

New Leash
On Life USA[®]

2025 Impact Report



AN INTRODUCTION

GIVING PEOPLE AND DOGS A FRESH START

Founded in 2010, New Leash on Life USA rescues at-risk dogs to work with justice-impacted individuals in both prison and community settings to create fresh starts.

Leveraging the powerful bond between humans and dogs, our unique model supports a vulnerable population of underserved people and at-risk dogs.

Together, they rescue each other.

New Leash on Life USA works in close collaboration with local prisons, state correctional institutions, and community stakeholders to implement our programs collaboratively, efficiently, and effectively.

The key to our model's success is a commitment to each participant and dog's success through customized, wraparound services. Furthermore, to ensure we create an environment of understanding and respect, our staff and volunteers include people with lived experience.

Prison Reentry Program

Our signature program delivers life skills and career readiness workshops to incarcerated individuals. The animal-assisted therapy model creates a strong human-animal bond that increases empathy, self-esteem, social confidence, and belief in self-change. Upon graduation, our participants are released on early parole, complete a paid internship, and receive individualized case management and employment assistance.

YARD Program

Our Young Adult Reentry/Diversion (YARD) program serves young adults, aged 18-24, who are eligible for early parole or are experiencing their first encounter with the criminal justice system. Our participants grow, learn, and succeed through group workshops, individualized case management, and paid internships/training, proving that providing young adults with an alternative to incarceration leads to life-changing results.

OUR SERVICE DELIVERY IN 2025

167 participants served across **5** programs

61 dogs served

43 new rescues

43 adoptions

Graduation rate: **81%**

Employment rate: **72%**

Recidivism rates:

one-year
6.3%

three-year
14%

YARD PROGRAMME EXPANSION IN 2025

- Launched the George W. Hill Correctional Facility Prison Reentry Program
- Launched the SCI Chester Prison Reentry Program
- Doubled the size of the YARD Program



Allison Murphy, Superintendent's Assistant for SCI Chester, with Amos



Kelly Shaw, Reentry/Program Administrator for George W. Hill Correctional Facility, with Sweet Potato

BRIAN'S STORY WHERE CHANGE BEGINS

When Brian* entered the Young Adult Reentry/Diversion (YARD) program, his expectations were modest. “At first it was just the easiest way to get through the problem that I had,” he shared. What he didn’t anticipate was how meaningful the experience would become.

Brian describes the change as gradual but significant. “It was a way to calm me down, to really think about life and make better decisions.” One of the most impactful moments came from a guest speaker—a man who had spent more than 20 years incarcerated and was now rebuilding his life. “Looking at him was like a mirror,” he said. “I didn’t want to be in that position.”

After completing the program, Brian is now working as a licensed salvage vehicle inspector, a career path he had planned for but would not have been able to pursue without successfully completing the program. “If it wasn’t for New Leash, I wouldn’t have been able to do that,” he explained. “New Leash allowed me to get to where I wanted to be.” Passing background

checks and moving forward without a record made it possible for him to stay focused on something legitimate and long-term. “I’ve never been so focused on something — especially something legit,” he shared.

Beyond professional success, Brian describes the biggest change as how he lives his life day to day. “I live a transparent life now. No more secrets. I don’t have anything to hide. That is a big relief for me.” As a father, this fresh start carries even more meaning. “Because of that, my daughter is also going to be able to live a better life than me.”

*Name has been changed to respect anonymity.

JIMMY'S STORY

WHEN PATIENCE MEETS POSSIBILITY



In June of 2025, Jimmy was spotted darting through Lemon Hill Park in Fairmount for more than two weeks, surviving on his instincts as heavy rain soaked the city.

He hid deep in the woods, wary of people and unwilling to be caught. It took patience, creativity, and a lot of cheeseburgers before help finally broke through. An Animal Protection Officer—who would later join New Leash as an Animal Services Advocate—earned Jimmy's trust one bite at a time, safely bringing him to the shelter.

Jimmy's next chapter began when New Leash rescued him to join the Philadelphia Department of Prisons program. From the start, Jimmy showed just how resilient he was. He handled neuter surgery and multiple veterinary visits with calm cooperation, powering through treatment for a minor ear infection and laceration without missing a beat. He mastered cues like sit, down, stay, leave it, touch, and recall, earning perfect 10s across the board in his evaluations. With the people he trusted, Jimmy revealed a laid-back, affectionate personality that made it easy to see just how special he was.

