



**Jennifer Parker**  
Trial Courts Administrator

Administrative Office of the Court

## **The Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida**

14250 49th Street North  
Clearwater, Florida 33762  
(727) 453-7176  
Fax: (727) 453-7166

**Public Information Office**

## **The Sixth Judicial Circuit Establishes Courthouse Facility Dog Program**

CLEARWATER - They say a dog is a man's best friend.

But now, thanks to a partnership between the Sixth Judicial Circuit and a child advocacy group, one might be of comfort to a child, victim or witness who find themselves in a traumatic court proceeding.

According to an administrative order signed by Chief Judge Shawn Crane on May 1, the circuit and the non-profit organization Hero to a Child have established a certified courthouse facility dog program.

If anyone affiliated with any of the major stakeholders — the state attorney's office, the public defender's office, the office of regional counsel, the Department of Children and Families, or the Guardian ad Litem — believes the presence of a dog may help a child, victim or witness testify, they can contact Hero to a Child. A private attorney may do so also.

The presiding judge must approve.

First, whoever is interested in having a dog present at a court proceeding must coordinate with Hero to a Child, to ensure that the courthouse facility dog, whose name is Polar, is available. The best way to do that is to email Tammie McQueeney at [tammiem@Herotoachild.org](mailto:tammiem@Herotoachild.org). If someone has specific questions about the program, they may call Tamie at (727) 346-8641, ext. 4.

Once Polar is reserved for a court proceeding, the attorney who asked for the canine must file a timely motion with the presiding judge asking for approval to have the dog present.

For more particulars about the program, please read the administrative order at [www.jud6.org](http://www.jud6.org). It's Administrative Order No. 2025-024 PA/PI-CIR.

The circuit was able to establish the new program due to the cooperation of Pinellas County government and Pasco County government, and Canine Companions, which trains the dogs, and arranges for insurance.

