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# NEWS RELEASE

## Chicago Police Department

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### **Canine Rescued From Shelter Joins Ranks of Chicago Police** *Black Labrador Retriever is City's Youngest Certified Narcotics Detection Canine*

CHICAGO – Today Chicago Police introduced the Organized Crime Division's newest member, Pantera, a 16-month old black Labrador retriever rescued from an animal shelter in Chicago Ridge. The addition of Pantera marks the launch of a new initiative to recruit canines for law enforcement from shelters where animals are unwanted or without homes.

Pantera demonstrated a high degree of maturity and strong drive and instincts when canine Police Officer Steve Martinez found his new partner at the Chicago Ridge Animal Welfare League in May. After undergoing a rigorous curriculum of narcotics detection techniques, Pantera graduated in October as the City's youngest certified narcotics detection canine. Since hitting the streets last month, Pantera has recovered evidence and assisted in the execution of search warrants as part of his assignment to the Narcotics Section.

Following Pantera's successful placement from the Chicago Ridge Animal Welfare League, Chicago Police announced plans to continue seeking partnerships with animal shelters.

"Our Canine unit is a critical asset for the Narcotics Section. We are very fortunate that Chicago Ridge Rescue had called about Pantera," said Deputy Superintendent Peterson. "As staunch supporters of canines, we view this as a win-win situation – the Department gets an excellent canine partner, and Chicago Ridge finds a good home for Pantera," he added.

Chicago Ridge Animal Welfare League emphasized the value of shelter animals and encouraged the new program as a model for law enforcement.

"The Animal Welfare League is very proud of Pantera. It just goes to show that shelter dogs have so much potential," said Marketing and Public Relations Director Terri Sparks. "We hope to work with the Chicago Police Department on future endeavors like this very soon and hope that other law enforcement agencies catch on," she added.

The Chicago Police Department has been an advocate for animals and maintains ongoing alliances with Safe Humane Chicago, Best Friends Animal Society, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

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