



Medinah Shrine Therapy Dog Club

Highland Park High School Visit

Yesterday, Wednesday, April 5th, the Medinah Shrine Therapy Dog Club visited Highland Park, Illinois High School.

We were called there because of an incident that occurred on Tuesday, April 4th, at about 11:30 AM. School administrators learned from an anonymous source that there may be a gun in the school with a student. That source was corroborated by another student who told the administration that he had seen a student with a gun. The Highland Park Police were notified, and the school was immediately put into lockdown. A heavy police presence ensued as a notice was issued to the community.

Once again, Highland Park was exposed to another gun related episode. Many of the High School students and staff had witnessed the July 4th shootings at the Highland Park Parade.

The lockdown triggered many raw emotions.

We arrived with our dogs, Gemini, Buddy, and Dandy, shortly before 1:00 PM. We checked in at Security, got our visitor passes and proceeded out into the foyer of the school. We were met by students during changing classes. The dogs were quite an attraction out in the hallway, and we were quite able to create a student "traffic Jam" with students thrilled to meet our Therapy Dogs. The pups were steadfast and didn't flinch when surrounded by the throng! Smiles abounded and everyone was enjoying the moment.

A large room adjacent to the school foyer was cleared and we made our way into that quiet space. There, for the next 2 hours, we met many students and staff. We all had a chance to relax. We had some laughs, there was a lot of petting and hugging the dogs, and plenty of time for some light conversations. We did overhear snippets concerning the lockdown. As we watched, we'd get a glimpse of the look in some of the faces that was proof enough to us of the emotions awakened by the event the day before. As handlers, parents, and grandparents, we kept the interaction as light and friendly as we could.

The response from the kids and staff was exceptional! Oh my, our pups were an absolute hit!

The 2 hours flew by. We visited with a lot of students and staff.

Our dogs were on point the entire time and did an awesome job.

We were asked by quite a few kids "Will you be back tomorrow?" To which we'd answer, "if we're asked to, we'll be back".

As our visit ended, we were greeted on the way to our cars by more enthusiastic students anxious to meet the dogs and catch a quick petting on the way by.

As we got into the car, the dogs were sad that we were leaving but were tired and ready to rest. They had accomplished a great service and earned a quiet ride home.

We had a great day and represented our Therapy Dog club and Medinah well indeed!