

CALLI.....continued from pg. 1

Before she was here, the Labrador/collie mix lived in an animal shelter. Before that, the abandoned dog was roving the back roads of Clay county, hungry, tired and pregnant with three pups.

"Up, Calli!" says junior Mikele Crawford, straightening up from his crouch on the grass. She stands at the command and is rewarded with another treat.

"Good girl," Crawford says, smiling.

Calli, short for Calliope,

is more than a pet to him. She's a friend, something the mildly autistic student is happy have.

"She makes me feel comfortable that I'm not alone, that she's around me," Crawford said.

The 2-year-old mixed breed, originally named Calamity Jane after the cowboys who saved her, was hand-selected for the Autism Support Program by Professor of Special Education Millie Gore.

Gore contacted the Clay

County Animal Shelter in late spring about acquiring a dog that would be therapeutic to the student-residents of the Ranch House. Calli had been living at the shelter for a few months and seemed to fit the bill.

"Sweet, demure, gentle and even-tempered, she seemed like the perfect candidate for a therapy dog," Gore said. About 5 other dogs fit the criteria, but Calli won out.

The canine's stay at the Ranch House began in Aug. 2008. Her friendly demeanor

has made her a big hit with residents, Program Director Jessica Dunn said.

"They all think Calli is awesome," Dunn said. "She just another part of the family."

Calli was adopted to help one student in particular that had trouble sleeping without being around a dog. Some autistic students may have a hard time calming down at the end of the day without the nurturing of an animal, Dunn said.

But the effect of Calli's

presence is farther-reaching than that.

Dunn believes the dog is compassionate – that it can sense emotion and hurt.

"When you're upset or crying, she senses your anxiety," Dunn said. "She'll lick you or nuzzle up to you if she thinks there's something wrong. She has this innate ability to feel pain."

Currently Calli is training to become a certified therapy dog. Dunn hopes that in time the collie will become an assistance dog, an animal

trained to complete tasks like waking students in case of fire.

All seven people who live and work in the Ranch House take turns walking, grooming and feeding Calli every week. This helps students learn responsibility and interaction.

Once a timid, shy dog without a home, Calli is now the Big Dog on Campus. She has a home and a family that cares about her.

Who could ask for more?

Campus briefs

Wednesday

- Career Management Center: How to Prepare for a Career Fair in CSC Kiowa at 2 p.m.
- Career Management Center: Sponsor Reception in the CSC Kiowa at 6:30 p.m.
- Allied Health Dignified Lecture Series: Healthcare Leadership in Bridwell 108 at 7 p.m.

Thursday

- Career Management Center: Career Fair in D.L. Ligon at 11 a.m.
- Writing Proficiency Exam in Bolin 127 at 2 and 6 p.m.
- Spanish Club presents Salsa Dancing Lessons in CSC Kiowa at 6 p.m.
- Foreign Film Series: Elevator to the Gallows at the Kemp Center for the Arts at 7 p.m.

Saturday

- Career Management Center: GRE Express Course in Dillard 189 at 9 a.m.
- Writing Proficiency Exam in Bolin 127 at 10 a.m.

Monday

- OSP, TLRC, INQRI open house for faculty, staff, GAs in Bridwell 101 at 11 a.m.

Tuesday

- Imagine Graduation in the CSC Atrium at 11 a.m.



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