After graduation, Jimmy settled into his forever home with his adopters, who jumped right in—scheduling vet visits, enrolling in training classes, and continuing all the great work he had started through New Leash. He enjoyed his first Thanksgiving turkey (a huge fan) and handled new experiences—like the Christmas tree—with confidence. From rain-soaked woods to a warm home filled with love, Jimmy's journey is a powerful reminder of what's possible when patience meets possibility.



LEXI'S STORY

FRESH STARTS, RENEWED DIRECTION

When Lexi was approached to take part in the Prison Reentry Program at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons, she was thrilled.

"I can get out early [on parole]? That's a win-win," said Lexi. "And then once I got into the program, I absolutely loved it. I'd already been an animal lover, but doing that program just opened up my eyes to a lot of different things. I took everything really seriously."

Sharing a cell with her dog, Toast, provided an enormous benefit to Lexi's mental health during

her incarceration. "I wasn't lonely, and that dog loved me to death. So that was my best friend."

Lexi thrived on the responsibility of ensuring that Toast was healthy, happy, and well-fed. "I have two kids, so I don't know anything but being a mom. To have somebody that depended on me really helped me cope. It helped me with my anxiety. It just helped give me something to look forward to."

After her release, Lexi accepted a paid internship at an animal shelter, working in the kennels. She

loved learning more about animal care, and she was inspired by the photographs on the wall featuring staff and management. "I'm like, you know what? My face is gonna be on that wall," she said. "And then I applied for the vet tech position."

Initially she was afraid that her criminal record would prevent her from being hired. "But they hired me, and they trained me up. And from there I just took off."

Today Lexi works as a veterinary technician, and she's full of excitement for the future. "I can't



wait to graduate, take the VTNE, which is the Veterinary Technician National Exam, and get my CVT and just continue to learn more in the field! I eventually want to move into emergency. So that's a goal of mine—and continuing to be the best mom for my kids, and making good money to take care of them, and buying a house!"



New Leash SVP of Programs, Rob Rosa, and George W. Hill Correctional Facility Interim Warden David Mascellino congratulate a graduate

"YARD has meant a lot to me. I say this because I had to learn how to communicate with people my age from all over and find solutions to real problems. In my opinion, YARD means family; they never judged me or bashed me."

- YARD PROGRAM GRADUATE

SHAMU'S STORY RESCUED. CHERISHED. THRIVING.



When Shamu arrived at the shelter, she was frightened and unsure of what would come next. But even in her fear, Shamu showed something special—a quiet trust in the people trying to help her.

She quickly proved herself to be an exceptional student in our Philadelphia Department of Prisons Program. She mastered her commands with enthusiasm and grace, impressing everyone with her focus and desire to please. She also faced ongoing medical challenges, including chronic urinary incontinence and persistent ear infections. Despite multiple treatments, Shamu never let these obstacles define her. She remained affectionate, eager to connect, and endlessly loving — a favorite among staff, volunteers, and handlers alike.

She joined our SCI Chester Foster Program, where her training deepened — and she became a true

standout. Watching Shamu hold a perfect “stay” for over a minute while her handler stood across the gym was just one of many moments that showed her remarkable intelligence and dedication.

Those who worked closely with Shamu described her as gentle, obedient, and deeply bonded to her people. She knew her commands, loved playing fetch, and embraced her role as a true lapdog — happiest curled up beside someone she trusted. At adoption events, she shined just as brightly. She greeted strangers with kisses, calmly interacted with other dogs, and even charmed young children.

Shamu finally found what she had been waiting for all along: a family who saw her not for her challenges, but for her heart. Today, her adopters continue to ensure she receives proper management and care for her medical needs. She is safe, cherished, and truly experiencing the fresh start she always deserved.

LETTER FROM ADOPTERS:

A PERFECT MATCH

When our family began the search for a new dog, we were determined to find the right fit—not just for us, but for the dog as well. From our very first interaction, the New Leash on Life USA team demonstrated an extraordinary level of care, patience, and expertise.

