

NEW LEASH ON LIFE GRADUATION ADDRESS

6th Graduating Class--May 13, 2013

Presented by: Denny Shupe, Esq.

Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP

Member, Board of Directors, New Leash on Life USA

Since Schnader became involved in supporting New Leash on Life, approximately 20 Schnader attorneys from our Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cherry Hill, Washington, DC and San Francisco offices have spent over 325 hours of *pro bono*, or free, legal time to assist New Leash. They have worked on initial corporate formation, intellectual property issues, such as protecting the legal name “New Leash On Life,” contract issues, and on a wide variety of legal advice.

We at Schnader are committed to giving back to society – dating back to our Firm’s origins in 1935—we were a law firm formed so attorneys of different religious backgrounds could practice law and serve clients together, when such an arrangement was not common in Philadelphia at that time in our nation’s history.

Since our formation our attorneys, among other things, were instrumental in supporting President Kennedy, President Johnson, and their administrations in support of the civil rights movement.

We at Schnader believe that as lawyers, we have an obligation to serve a higher calling in society, to assume an active role in support of a just and ordered society, to help solve social problems, and to serve the public as our client, as if she or he were a paying client.

I grew up on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, in a family that had many challenges. We did not have money to give to social or charitable activities.

But one thing my late father, a military veteran and hard working, humble man, instilled in all of his children was that we can – and that we must – give of our personal time and our God-given talents to help and serve others and to make our society a better place.

New Leash On Life, as has been so beautifully reported by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in its multi-part series this last week, makes our society a better place. A better place for people. A better place for dogs. A more humane society.

New Leash on Life is a next generation prison dog-training program that saves the lives of shelter dogs – unadoptable dogs that in many cases literally were on the equivalent of death row – by training and socializing them to enhance their adoptability while helping inmates to learn to train and care for them.

With New Leash On Life, dogs live in the prison cells with their inmate trainers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, making New Leash dogs highly desirable for adoption and contributing to the long term success of the program both for humans and for dogs.

New Leash On Life provides:

- Weekly sessions with professional trainers, animal behaviorists and veterinary technicians;
- Job readiness and life skill courses to improve successful re-entry and employability for inmates upon parole;
- Internship opportunities for paroled inmates for additional training and education in the animal care field; and
- Post-parole support with worksite transition services

But New Leash does so much more.

New Leash addresses the core values and principles that govern humanity and society:

Respect. Teamwork. Forgiveness. Second Chances. Hard Work. Not being afraid to make a mistake. Never giving up. Supporting each other. Believing in the power of yourself and others.

Never doubting that this world in which we live can be – and indeed must be – a better place.

Our world will be a better place if we open our minds, pour out our hearts, and give of our individual talents to make it better.

As one of our former U.S. presidents said, we can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.

I challenge each of you today, before you leave here, to think of someone you can help.

I challenge each of you today to commit to help that person, then follow through on your commitment. Make a difference in someone's life.

Let me turn my attention for a few minutes to the men who are graduating here today.

Gentlemen, as you and your predecessors who have graduated from this program often have said, you are seeking respect.

You have learned in this program the wisdom of the Proverb which states, "Respect starts with yourself."

For many of you, you have been told in life what you cannot do. That you are not talented enough. That you are not strong enough. That you are not good enough. That you can't achieve. That it is too late for you to change.

Gentlemen, by your success in this New Leash program, you have proven that is wrong. You can succeed. You have talents. You can achieve. You have achieved.

A man by the name of John Burroughs once said, "a man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else." We all fail – what distinguishes us is how we respond to that failure.

Another wise individual has observed that "your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start."

Gentlemen, you have the opportunity to start anew today. You are graduates of New Leash. You are more ready to take on the challenges of this world than you were when you entered this program.

Dr. Martin Luther King once said that "the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Gentlemen, where do you stand today?

Tony Robbins once observed that "it is not what we get, but who we become, what we contribute ... that gives meaning to our lives."

This is your challenge today – who will you become, what will you contribute? Where will you go from here?

Let me conclude with a few thoughts for everyone here today.

These thoughts are not mine, but come from an anonymous author.

He was considering the question, “What is Life?”

Among his thoughts about the meaning of life were the following:

--Life is a challenge – meet it

--Life is a duty – perform it

--Life is a struggle – fight it

--Life is a sorrow – overcome it

--Life is an opportunity – take it

--Life is a gift – accept it.

To our graduates today, you have given a precious gift to these wonderful dogs – the gift of a New Leash on Life.

And as you know so well, they have given a precious gift back to you. You can be as good a person as your dog has believed you are.

The dogs are changed forever. Gentlemen, so are you.

I could not be more proud to be associated with the New Leash program. I am enormously proud of our program graduates, our staff, our volunteers, and all of our supporters.

Dogs are miracles with paws. Can any of us doubt that as we sit here and celebrate together today?

Thank you for your support of New Leash, and thank you for joining us today.