FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:                                             September 30, 2008

Sheriff’s Office Putting Inmates To Work With Guide Dogs Of Texas Puppy Program -
Updated

On September 29, 2008 we received our first guide dog in training. “Zeke” will be living at the Travis County Jail with inmates under the supervision of Corrections Officer Sandra Mullins.

On October 1, 2008 Officer Mullins and Inmates will be on hand, with Zeke, at 9 am for interviews in the lobby of the Travis County Jail, 500 W 10th Street.

In October of 2007, the Travis County Commissioner’s Court gave approval for the Sheriff’s Office to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc. and their Puppy Program. The program allows inmates the opportunity to assist in the training of puppies that may become guide dogs for the visually impaired. The inmates would act as companions to the puppies and start their basic obedience training to prepare the puppies for their future guide dog work.

Guide Dogs Of Texas, Inc. will fund the program, providing kennels, dog food and even paying for veterinarian visits if needed. According to representatives of the group similar programs have been in existence since 2000 with no problems being reported. In fact the program is credited giving inmates a sense of purpose and pride. It teaches them how to nurture, problem solve and cooperate with others. It also allows Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc. to be able to train more dogs.

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