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Polar, Our New Courthouse Facility Dog, Is Featured In Three TV Segments

CLEARWATER - Three television stations this month have aired segments on Polar, the Sixth Judicial Circuit's new courthouse facility dog. One, on WFLA News Channel 8, appeared Sept. 22, 2025.

Here's the link.

<https://www.wfla.com/video/meet-polar-a-therapy-dog-who-comforts-pasco-county-kids-in-need-bloom/11099224/>

Another, on Bay News 9, appeared Sept. 16, 2025.

Here's the link:

<https://baynews9.com/fl/tampa/news/2025/09/16/first-courthouse-facility-dog-for-circuit-6-offering-comfort-and-support-for-children-in-the-courtroom>

Finally, on Fox 13 News, a segment appeared on Sept. 2, 2025.

Here's the link:

<https://www.fox13news.com/video/1701123>

As the courthouse facility dog, Polar is 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 established the 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 Polar is available. The best way to do that is to email Tammie McQueeney at 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. 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.