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“We don’t want money to ever be an issue getting in the way of an officer having a K9 and performing the work they do in the community.”

▼ Decoys, clad in protective bite suits, serve an unenviable but valuable purpose in K9 training and competition.



organization received its 501 (c)(3) non-profit status, and less than a month later, K9s4COPs made its first donation to the Harris County (Texas) Sheriff’s Department: four K9s named Boomer, Fozzie, Mikey and Tamara.

Since then, K9s4COPs has grown exponentially. In 2011, the organization donated 10 K9s to two agencies in Texas. In 2012, the tally was 13 K9s to nine agencies in three states. So far this year, K9s4COPs has gifted 19 K9s to 15 agencies in seven different states, and in just over two years since its inception has raised more than \$2 million to support the cause.

“We’re filling a gap that counties and districts often can’t fill,” said K9s4COPs Executive Director Liz Lara-Carreno. “We don’t want money to ever be an issue getting in the way of an officer having a K9 and performing the work they do in the community.”

The Harris County Sheriff’s Department, recipient of K9s4COPs’ first-ever gift, has since received 16 K9s from the organization, bringing the department K9 unit’s roster to 23 K9s.

Sgt. Mike Thomas has been with the Harris County Sheriff’s Department since 1985 and has spent the last 22 years working with the K9 unit. He’s worked his way from the bottom up—starting out as a bite-suit-wearing decoy during K9 training sessions and now serving as day-shift sergeant as well as training sergeant—and he’s seen the unit grow. Thanks to K9s4COPs, he says, the department’s K9 unit has almost tripled in size in the time he’s worked there.

The addition of all those well-trained dogs

