



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Media Contact:

Taylor Temby
ttemby@CRgov.com
303-663-4452

Paula Hans
paula.hans@dcsdk12.org
303-387-0031

CRPD, DCSD expand SRO-therapy dog program with third team Media availability on Monday, Oct. 30 – details below

When: 10 a.m., Monday, Oct. 30

Where: Castle Rock Middle School, 2575 Meadows Blvd. in Castle Rock

Who: School Resource Officer Dave Knight; Castle Rock Middle School Principal John Veit; Castle Rock Middle School students

What: The Castle Rock Police Department and Douglas County School District will introduce police therapy dog, Ru

Note: Please check in at Security with ID

Good things come in threes! The Castle Rock Police Department and Douglas County School District's School Resource Officer and therapy dog program continues to grow. SRO Dave Knight and Ru, a 2-year-old Husky-Malamute mix, are now serving the Castle Rock Middle School community.

"Our Police Therapy Dog program has truly been transformative for our community," said Police Chief Jack Cauley. "The reach of these police therapy dogs extends beyond our middle and high schools to serve students and staff across Castle Rock. We're so proud of the work they're doing every day."

Officer Knight rescued Ru from a local shelter in February 2022. After realizing his potential and getting him certified as a therapy dog, he donated Ru to the Castle Rock Police Department so he could be assigned to work in school settings as a police therapy dog.

Community Relations Division
100 N. Wilcox St. ~ Castle Rock, CO 80104

EXCELLENCE • DEDICATION • SERVICE

Officer Knight and Ru currently hold several credentials including a Multi Discipline Therapy K-9 certification through the Brevard County Sheriff's Office Paws & Stripes College in Florida. Additionally, this duo earned American Kennel Club Therapy Dog Novice, Therapy Dog and Therapy Dog Advanced titles and passed the AKC Canine Good Citizen Basic, Urban and Advanced programs.

"I, myself, was a student at Castle Rock Middle School back in the day and I truly want the best for this community," said Officer Knight. "Ru has made an immediate difference, and his presence in our building has been enormous. Whether that's been helping individuals emotionally regulate, alleviating fears during lockdown drills or assisting in our Affective Needs classrooms, you see the impact during every interaction."

The police therapy dog teams are aware some may have allergies or fears, and are mindful of such conditions when allowing interactions with Ru. They will work with students, parents and the school district to mitigate any unwanted exposure.

In April 2021, CRPD and DCSD became the first in the state to permanently pair a school resource officer with a certified therapy dog when SRO Scott Gillespie introduced police therapy dog Buttercup to the Castle View High School community. Police therapy dog Rocket joined SRO Luke Godfrey at Mesa Middle School in 2022.

"We hope to set a trend on how effective Police Therapy Dog programs can be in schools," said Officer Knight. "Hopefully this is something we start to see more of across the state and country."

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