They took the time to understand our needs, preferences, and lifestyle, guiding us through every step of the process with compassion and insight. Their consultative approach ensured that we were matched with Cody (formerly known as Grits), a loving and energetic pit bull mix who has truly completed our family. The team’s support did not end with the adoption; they remained available for advice and encouragement, making us feel like valued members of their community.

What sets New Leash apart is not only their commitment to the animals, but also their



dedication to the people they serve. One of the most moving experiences we had was attending a graduation ceremony for the program.

Meeting the incarcerated individuals who had devoted months to training and loving these dogs was deeply inspiring. Hearing their stories—how working with the dogs had changed their outlook, given them hope, and shaped their post-parole plans—was a powerful reminder of the ripple effect this program has on both people and animals. The compassion and dedication we witnessed left a lasting impression on us.

Mark, Andre, and Cody

STEVIE'S STORY

WHERE TRUST TAKES ROOT



At just five months old, Stevie arrived at the shelter as a stray puppy already carrying the weight of trauma in her young life. A cigarette burn on her head told part of the story; her mistrust of people, tendency to keep her distance, and instinct to make herself small told the rest.

Stevie entered our SCI Chester Foster Program, where she was deeply cared for by her handlers. She mastered commands like sit, stay, shake, lay down, and leave it, and she loved nothing more than running freely in the yard or playing with other dogs. But trust came slowly, as loud noises and new faces startled her.

With consistency and compassion, small but meaningful changes began to take root. Her handler noticed both sides of Stevie: the delicate, tender dog who flinched at sudden movements—and the athletic, joyful pup who sprinted across open space, leapt effortlessly for toys, and splashed happily into any puddle she could find. “She can steal your heart,” her handler shared. “She’s loyal once she commits to you.”

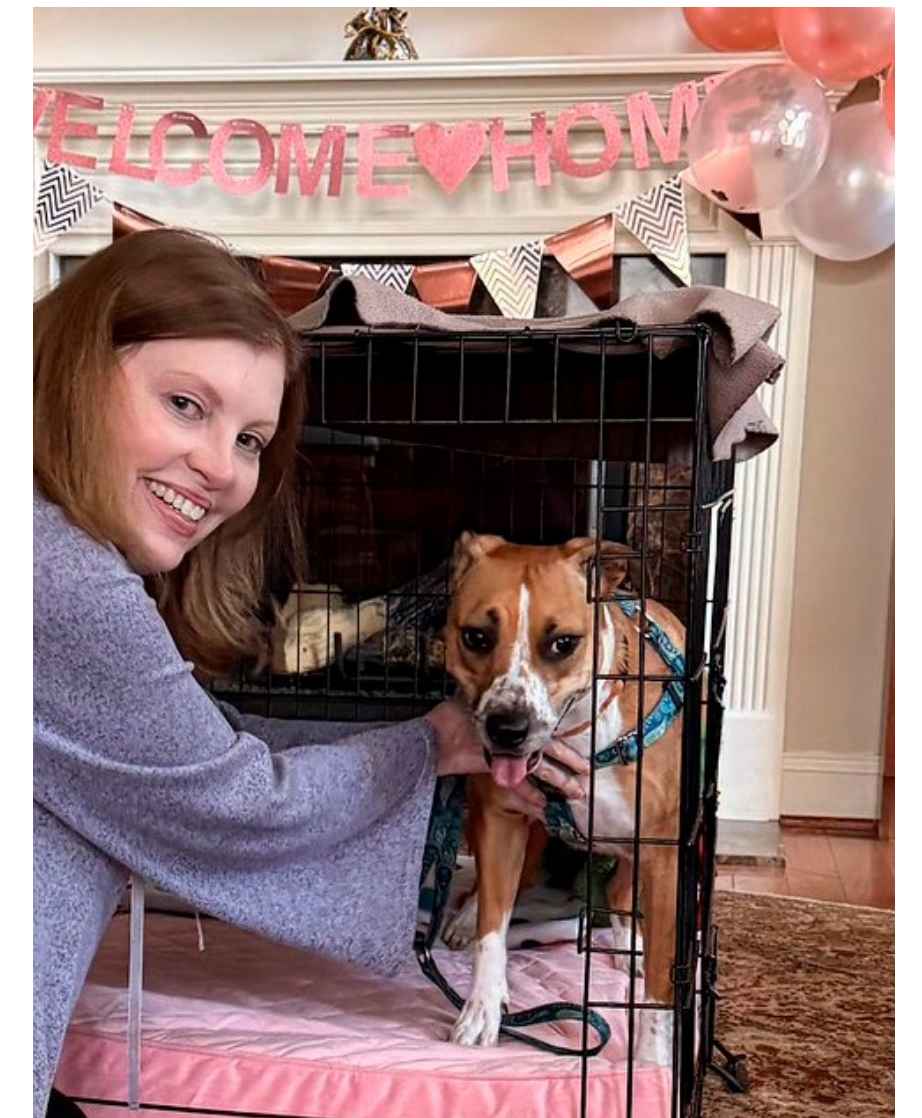
We knew she needed quiet, stability, and a home where she could finally let her guard down. And then, wonderfully, she got it.

