-9 UNIT (CONT)

GIFT HONORS LATE PROBATION SECRETARY HEARTHA LEE



Honoree Heartha Lee with OBOL Founder Brad Smulson and canine friend



Scent wheel inscription to Heartha Lee



K-9 Pablo testing out the new scent wheel

"This is instrumental to the probation department and will allow us to train our dogs on a lower quantity of odor which will result in more finds in the community, it will assist in ensuring community safety overall."
-SDPO Perico.

Ms. Lee's husband of 48 years, Gary, was also at the dedication. He reflected on her time working at Camp Scott with the youth and caring for the camp dogs, Joey and Taylor. "We have Joey and Taylor's urns at my house. All those years, the camp didn't have much money for pet care and food; Heartha took care of all that," he shared. "Today was really special. The tribute was really nice, and it's so interesting to see the dogs work with the scent wheel."

DPO IIs Robinson, Ochoa, and K-9 partner Pablo facilitated a demonstration of the Scent Wheel during the ceremony. The training tool has 12 arms with different attachments so that a variety of training exercises can be executed. For example, source odor can be placed in one branch. In contrast, novel odors (odors K-9s may encounter in the community), distraction odors (odors the K-9 should not typically experience but would interest them), and blank attachments are placed in others. During training exercises, deputies spun the wheel to conduct a blind search with their K-9 partners. The K-9 uses its nose to find the source odor. The pattern of scents can be placed on the wheel in any arraignment, with the aroma raised at various thresholds or vapor pressures to ensure that the K-9s are actually working.

Thank you, Operation Blankets of Love and Ms. Heartha Lee, for your years of service to Los Angeles County and the Probation Department's K-9 partners.

Probation News



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