

Chester County 4-H families invited to participate in new program

WEST CHESTER - Independence Dogs Inc. will kick off an exciting, rewarding project opportunity for 4-H families in Chester County.

Jean King, technical director for the organization, explains Independence Dogs Inc., as a program that will raise support type dogs to service handicapped

persons afflicted with a mobility impaired illness, such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, polio, cerebral palsy, or rheumatoid arthritis.

The dogs raised as work dogs for this program will not only be trained to perform physical tasks for their owners, but will also enter

a partnership with that person, as a living companion, providing love, laughter and a sense of security and independence.

Founded recently by Jean King and Kate Wolford, a professional dog trainer for 30 years, the

program will begin in late February of '86, to provide Akbash and Rotweiler puppies, to be placed with 4-H families in Chester County. Because of the physical strength required of the Independence Guide Dog, the breeds to be raised are large, strong dogs. The Akbash dog, a turkish seed over 2000 years old, now used to

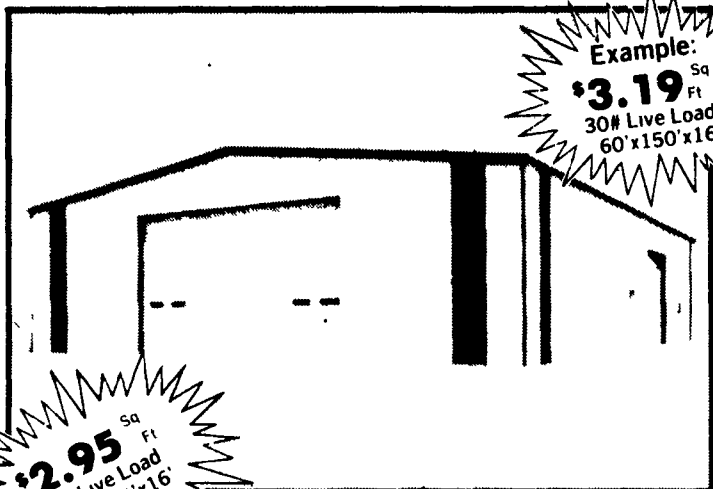
dystrophy has saved \$80 in babysitting earnings toward the \$150 cost of the dog.

Jean is very concerned about each dog raised through her organization, that they are matched well with their owner, that they are trained in a non-threatening environment, and that they will be provided with a committed and caring home before and after they are finally placed. Home visits will be conducted from Independence Dogs staff to 4-H families, to lend support and guidance.

Families and committed 4-Hers are needed! Raising a puppy is a big responsibility, but one that provides a wonderful learning experience and sense of responsibility. Independence Dogs Inc. additionally provides the opportunity for service to others. Socialization, care, and love of the Independence Dogs puppy are three key necessities required by the family.

If you are interested in learning more about this new 4-H program opportunity, contact Laurie Sandow at the Chester County 4-H office at 696-3500. An opportunity to meet Jean King and her puppies, and learn more about Independence Dogs Inc., is scheduled for Wednesday evening, Feb. 26th, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the Stetson Middle School located at Rt. 202 in West Chester. Come and learn about Independence Dogs Inc., and how 4-H can become a part of this important organization.

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guard sheep, weighs between 100 to 110 pounds. Eleven Akbash and ten Rotweiler puppies, now four weeks old, will be looking for good homes and loving 4-H families in mid February, at the age of 8 to 12 weeks. The program will soon expand to include breeds that will service the hearing impaired.

Jean King of Independence Dogs has worked closely with Seeing Eye, Inc. of Morristown, NJ, to develop the structure and guidelines of the program. The basic format for program operation and effectiveness with 4-H families, will include placement of the puppy with a selected family for 12 to 14 months; bi-weekly or monthly attendance at 4-H Independence Puppy Club meetings, payment of all veterinary and boarding expenses, assistance with feeding costs; and provision of "follow-up" once the puppy has left the home, for training with Independence Dogs.

Jean King is totally involved with the purpose and development of Independence Dogs, beginning in PA and expanding to provide state-wide service to the handicapped. Already, a young girl from Syracuse, NY, with muscular

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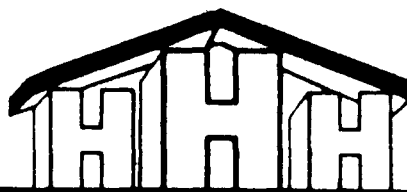
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