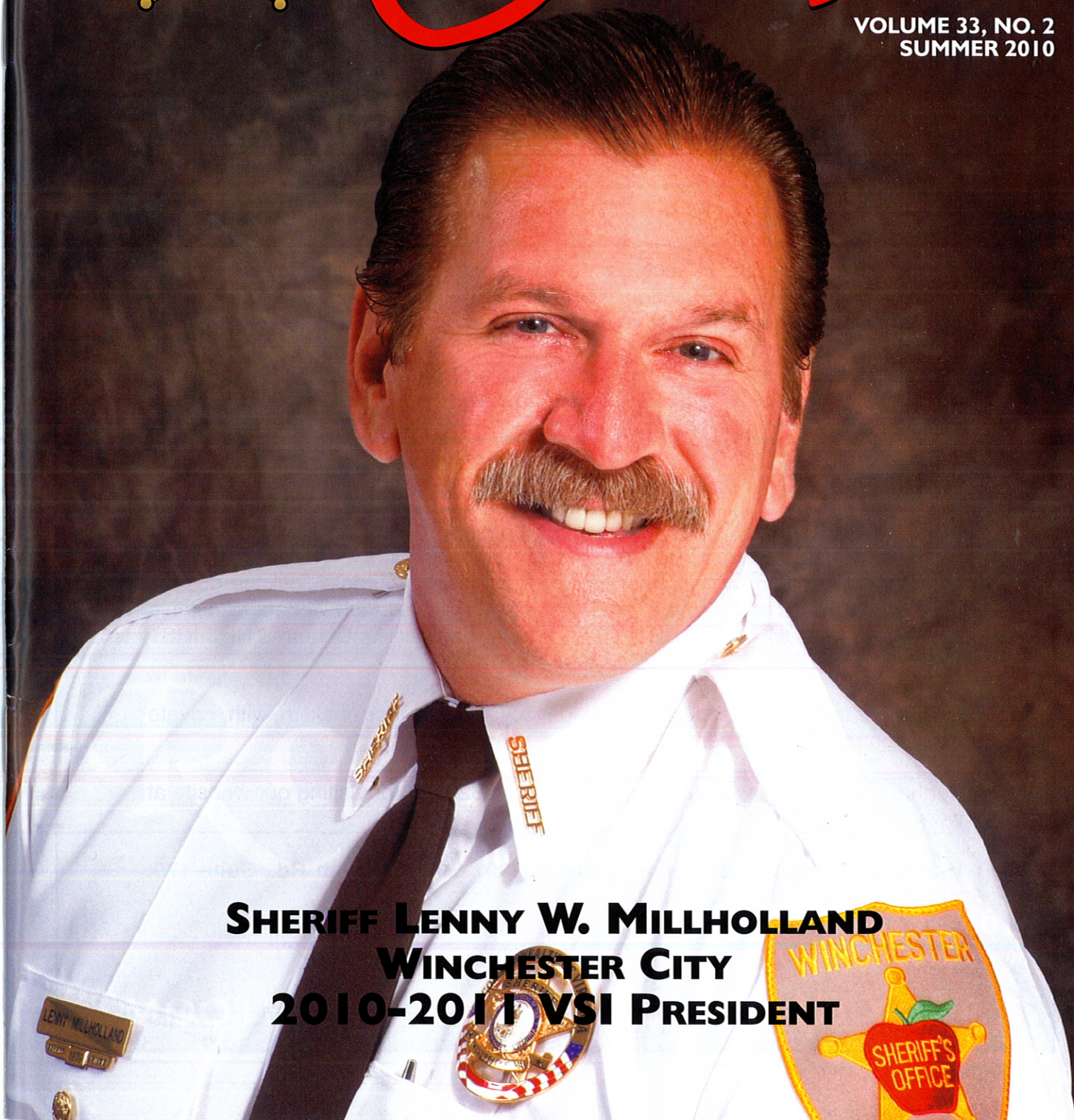


VIRGINIA



Sheriff

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SHERIFF LENNY W. MILLHOLLAND
WINCHESTER CITY
2010-2011 VSI PRESIDENT

BIG Hero! Small Package

LIEUTENANT KATHLEEN CAREY, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

She might only be 6 years old, but Kayleigh Crimmins is a hero to the Newport News Sheriff's Office. This little girl from Chesapeake is on a mission to outfit all police dogs with bulletproof vests.

Since coming up with the idea for Kids for K9s, Inc., she has donated vests to K9 Units in Maryland, Virginia, California and North Carolina. Most recently, she generously gave this lifesaving gift to Vader, a Newport News Sheriff's Office K9.

Vader is a dual-purpose dog trained in both narcotics detection and patrol. His handler, Corporal Wayne Hill, said, "I feel honored and blessed that someone as young as her is motivated to do what she does." The Newport News Sheriff's Office met Kayleigh at a Virginia Police Work Dog Association Banquet where she and her mother, Lee Crimmins, had set up an information table.

Resounding applause filled City Council Chambers on October 13, 2009, when Kayleigh officially presented the vest to Corporal Hill and Vader. You would have thought the girl and dog were close friends the way they interacted. In truth, this was only their second meeting. As a lifelong dog lover, Kayleigh was completely at ease.

Kayleigh's mission to keep police dogs safe came when she learned not all departments could afford to outfit their K9s with bulletproof vests.

