

The Puppies' First Visit to the Vet

The Agency's four new K9 recruits – Suni, Indigo, Freya, and Nicole – have their first veterinary exam since joining the CIA program with Dr. Buck Drummond at Old Dominion Animal Health Center. He specializes in the unique medical challenges of working dogs. Heide and Lulu, the other two CIA "Puppy Class" K9s, belong to Frederick County Fire Marshal and Fairfax County Police respectively and will have exams at their local vets.

Before classes begin, all Agency dogs go to the vet for a full health exam and any necessary vaccinations. Old Dominion is known regionally for its work with law enforcement and military K9s, including CIA's K9 officers. They even started a program to help support retired military, CIA, and police K9s called *Paws of Honor*. Most K9 handlers – whether military, police, or CIA – keep their K9 partners once the dogs retire. Medical care for the dogs, however, is often no longer covered by the government. Programs like *Paws of Honor* help the handlers with veterinary expenses throughout the retired dog's life.



First up to see the vet is Suni, a whirl of wiggles and kisses, who leaps out of the CIA K9 van and greets every person, shrub, and butterfly she sees. It's her nose, however, that most dictates her path. Darting from bushes to shoes to rocks to flowers to trees, Suni follows any curious scent she encounters in the parking lot, weaving a mysterious, seemingly haphazard pattern of puppy energy that only a dog can discern. The same thing happens once she bounds into the lobby of the veterinary clinic, jumping from sniffing rugs and chairs legs and shelves of specialty dog treats, to leaping into the arms of the kneeling veterinarian, Dr. Drummond. A gaggle of puppy kisses greets her new best friend, and then she's off again tracking another unknown scent.



(SUNI)

Other than allergies causing her eyes to water and some gunk that has to be cleaned from her ears, Suni is declared healthy and ready for class. She receives the remainder of her yearly vaccines and is sent home with some medication to help with her watery eyes and dirty ears. She bounces out of the veterinary clinic as wiggly and affectionately as she bounded in.



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(INDIGO)

Next up is Indigo, who tries to leap from the exam table, and when that is unsuccessful, buries her head into the crook of K9 instructor Andy's arm until her vet exam is done. Leaving the clinic, Indigo springs up onto the receptionist counter, front feet only, begging for rubs and treats. Instead of being admonished as impolite, she's rewarded and encouraged to do it a second time! Our trainers actually like this behavior because she'll need to be comfortable getting onto all kinds of different surfaces—like chairs, tables, or truck beds—in her line of work (of course, under the careful guidance of her handler). Even a trip to the vet provides a good learning opportunity for the new pups.

Freya, who would much rather ride shotgun in the passenger seat than in the state-of-the-art K9 van kennels, shows her spunk as soon as she enters the lobby of the vet clinic. Greeted by Dr. Drummond, she immediately assumes the puppy play position (paws and head low to the floor, rear-end raised high) and starts roughhousing with her new friend. Her big paws tap-dance across the linoleum floors in a chaotic beat as she tries to entice the vet and Andy to play with her. Once her exam starts, Freya stands

quietly and lets Dr. Drummond look her over and administer her vaccines, but the expression on her face makes sure everyone knew how she feels about it.



(FREYA)

Nicole is the calmest puppy of the bunch, happy and sweet and beaming with joy as she makes her rounds saying hi to the clinic staff. She is very polite for her exam, sensitive to whatever Andy or Dr. Drummond ask of her. Like Suni, Nicole also has slight allergies, which the vet treats, and then he examines her paws.



(NICOLE)

The vet finds two small bumps, most likely Sebaceous cysts, between her second and third toes on each front foot. They don't seem to bother her, but of course, as with any Agency dog, she'll have a full workup done to be sure she's healthy and that the cysts don't need to be removed. Dr. Drummond takes extra blood to run additional tests out of an abundance of caution, and the K9 training staff should receive her results shortly.

All of the pups receive clean bills of health, although none are thrilled about having their ears cleaned or receiving their inoculations.

What's Next?

The pups are now ready for their first week of classes, where they'll learn what it means to "seek" and how to detect their first explosive odors.

If you miss any of the articles in this series, visit "Follow CIA's New Puppy Class!" main page, where we are chronicling the puppies' progresses over the next 16-weeks.