



"Tails On The Trails" is a shelter enrichment program for dogs which started in May 2015. This seasonal program allows HSR volunteers and shelter dogs to have fun in the beautiful outdoors of Central New York. Besides getting fresh air with our canine hikers, Tails On The Trails adds an enriching activity to a dog's stay at the shelter, exposes dogs to new things and reinforces obedience, burns off some energy in a positive way, increases adoptability by having more exposure to the public, and offers volunteers a new way to interact with the animals.

Walks are scheduled one Saturday per month. Volunteers meet at 9:15 AM at the humane society on the scheduled day. Volunteers must submit a volunteer application before they can participate. The majority of participants come consistently month to month so they have knowledge and experience handling dogs. New volunteers are welcome to join and this program has successfully attracted more volunteers to the organization and also gives HSR more positive exposure throughout the community. Before each walk, volunteers are matched up with appropriate dogs, pre-selected by shelter staff. Each dog is equipped with a collar, gentle harness and proof of Rabies certificate. Volunteers drive to the designated park, the same as they do for pet therapy and all off-site adoption events. Last year, we frequented the Mohawk River Trails (Griffiss Park), Bellamy Harbor Park, the Erie Canal Trails and other nearby parks and trail systems. During the walks, volunteers make stops along the way that include water/ treat breaks and some belly rubs. Water, treats and poop bags are donated by volunteer Kerry Roemer. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own dog blankets to reduce or eliminate any laundry for staff. There are currently 42 volunteers on the TOTT roster.

Tails On The Trails greatly benefits the staff because they get a break from caregiving so they can focus on other tasks and allows them time to assess and interact with new dogs. We also give them pertinent information discovered about the dogs that will help them find their forever homes. Everybody wins...especially our deserving shelter dogs!

For more information on this event please contact kellyk@humanesocietyrome.com