In October 2025, Stevie entered a foster-to-adopt home with a loving family and a gentle giant of a resident dog, a St. Bernard named Boomer. Slow introductions, thoughtful routines, and respectful boundaries helped Stevie settle in at her own pace. Gradually, she began exploring her neighborhood, building confidence, and even making new canine friends, including a local German Shepherd.

A few weeks later, the transformation was undeniable. Stevie formed a close bond with her trainer, Tina, eagerly waiting by the door for her visits. She learned to walk calmly on leash, became more comfortable in her own skin, and made remarkable progress with resource guarding. “She’s very smart,” her trainer shared. “There will still be bumps—but she’s come so far.”

Today, Stevie is exactly where she belongs: surrounded by humans who love her, dogs who respect her boundaries, and a routine that helps

her feel safe enough to shine. Her journey is a powerful reminder that healing takes time—and that with patience, advocacy, and the right environment, even the most guarded hearts can open.



JOSH'S STORY

BOUND BY TRUST, MOVING FORWARD

When New Leash began its foster program at SCI Chester, Josh was one of the first participants. “The joy of having the companionship with the dog outweighed all the negativity,” said Josh. “Cause there’s a lot of us guys in there that don’t have the friends and the family on the outside willing to talk to you every day.” Josh worked with rescue dog Stevie, welcoming her to the foster program and giving her a foundation for her success.

After his release from prison, Josh struggled to find employment. Instead of giving up, he reached out to New Leash staff for help. Although New Leash hadn't yet begun offering post-release services at SCI Chester, we stepped in and arranged a paid internship for him at one of our shelter partners. Two years later, Josh has leveraged that opportunity into a full-time job.

“It wasn't just that New Leash found a job for me,” said Josh. “I'm not the type of person that opens up easily, but all of the staff took their time to get to know me, to make me feel safe

and comfortable, to open up about my fears, and helped me along my way.”

This was a breath of fresh air for Josh, who'd been in and out of several prisons over the past few decades. “The longest I ever had on the street without getting in trouble was 45 days. I never really looked at changing myself.”

The difference, he said, was the individualized support he received from New Leash staff before and after release. “Completing the New Leash program in prison, and then coming out to the street and doing it on the street as well, it helped me decide what I want for my future. It's given me that ping in my head whwwqwen I think that I could be going down the wrong path. It's a constant reminder of who I want to be, and not who I was. Like, I get excited now for my little triumphs, my little goals that I accomplished.”

He's also begun to repair his relationship with his father, strained after years of incarceration. “I'm proud of the fact that my dad, who I haven't seen nor physically really talked to in 10 years,

told my sister, ‘I see that your brother has not only finally got his life together, but he's excelling,’” said Josh. “So for him to be this excited for me to come home shows me that I'm not only changing myself, that he sees the change, and he wants to be around it.”

Today Josh is full of goals: first, to pay his court fines, which he estimates will take about a decade; second, to save for his own apartment; and finally, to start dog training courses so that he can get a better position with his animal shelter employer.

“Even though a lot of days I'm tired, and I don't want to go from one job to the next,” he said, “I still do it, because I want better for myself, and I wanna show my support system, my family and my friends, that this ain't just another time of Josh getting out. This is the new Josh, and this is how I'm gonna be.”

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit: newleashonlife-usa.org

Call: 484-432-1288

Email: info@newleashonlife-usa.org