

Angela Eaton, B.A., CTP-KPA



Angela Eaton is a dog trainer, canine behavior consultant, and search dog handler. As the author of [A Guide to Search and Rescue Dogs](#), (Barron's Educational Division, 2004), she emphasizes the importance of the close connection between working dogs and their handlers and has a reputation for being able to communicate complex ideas that enhance the lifelong relationship between a dog and person.

Angela's first dog arrived when she was 3 years old. A beautiful German Shepherd Dog, he assigned to the family by the British Royal Air Force to be their guardian during their time in Pakistan. Her interest in working dogs was once again ignited when she saw avalanche rescue dogs on duty in Europe.

It was during her career a professional ballerina and dance teacher that Angela began to train and compete with her dogs in AKC and UKC obedience trials around the country. They won many high-in-trial awards and developed the reputation of consistent, enthusiastic performances. She attributes this to similar techniques used when teaching dance students; respecting the uniqueness of individuals, capturing their strengths and shaping them to full expression.

Following her life-long interest in working dogs, Angela became a search dog handler with Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado (SARDOC) in 1984. Now one of the most established and largest search dog agencies in the United States, SARDOC provides certified search dog teams for missions in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah. Angela also provides search dog support as a member of Alpine Rescue Team; fully accredited by the Mountain Rescue Association, an international organization of teams specializing in mountain search and rescue, and safety education.

Working in search and rescue and scent detection requires dogs to use their innate abilities to locate scent, follow it to its source, solve problems only they can perceive, and communicate all this to their human partners. At the same time, the handler needs to have the dog communicate their findings to them, "read" the dog's language, move with the dog, and support the dog in getting to the scent source (lost, injured or deceased person, and/or evidence). Throughout a search the dog appears to work independently from their human partner, although in reality a deep connection between the two species makes them successful.

Effectively training dogs and their handlers for this type of work requires an understanding of canine and human behavior. Angela's respect for dogs' instincts and peoples' unique personalities are the foundation of her training style. She focuses on the value of each in the partnership. People appreciate her ability to explain and teach both simple and complex skills and concepts to dogs and their people.

Her first Belgian Malinois, "Isis" certified in trailing (following ground scent) to locate both live subjects and human remains in the Rocky Mountain wilderness. "Isis" and Angela were recipients of the "Rusty" Award from the American Belgian Malinois Club and honorees of the Award for Canine Excellence (ACE) from the AKC for their "service to humanity" in search and rescue in 2001.

Although her next search dog "Shakti" was a half sister to "Isis", Shakti's personality and learning style were completely different from her sister's. Search dogs are required to learn to

discriminate between scents, indicate on target scent, solve problems, and report this information to the handler. This dog was reactive with lightening fast response time, hyper-vigilant, opinionated, anxious about any changes to her environment, and an intrepid guardian of her space; a potentially dangerous combination in the field of critical incidence response and emergency services. Although “Shakti” was considered to be “over the top” by many experienced trainers, Angela regarded the challenge presented by her dog as the opportunity of a lifetime.

As a result of Angela’s efforts and dedication to learn as much as possible about canine behavior and ultimately clicker training, Shakti certified in Air Scenting, Avalanche, and Human Remains Detection with Angela and has successfully completed and assisted in several missions for both search and rescue agencies and law enforcement. She earned her Beginning Title in Musical Freestyle in April, 2012! “Shakti” has also developed into an ideal demonstration dog for seminars, workshops, and conferences.

In addition to developing clicker-based training protocols for search and rescue dogs, Angela is creating the dog training program for therapy and crisis intervention dogs in service to law enforcement agencies, the courts, reading programs, and hospital animal assisted therapy for K9 C.A.R.E.S. (Canine Assisted Reduction of Eventful Stress) in Colorado. Although the ways in which behaviors are applied are different for Therapy Dogs and SAR dogs, the skills and quality of the partnership is paramount in determining their success.

Angela received her B.A. in Political Science from George Mason University and is a Certified Training Partner with the Karen Pryor Academy. She recently retired from the University of Colorado in Boulder as the Director of Information Systems. In addition to her book, Angela has written several articles on training and provided presentations, seminars, and workshops around the country.

Her business, *Clicker Joy* is built on the practice that *Joyful learning creates powerful results*. To learn more visit www.Clickerjoy.com.