

For Immediate Release

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RAISE A PILOT PUPPY AS A 4-H PROJECT

Unique 4-H Project teaches responsibility and what it means to give back to the community

With the arrival of spring, 4-H members throughout the county will be perusing project books to pick their activities for the year. The variety is absolutely enormous ranging from sewing, arts and crafts, woodworking, engines, shooting, genealogy, public speaking, gardening, cooking and chemistry to name a few. Projects also include animals of all sorts and sizes – pigs, rabbits, goats, dairy cattle, steers and horses.

While all 4-H projects are designed to teach members lifelong skills, one dog project provides the opportunity to improve the life of a blind individual. Puppy raisers for Pilot Dogs, Inc. help provide the solid foundation for a future working dog. This includes socializing the pup with a variety of people, letting it experience new things and activities, teaching it basic rules like house-training and no jumping, and taking it to a basic obedience course so it learns to walk on a leash and more.

This one-year project allows for a youth to take responsibility of a puppy, watch it mature and grow and teach it how to be a well-behaved young dog. Once the pup is 12-14 months old, it is returned to Pilot Dogs for formal training. The trainers at the non-profit organization will continue to hone the obedience skills and teach it to guide its future owner.

Nearly 150 blind and visually impaired individuals from throughout the country train each year at Pilot Dogs. Their desire for wanting a guide vary – from maintaining their

independence as their sight fails them or to gaining confidence to travel on their own for work, school or leisure.

The only cost raisers are asked to incur is that of puppy food. Pilot Dogs covers all veterinary expenses and raisers will be reimbursed for taking an approved obedience course with their puppy. To find out more about raising a Pilot Puppy as a 4-H project, contact the **[insert county]** County Extension Office, at **[insert address and phone number here]** or Diane Miller, Vision and Development Director, Pilot Dogs, Inc., 614.221.6367, dmiller@pilotdogs.org Members interested in taking this project should work with their 4-H advisor to complete the application.