

## **PACE U STUDENTS VISIT ECAD, INTERACT WITH SERVICE DOGS IN TRAINING**

Fourteen students from New York's Pace University came to the ECAD Canine Education and Wellness Center in Torrington/Winsted recently to learn more about the ways in which Service Dog's assist people with disabilities, and about the extensive education given to ECAD's canines.

They were greeted by Dale and Lu Picard, co-founders of ECAD, volunteers from the Torrington/Winsted area, and a good number of Service Dogs in Training. The latter were particularly happy, so the humans reported, because Pace Professor Joanne Singleton was accompanied by Facility Dog Spirit, a member of Pace's faculty, and an ECAD alumnus.

The students, all undergraduates, are enrolled in Pace's pioneering program for future health care professionals, Canines Assisting in Health (CAIH). The program, which teaches how canines can assist in human health, was introduced to graduate students in 2017. This semester is the first time it is being offered to undergraduates. The trip to ECAD represented the Civic Engagement part of the program and the students earned credits for the visit.

ECAD partnered in the Pace program from the beginning and Lu Picard has participated in the development of the curriculum with Singleton.

"There is a wide gap between health care professionals and the Service Dog industry. This program is very beneficial – a bridge between that gap - and ECAD is proud to be part of it," said Lu Picard.

For the outing, Picard, her instructors and volunteers, demonstrated a number of the commands they teach the SDiT, including the "yes/no" exercise for focus through eye contact, retrieving, and pulling a rolling chair.

"It was an amazing experience," Stapleton said. "Our students were fully engaged and excited to witness the actual training which re-enforces how animals, specifically canines, can assist in human health."

ECAD, Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities, is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit founded by the Picards in 1995. The organization just recently received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for the seventh consecutive year. ECAD has placed Service Dogs with people with disabilities in over 20 states, as well as Facility Dogs in schools, hospitals, and nursing homes.

For additional information, visit: [www.ecad1.org](http://www.ecad1.org)