

# QCC welcomes Siggy, its first community resource dog

February 7, 2024 | Education/Schools, Pets/Animals

**“The college community is overjoyed to have this type of emotional support service for its students, faculty and staff”**

*By Charlene Arsenault*

QCC’s new community resource dog, Siggy, with Community Resource Officer Nicholas Yacuzzi (photos courtesy Quinsigamond Community College) WORCESTER—Quinsigamond Community College Campus Police started the new year off with the college’s first-ever community resource dog, the school recently announced.

Siggy, a four-month-old English Cream Golden Retriever, is already making his presence known on campus, but will be sworn in as an official campus police dog once he completes rigorous training, making him the first of his kind at a Worcester college or university.

“The college community is overjoyed to have this type of emotional support service for its students, faculty and staff,” said QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja in a statement. “Studies have shown that interacting with dogs can improve mood and decrease stress. In this new post-pandemic world many people are still struggling with added stress and stressors. We are delighted to have Siggy as a member of our QCC community to offer a bit of cheer and positivity.”

Community resource dogs have become a common practice for both educational institutions and police departments across the country. At QCC, Community Resource Officer Nicholas Yacuzzi is supervising Siggy, and the dog resides with Officer Yacuzzi and his family when he is not on duty.

Yacuzzi brought up the idea of having the college retain a dog after witnessing resource officers utilize canines as a de-escalation technique, according to the press release.

“There is a huge need for this across the state and the country,” Yacuzzi said in a statement. “These types of dogs have become a common practice to bridge the gap between the public and the police.”

While QCC has had therapy dogs on campus during events and busy periods such as final examinations, the new community resource dog will be on campus consistently with office hours available for people to spend time with him.

Siggy is currently being trained by *Golden Opportunities for Independence*, a program in Walpole, MA that specializes in training dogs to work in a variety

of settings, such as schools, healthcare facilities or as personal service dogs. The community resource dogs are taught to be calm and confident in crowded environments through activities such as visits to Gillette Stadium on a busy day.

According to Yacuzzi, Siggy already knows several basic commands and has begun meeting the college community. Upon completion of his training, students, faculty and staff will be able to submit requests to spend time with Siggy during specific hours.