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Illinois Sheriffs' Association Announces 2025-2026 K9 Hero

Springfield, IL — The Illinois Sheriffs' Association (ISA) is proud to announce DuPage County Sheriff's Office **K9 Xena** and her handler, **Deputy Aaron Davis**, as the 2025–2026 ISA K9 Hero.

Launched in 2024, the ISA K9 Heroes Program was created to celebrate the remarkable service and sacrifice of police K9s and their handlers across Illinois. Each year, sheriffs' offices are invited to nominate their K9 teams for recognition. These highly trained dogs assist in narcotics detection, search and rescue, suspect apprehension, and community outreach—serving as both protectors and ambassadors of public safety.

This year's nominations featured **seven K9s from six counties**, each demonstrating extraordinary commitment to service. After reviewing years of service, deployments, and accomplishments, ISA selected K9 Xena, a six-year-old Chocolate Labrador Retriever, for her exceptional work in narcotics and human remains detection.

K9 Xena: "The Goodest Good Girl"

Deputy Davis, a 22-year veteran of the DuPage County Sheriff's Office, partnered with Xena in 2020. Together, they have built a reputation of excellence across Illinois and beyond, assisting local, state, and federal agencies including the DEA, FBI, U.S. Postal Inspectors, Illinois State Police, and Chicago Police Department.

Xena's career highlights include:

- **Narcotics Detection:** Assisting in the seizure of over **350 lbs. of cannabis, 30 kilos of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine, and pounds of fentanyl and opioids** , as well as the recovery of **\$4.5 million in drug-trafficking currency**.
- **Human Remains Detection:** Credited with **over 35 successful recoveries** , providing closure to families in cases of missing persons, homicides, and accidents—including underwater searches with the Chicago Police Marine Unit.
- **Community Engagement:** Regularly participating in National Night Out, school demonstrations, block parties, and Citizen Police Academies, where her calm, friendly demeanor makes her a community favorite.

Deputy Davis proudly calls Xena “The Goodest Good Girl”—a fitting title for a K9 who has become a trusted partner, public servant, and community hero.

Supporting K9 Heroes

As part of the K9 Heroes Program, ISA will launch a **limited-edition K9 Xena plush toy and trading card** this fall through the ISA Holiday Store. A \$30 donation includes the collectible plush fitted with a tactical vest, sheriff collar, and Hero dog tag. Net proceeds will directly support the DuPage County K9 Unit in honor of Xena's service.

“Every time you shop or become a member, you help ISA continue to provide support and training to Sheriff's Offices throughout Illinois,” said ISA Executive Director Jim Kaitschuk.

Learn More

ISA encourages the public to visit the **K9 Heroes page** at www.ilsheriff.org/k9-heroes to learn more about Xena's story and the other outstanding nominees.

Follow ISA on Facebook for program updates: facebook.com/Illinoissheriffsassociation.

About the Illinois Sheriffs' Association

The Illinois Sheriffs' Association supports the Office of Sheriff across the state through training, resources, and advocacy. ISA works to strengthen law enforcement, promote community partnerships and ensure the safety and security of Illinois residents.

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