

Area teen trains seeing eye dogs

By **MARJORIE STROMBERG**
Sentinel reporter

As the granddaughter of a dog trainer, Jensen Swartz grew up around dogs and quickly developed a fondness for them. Now, she's using her own love, skills and passion to train them through the Juniata County 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club.

Through her work, Jensen, 14, hopes to help those in need.

The Juniata High School student, of Port Royal, has been involved with the Seeing Eye Puppy Club since the age of 8, because her grandmother, Jean Swartz, has been active, and has helped lead the club for many years.

She says she initially got involved "to help someone" and because she likes dogs.

Jensen says the club, which includes both children and adults, receives about six to nine puppies at once, and they are usually around the ages of 7 to 8 weeks old. The puppies come from The Seeing Eye

Inc., which is based out of Morristown, N.J.

Most of the dogs are bred by The Seeing Eye, Jensen says, but some are donated to the organization.

Jensen usually trains the puppies every day for about 15 minutes a day, she says. While most trainers in the club have the dogs stay at their homes, Jensen's puppies stay at her grandmother's house for the duration of the training period, which usually lasts until the puppies are about 16 to 18 months old, she says.

Jensen says she teaches the dogs basic commands, such as "sit," "down," "rest" and "stay."

Training a seeing eye dog is slightly different than training a regular dog, Jensen says, explaining that the training is stricter with seeing eye dogs. Some differences are that seeing eye dogs are not allowed in bed with the owner, or up on the couch. They also aren't allowed to eat "people food" or rawhides, she says.

Additionally, seeing eye

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Photos submitted by TAMMY SWARTZ

Jensen Swartz, of Port Royal, has been a part of the 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club for many years.



Several puppies in training enjoy some free time at the 4-H Camp.



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