



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<b>Subject:</b>	WPD'S K9 FIJI RECEIVES DONATION OF BODY ARMOR		
<b>Releasing Officer:</b>	Sgt. Stephen Fridley		
<b>Date:</b>	July 20, 2018		
<b>Press Release Log:</b>	<b>18-015</b>	<b>Report #:</b>	n/a

(Westerville, Ohio) – The Westerville Division of Police’s (WPD) K9 Fiji will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Fiji’s vest is sponsored by Greg Nobis of Delaware, Ohio, and will be embroidered with the sentiment “This gift of protection provided by Greg Nobis.” Delivery is expected within eight to 10 weeks.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. is a 501c (3) charity located in East Taunton, Mass. whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. The non-profit was established in 2009 to assist law enforcement agencies with this potentially lifesaving body armor for their four-legged K9 officers. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provided more than 3,000 protective vests in 50 states through private and corporate donations at a value of \$5.7 million dollars.

Fiji has been a WPD K9 officer for four years, working with Officer Bryan Schwartz. A seven-year-old Belgium Malinois, she is an award-winning K9 for her alertness and focus with Officer Schwartz. In 2013, the duo won three gold medals at the Ohio Police and Fire Games.

“Fiji is a working dog, and takes her work seriously,” said Officer Schwartz. “She’s clear-headed and able to socialize well, but she’s all business when we’re working. She’s strong, highly trained and very alert. But there’s no substitute for extra safety. On behalf of our entire department, I’m grateful for this donation, which together we’ll use to continue our mission of keeping Westerville safe.”

The program is open to dogs actively employed in the U.S. with law enforcement or related agencies who are certified and at least 20 months of age. New K9 graduates, as well as K9s with expired vests, are eligible to participate.

The donation to provide one protective vest for a law enforcement K9 is \$950. Each vest has a value between \$1,744 – \$2,283 and a five-year warranty, as well as an average weight of 4-5 lbs. There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s in the U.S.

For more information on the Westerville Division of Police, please visit [www.westerville.org/police](http://www.westerville.org/police).

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**About Vested Interest in K9s, Inc.**

For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call (508) 824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts tax-deductible donations of any denomination at [www.vik9s.org](http://www.vik9s.org) or mailed to P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA 02718.