

6 July 2018

Denise,

I was excited to receive your letter. Made my day! I appreciate your kind words and the time you took to sit down and write. I know how busy you are. I also know how chaotic things must get around all of those dogs and helpers. It is a bummer about the financial side of things being such a challenge. My one wish is to wish Brigadoon some financial security. I was pleased to hear about Louis and Tucker making the effort, and staying in touch. We are the proof of the impact you have on prisoners, we continue to feel the connection to you, as well as the mission. I am absolutely OK with you using any words or statements of mine as a testimony to the positive change you and Brigadoon have had on my life. I am 100% sincere when I say it's been a Game Changer. I had no direction and lacked inspiration prior to getting involved. I wasn't hopeless, but I certainly lacked hope. Working with the dogs brought me more in touch with important values. I benefited in countless ways, but specifically I became much more caring and compassionate. I gained in how I valued responsibility. I learned more patience and self-control. I really learned to appreciate the significance and necessity of positive reinforcement & feedback. I am a better person because of you and what Brigadoon did in my life. You were a magician, turning a dismal prison environment into a joyful experience for me. You lifted me up and showed me I could make a positive difference and be a benefit to people... and dogs!

How is Bernard these days? I know he had the rough go of things with his dew claws, so has he fully recovered and back to work? I was surprised to learn Summit was the operation who got Buttercup.

I enjoyed working with that girl - she was special and tapped in to another level for me. She brought a lot out of me and came along at the perfect time. Sometimes it works like that. I appreciated the challenges of all the dogs I worked, but with Buttercup there was little to find to complain about - even for those who like to complain. Not me... but somebody else who may be susceptible to complaining.

Camp was like that. That boy gave no reason to find any fault.

But it's the challenges that allow us to raise our game and get better so I will always be grateful to each and every dog I got to work with. The way they do it here is much different. From what I observe they keep them on a tight leash - the handlers that is. I don't think they are allowed to train many cues - but the loose leash is ON POINT! The handlers aren't paid either. That was something "Tara" McIlravy did right, for sure. But I don't see the same enthusiasm among the handler-dog that I remember feeling with us - so I do hope to have the chance of returning to Stafford, unless of course they'll just let me out once I complete the program I was sent here for. Regardless, I absolutely intend to remain as much "in the loop" as I am allowed. I wish I could do more to be helpful, but I'll stay up on everything and then you never know? Maybe my opportunity will come.

Keep fighting the good fight Denise. I cherish you and all you do for people - you are a model for me to make positive change in my life and do all I can to be a benefit to the most people I can. Please stay in touch, and good luck with the auction (and everything else). Sincerely, Dan