



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject:	WPD'S K9 FIJI RECEIVES DONATION OF BODY ARMOR		
Releasing Officer:	Sgt. Stephen Fridley		
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(Westerville, Ohio) – The Westerville Division of Police’s (WPD) K9 Fiji has received 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 was embroidered with the sentiment “This gift of protection provided by Greg Nobis.”

Fiji has been a WPD K9 officer for four years, working with Officer Bryan Schwartz. A seven-year-old Belgium Malinois, she and Officer Schwartz have won multiple awards for alertness and focus among other competitive tasks. In 2013, the duo won three gold medals at the Ohio Police and Fire Games.

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.

Protective vests for law enforcement K9 dogs are valued between \$1,700 – \$2,200. They weigh an average of four to five pounds and are custom fit to streamline the contour of the dog to maximize protection. The vests have a lifespan and warranty of five years. Fiji’s existing body armour was set to soon expire.

“Fiji is a working dog, and takes her work seriously,” says 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 K9 protective vest program is open to dogs at least 20 months of age actively employed in the U.S. with law enforcement or related certified agencies. New K9 graduates, as well as K9s with expired vests, are eligible to participate.

For more information on the Westerville Division of Police, please visit 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 or mailed to P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA 02718.