

Celebrations



Dogs in the hearing-dog program are selected for their friendliness.

Graduation day at S.F. SPCA

Last week, five students and their adorable canine companions graduated from the San Francisco SPCA Hearing Dog Program, marking the completion of months of training for the dogs and an eight-day intensive training course for the canines and their new human companions, all of whom are deaf or hearing-impaired.

"We graduate dogs two different ways," said program director Glenn Martyn, who has been running the program for the past six years. "One is through a placement class that is held three times a year, and the other is through home placement."

Martyn is no stranger to this process. He started his career as a trainer in 1965 and later ran a

hearing and service dog program in Montana. In 1999, he joined the SF/SPCA, at which he has graduated virtually every canine in the hearing dog program.

"We select them to have certain traits — they need to be very friendly and outgoing and love people," Martyn said. "And they need to get along with other animals — including our resident cats, Ying and Yang."

When training is completed, the dogs are introduced to their new owners — if they haven't already met.

"The matching of the person and the dog is a key factor to the program's success," Martyn said.

For more information, call (415) 554-3020 or visit www.sfspca.org.