



ASHLEY, HEADWAY *and* JENGA

Fate and the facility dog

Ashley is a licensed therapist at Headway Emotional Health Services, Hopkins Day Treatment program that combines academics with therapeutic support for teenagers who struggle in a traditional classroom. Ashley has also been involved with Helping Paws for eight years, as her wife, Corbett, has service dog Rocky.

Fate brought Ashley's two worlds together in 2016. One day Corbett couldn't bring Rocky to work, so he went off with Ashley to Headway. During a group therapy session, a student was working through an extremely difficult situation of grief and loss, and Rocky came to lie down with and comfort her. Ashley says, "The girl buried her face in Rocky's fur and he laid still with her for a long time while she sobbed. Something magical was happening and I knew right then that our program needed a dog for animal assisted intervention."

Ashley presented the idea to Helping Paws, and fate took another step forward. Jenga had been in training. But with a recent diagnosis of mild hip dysplasia and a wild mind for distractions, he wasn't destined for life as a traditional service dog. Eileen decided to bring him to Headway for a couple of hours, to see how he would respond.

"Jenga spent the whole time lying on the floor with 12 teenagers rubbing his belly,"

remembers Ashley. "His anxiety disappeared, as if he'd found his purpose, and the kids responded just as beautifully. It was clear we'd found something special for everyone."

Two weeks later, Jenga was given the new title of Facility Service Dog, and he and Ashley began graduate training together. Jenga is Helping Paws' second Facility Dog placement, and it's a very positive step forward for the program.

Over the summer, Jenga continued his work, this time with Ashley's teens at Headway. Says Ashley, "the kids learned all of Jenga's commands to improve their connection with him, but they also learned broader life skills, like patience and distress tolerance."

Then she giggles and adds, "An important part of our program here is goals, so we are setting a fun goal for Jenga. We're going to teach him to take a selfie!"



ASHLEY, HEADWAY *and* JENGA

Fate and the facility dog

Ashley is a licensed therapist at Headway Emotional Health Services, Hopkins Day Treatment program that combines academics with therapeutic support for teenagers who struggle in a traditional classroom. Ashley has also been involved with Helping Paws for eight years, as her wife, Corbett, has service dog Rocky.

Fate brought Ashley's two worlds together in 2016. One day Corbett couldn't bring Rocky to work, so he went off with Ashley to Headway. During a group therapy session, a student was working through an extremely difficult situation of grief and loss, and Rocky came to lie down with and comfort her. Ashley says, "The girl buried her face in Rocky's fur and he laid still with her for a long time while she sobbed. Something magical was happening and I knew right then that our program needed a dog for animal assisted intervention."

Ashley presented the idea to Helping Paws, and fate took another step forward. Jenga had been in training. But with a recent diagnosis of mild hip dysplasia and a wild mind for distractions, he wasn't destined for life as a traditional service dog. Eileen decided to bring him to Headway for a couple of hours, to see how he would respond.

"Jenga spent the whole time lying on the floor with 12 teenagers rubbing his belly,"

remembers Ashley. "His anxiety disappeared, as if he'd found his purpose, and the kids responded just as beautifully. It was clear we'd found something special for everyone."

Two weeks later, Jenga was given the new title of Facility Service Dog, and he and Ashley began graduate training together. Jenga is Helping Paws' second Facility Dog placement, and it's a very positive step forward for the program.

Over the summer, Jenga continued his work, this time with Ashley's teens at Headway. Says Ashley, "the kids learned all of Jenga's commands to improve their connection with him, but they also learned broader life skills, like patience and distress tolerance."

Then she giggles and adds, "An important part of our program here is goals, so we are setting a fun goal for Jenga. We're going to teach him to take a selfie!"