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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEVOTED COMPANIONS WINKY AND ABBY ARE GETTING A SECOND CHANCE

FORT MYERS, FL. - December 4, 2014 – The Gulf Coast Humane Society (GCHS) is proud to announce the upcoming graduation of two special adoptable residents from the Second Chance Pals, Cell Dog Program with the Department of Corrections.

Two unlikely companions have become special friends and will be ready to start a new life in the next few weeks. Winky, a blind American Bulldog, and Abby, a Jack Russell and Terrier mix, have a special story to tell.

Winky came to GCHS after he was found alone, dropped off at the end of a road with a bag of food. He was newly blind in one eye and his other eye was missing. Winky suffered from extreme separation anxiety. His behavior was self-destructive and he became a danger to himself when left alone. As a last resort, Executive Director, Jennifer Galloway, asked the Second Chance Pals at the Department of Corrections to see if they could help. They agreed to foster Winky on a trial basis.

Edwin Perez, a trainer at Second Chance Pals program was the one who worked with Winky. “He needed twenty-four hour care at first. He was so upset and a mess when we first got him,” said Perez. “He would hurt himself when alone from running into things, so I padded the areas around that could hurt him and then started his training.” With patience and reading up on training blind dogs, Winky not only improved, but could learn to be alone without anxiety or self destruction. “We worked on building up the time we left him and now he can be alone up to an hour knowing he will be rewarded. His senses are heightened and once he learns his environment he is comfortable. He is people friendly, well trained and deserves a good home and life,” said Perez.

Abby was surrender to GCHS. She was tremendously depressed and withdrawn. She was brought into the Second Chance Pals program and chosen to be with Winky as a companion. Her size and temperament was perfect to be with him, as he didn’t feel she was a threat. Abby and Winky bonded quickly and now she mothers and protects him. Winky nudges Abby when he is looking for attention and Abby appears to help and comfort him

especially when he is stressed. “Our hope is for them to be adopted together so they can continue to help each other,” said Galloway.

Cell Dogs and Second Chance Pals programs place homeless shelter dogs in an obedience-training program with carefully selected inmates. The dog training programs teach inmates how to obedience train dogs, using the C.L.A.S.S. Program, during an intensive 8 to 16 week course.

Upon graduation, the dogs are highly adoptable and possess obedience skills such as how to heel, sit, recall, and stay. They are also housed trained, leash trained and responsive to voice commands and some hand signals. Some dogs in the Second Chance Pals program move on to receive more training to become Therapy Dogs.

Gulf Coast Humane Society, located at 2010 Arcadia Street in Fort Myers, was established as the first non-profit animal welfare organization in southwest Florida in 1947. The 501(c)(3) mission is to rescue, provide safe refuge and compassionate care, and find forever homes for abandoned and neglected animals in the area. GCHS only takes in owner surrendered and transfers from other shelters and rescue groups with a high success rate of adoptions. Their veterinary clinic is open to the public and offers a full array of affordable services six days a week.

For more information about the events with the Gulf Coast Humane Society call 239-332-0364 or visit www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org.