

Sage choice

Laurens rescue pup to help vet cope with PTSD

By John Clayton
Editor

A puppy in the care of the Laurens County Humane Society recently got both a new home and a new mission as an emotional support dog for a U.S. military veteran.

"Sage," a black Labrador-German Shepherd mix, was adopted by retired U.S. Army soldier Charles Degone of Augusta, Ga., from the local humane society.

According to LCHS manager Lisa Wicks, Degone found Sage on an online adoption site frequently used by the LCHS.

"He came over and met her, and I think they fell in love immediately," Wicks said.

Degone, a U.S. Army retiree who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following multiple tours of duty in Iraq, will be working with Sage through a training group called K9 Solutions based in Evans, Ga.

"She's going to go with me everywhere," Degone said. "She's already started. If I go to Walmart, she's with me in the cart."

Sage will have to be 6 months old before she begins training, which Degone said he expects to begin around Sept. 1.

Degone said he wanted a dog that would take to training as a service-support animal, but also one that is friendly with the family pets and one that likes water and will enjoy pontoon boat rides on the lake.

So far, Sage has fit right in with the entire family, he said. After training, she will provide emotional support and some fundamental services for Degone.

"She'll be trained to wake me up if I'm having nightmares or a seizure or something like that," Degone said. "She'll also be able to get my medicine or even press an alert button if something happens when I'm alone."

According to



Photo provided

GOING HOME — U.S. Army veteran Charles Degone of Augusta holds Sage, a German Shepherd-Labrador Retriever mix, he recently adopted to train as his service-support dog from the Laurens County Humane Society.

CompanionsforHeroes.org, emotional support dogs differ from service and therapy dogs. "Therapy dogs can have a variety of jobs ... Service dogs help people with disabilities perform tasks, which helps the handler attain safety and independence," a post on the website reads. "PTSD and psychiatric service dogs provide emotional support with people that have PTSD and other mental health conditions."

Statistics from the website say that an estimated 20 percent of veterans who have returned from conflicts in the Middle East suffer from PTSD or depression.

"A recent upsurge of a simple relatively inexpensive technique has changed veterans' lives for the better," the post continued. "The solution comes with four paws, a wet nose and very specialized training: Service dogs.

Veterans who utilize service dogs report lower levels of depression and anxiety, fewer hospitalizations and numerous other benefits."

While Sage was too young to exhibit particular traits that might make her a service dog, her breeding would suggest that she will do just fine at the job. German Shepherds are protective and the breed is a worker, particularly for police and the military, while Labs tend to be friendly companions.

"It's been my experience that rescues exhibit the best traits of their breeds," Wicks said.

While Sage is the latest to be adopted for specialized training to help people, she is not the only one. Wicks said another rescue puppy was adopted from the LCHS several months ago as a service dog for a person suffering from diabetes.

Scott recognized for positive influence

Scott & Corley, PA, is pleased to announce Ronald "Ron" C. Scott has been selected as one of 24 business professionals being recognized for their positive influences on the Greater Columbia community in Columbia Regional Business Report's 2019 inaugural list of Icons and Phenoms.



Ronald C. Scott

For the first time, the Columbia Regional Business Report is honoring two groups of people for making an impact: ICONS, 10 of the community pillars who have established standards of business and civic excellence; and PHENOMS, 14 of the up-and-coming go-getters who are changing the landscape.

The honorees were nominated by Business Report readers and selected by a confidential

panel of judges. Among this years honorees are professionals in architecture, real estate, pharmaceuticals, banking, law, nonprofits, and hospitality. These individuals will be honored at a luncheon on April 11, and a profile of each will be published in the April 22 issue of the Business Report.

Ron Scott has previously been selected as a recipient of the Order of The Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian honor. He was also selected as one of 20 attorneys state-wide to the inaugural class of the South Carolina Lawyers Weekly, Lawyers Hall of Fame in November 2018.

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LOCAL PEOPLE. SERVING YOU.

Join us this year at
Laurens Electric's 2019 Annual Meeting!
Saturday, June 1

Laurens Electric's Main Office, 2254 Highway 14, Laurens, SC 29360

Registration & Voting for Board of Trustees
8:30-10:30 a.m.

Entertainment
9-10 a.m.

Early Bird Prize Drawing
10 a.m.

Business Meeting Begins
10:30 a.m.

Prize drawings will follow the business meeting.

Laurens Electric Cooperative

\$25

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GIFTS & PRIZES

Registration Gift
Each member who is present and registers at the Annual Meeting will receive a

- \$25 Credit on their electric bill.
(Limit one \$25 electric bill credit per membership)

Grand Prize
• 2014 Chevrolet 1500 Truck
Grand Prize vehicle similar to the one pictured.

Early Bird Prize
• YETI® Tundra Haul Portable Wheeled Cooler that holds 45 cans
(Must be registered prior to 10 a.m.)

Just for High School Seniors
• Two \$1,000 Scholarships
Two \$1,000 scholarships will be given away to high school seniors whose parents, grandparents or guardians are members in attendance (student does not have to attend). The member at the annual meeting can register for the scholarship drawing on the student's behalf.

Entertainment
Mighty Kicks



The band has performed worldwide playing a mix of Motown and Top 40 Dance Songs combined with high-energy choreography!

Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Registration cards for the Annual Meeting will be mailed by May 17. You should receive one card and will be given one gift, even if you have multiple accounts. Only members who register in person will receive a gift.