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Youth Village PREP Program celebrates one year anniversary

The Dallas County Youth Village PREP program has completed one year of operation. The PREP (Patience, Responsibility, Empathy and Partnership) program teaches young men dog training, handling and behavioral techniques that emphasize life skills that they will all need upon graduation from the program. Jerry Silhan, Executive Director for Youth Village Resources of Dallas stated, "This program was meant to provide the young men with an opportunity to assume responsibility for another life, their rescue dogs and to provide them with guidance and encouragement to make them more adoptable. For some this is the first opportunity they have to be trusted with something and to deliver on it in a tangible way." More than 90 young men have gone through the program to date. "We have a 100% graduation rate with the young men who remain in the program and do not get removed for disciplinary issues," stated Juan Faura the director of training for the program, "Every one of the young men we have taught has left the program with some great life skills and with very marketable job skills that would qualify them to work at a pet supplies store, a vet's office, a kennel or any other pet services organization," added Irais Faura co-director of training for PREP. The PREP program had been a part of the Youth Village curriculum until 2005 when funding ran out. Youth Village recognized the value of the program and made the decision and commitment to reinstate it. The program is funded through private grants, "I think we have been successful in obtaining funding for the program because we have shown our donors how their donations are put to work. Most of them come to see the boys in action and see the change in their behavior and in their demeanor, there is a very real transformation," added Silhan. The organization is looking to expand the program to other facilities, including Medlock and facilities for young women.

The Youth Village Resources of Dallas is dedicated to helping juvenile offenders, ages 10 to 17 years old, reach their law-abiding potential and to diverting them from further involvement with the juvenile justice system or progression to greater offenses.