

CPD K9 Wazi remembered with memorial service at SPCA

By **Jim Herr** - June 22, 2018



The Daskocz family and members of the Cheektowaga Police Department hold a memorial service for K9 Wazi on June 22nd outside the Erie County SPCA in West Seneca. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

WEST SENECA – The community gathered at the Erie County SPCA Friday morning to pay tribute to Cheektowaga’s late police dog, Wazi.

Officer John Daskocz and his family, a police department honor guard, fellow officers, and the SPCA family gathered around a memorial stone honoring Wazi.

Mr. Daskocz said he spent 24-hours a day with Wazi – more time than with his wife and family – and was devastated when [Wazi died of an inoperable heart tumor last June](#).

“When a handler and a dog get together it’s a different bond that you just don’t understand. You never expect your dog to die. Pretty much when you’re partnered with a K9 that’s what you’re going to watch happen. You’re going to watch your dog die someday. Hopefully of old age, but not in the line of duty,” Mr. Daskocz said.

Wazi was born K9 Fello von Rapicar in Frankfurt, West Germany on January 28, 2010. The

Cheektowaga Police Department purchased him and renamed him in memory of Cheektowaga Police Detective Wasyl Potienko who died in the line of duty in a car accident in 2002.

Like his predecessor, K9 Iozo, Wazi worked with Mr. Doscocz. Together, he and Wazi continued to give the department an edge on criminals by providing invaluable patrol, drug detection, and tracking capabilities.



Cheektowaga Police Department K9 Wazi is remembered during a memorial service on June 22nd outside the Erie County SPCA in West Seneca. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

He was also a great public relations tool for the police department. Attending community events across Western New York, Wazi amassed a huge fan club, as evident by the many people in attendance at Friday's memorial service.

"I had no idea how many people's lives he touched. From young kids who first started seeing him, to now, they're teenagers. It's amazing to see how well he impacted everybody," said Mr. Doscocz. "I'm thrilled he was my partner. The memories I have, I'll always have. It was a great time, and I'm sorry to see him go. I miss him; I miss him a lot."

Since Wazi's death, the police department has put the K9 program on hold. [Chief David Zack told Cheektowaga Chronicle last month that many issues are impacting K9s today](#) and if the program was going to be reinstated he wants to make sure the program is as successful as possible.