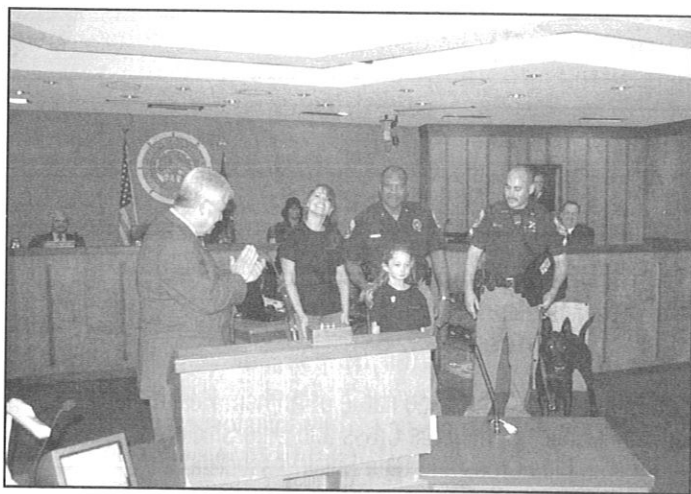
"Her dad's a police officer," explained Lee

Crimmins. "Not a K9 officer. Never has been. But as a detective, he sometimes trains how to work around dogs when they are at a scene together."

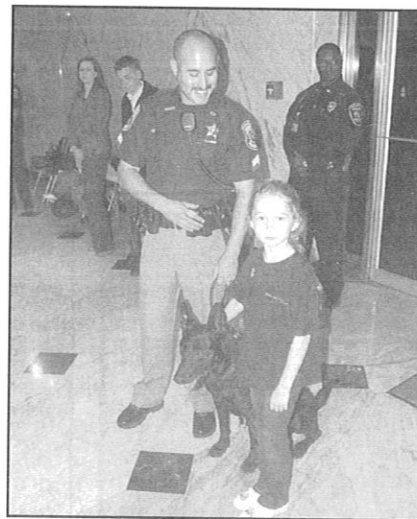
This is where Kayleigh picked up the story, "My dad, umm, he called us and said 'You want to come out and watch some police dogs?' And my mom said yes. And we went and watched the dogs. Then we went home and did a scrapbook."

It was then, looking at the photographs, that the little girl made a big discovery. One dog was wearing a vest. Another was not. That was completely unacceptable to Kayleigh. Immediately she started talking about how to raise money. She began selling her toys. First on Craigslist, then at yard sales. She started collecting cans and selling T-shirts and car decals. All of this in an effort to protect the dogs. Lee has taught her young daughter, "The dogs are doing just like the human officers. They're getting bad people off the street. Which, in turn, makes our community more safe."

They train together and work as a team. The animal plays a valuable role often in the face of great danger. The relationship between handler and K9 is like no other. In addition to being partners on the job, many of the animals are part of the family, living in their



Newport News Mayor Joe Frank; Kayleigh's mother, Lee Crimmins; Kayleigh; Sheriff Gabe Morgan; Corporal Wayne Hill; and Vader. (PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK CRIMMINS.)



Kayleigh Crimmins, 6 years old, is the founder of Kids for K9s, Inc., which raises money to purchase protective gear for service dogs across the country. She is pictured with handler Corporal Wayne Hill and his dog Vader. The Sheriff's Office K9 Unit received the vest at a presentation made before City Council. (PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK CRIMMINS.)

handlers' homes.

So when it came to accepting a gift that could save his partner's life, Corporal Hill's gratitude ran deep, "It's just amazing at six years old, the idea she had and how it has expanded. And having the support from her mother and father to help do that. That's the best thing to have that support to fulfill her dream."

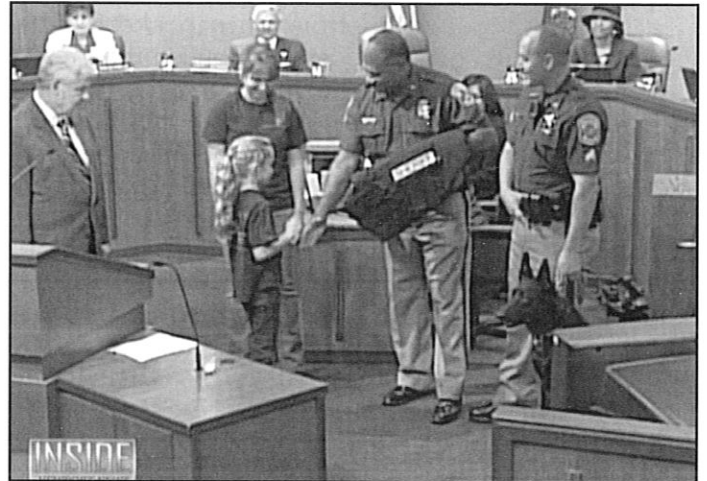
Sheriff Gabe Morgan also had high praise for this remarkable girl, "When a child can step up and see a

need and make it happen at six years old, we have to wonder what's going to happen when she becomes 24, 25, 30. This is a future leader. Again, Kayleigh, thank you for all that you've done for all the law enforcement agencies that you have supported."

Kids for K9s, Inc., is approved as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity. Learn more or make a donation by going to www.kidsfork9s.com.



Vader, Newport News Sheriff's Office, trains in the vest given to him by Kids For K9s, Inc. (PHOTO COURTESY OF NNTV.)



Newport News Sheriff Gabe Morgan shakes hands with Kayleigh at the official presentation ceremony. The event was televised by the local ABC and CBS affiliates as well as Newport News TV for its program "Inside Newport News." (PHOTO COURTESY OF NNTV.)

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