**Article of the Week (AoW) Directions**

1. Mark your confusion – either highlighting or underlining.

2. Mark up the text. Annotate the article with comments, questions, inferences, etc. You can use a variety of sentences, phrases, and symbols to show your thinking.

3. Write a developed paragraph response to one of the prompts below.

**Getting animals out of the doghouse of the criminal justice system**

Source: William Hageman/Chicago Tribune/November 18, 2015

For years, one of the failings of the criminal justice system in Chicago was the handling of court case animals.

Mostly dogs, they were victims of abuse or neglect and were seized when their owners were arrested. While the cases would slowly move through the courts, the animals would remain locked up as evidence, sometimes for years. When the cases were finally resolved, the standard procedure was to euthanize the dogs.

Animal rights advocates in Chicago were incensed by the injustice of it — “The dogs did the time but not the crime” is one of their favorite slogans — and developed a strategy to save the animals. In January 2010, Safe Humane Chicago launched the Court Case Dogs program. Working with Chicago’s Animal Care and Control and funded and staffed through Utah-based Best Friends Animal Society, the program got the animals out of cages, rehabilitated and into homes.

The initiative was the first of its kind in the nation. It’s now fully under the auspices of Safe Humane, a not-for-profit that works to encourage positive relationships between people and animals.

When the program was founded, only 2 percent of the confiscated dogs got out of detention alive. Today, that number is 70 percent, and 760 dogs have gone through the program.

“We’ve had to work hard to get through a persistent image (that the dogs are simply evidence),” says Cynthia Bathurst, co-founder, president and executive director of Safe Humane Chicago. “These are the dogs everyone should care about.”

The stories of these dogs and the people who are saving their lives is being told in a new coffee-table book, “A Ruff Road Home: The Court Case Dogs of Chicago” by Susan Russell. The book profiles more than 20 dogs that had been brutalized or neglected, and shows them in their new homes, safe and loved. It is available online for $40 at the Safe Humane Chicago website.

“Some of the dogs were fought,” says Russell, a Chicago-based writer, attorney and shelter volunteer. “Some of the dogs were dumped in trash cans. Some of the dogs belonged to hoarders. Some were beaten mercilessly. Every one of these dogs had a terrible start. But this shows the resilience of the dogs and the compassion of people.”

The hefty 105-page book features remarkable photography by Chicago-based Josh Feeney, a master at capturing dogs’ personalities.

“He’s done all this pro bono,” Bathurst says, “and that’s the message, too. It’s all about volunteer work. You have volunteers from CACC, Safe Humane; they’re all doing their parts of the puzzle. That’s how good things get done.”

Likewise, editors, the book designer and Safe Humane volunteers and partners donated their time and expertise on the three-year project. The finished book is beautiful, polished and moving, and every penny from sales goes directly to Safe Humane Chicago. (In addition to the Court Case Dogs, the organization has programs that bring dog-training classes to disadvantaged neighborhoods; train high school students who, in turn, instruct younger children on building good relationships with animals; work with young people in at-risk neighborhoods and in the Illinois Youth Center to train neglected and abused dogs; and pair veterans with court case dogs.)

At the heart of “Ruff Road” are the stories of the dogs.

There’s Bruno, the first dog in the program, who spent more than a year in a kennel after being taken away from an abusive owner who was kicking him down the street. Bruno now is the loving pet of a family in the north suburbs. There’s Dolly, who was imprisoned in a basement before being found by Chicago police, and who now has earned her AKC Canine Good Citizen certificate under the tutelage of Steve Lackey, a former prison inmate who has become a renowned trainer. And there’s Derek Jeter — DJ — a terrier mix who had been abused on videos that were posted online for entertainment; DJ, too, has found a couple to love him.

There is also a focus on the people. Bathurst oversees Safe Humane’s operation. Court Case Dogs program manager Kathleen Budrean is a dog behavior expert. Janice Triptow is Safe Humane’s manager of dog training and behavior. They form the cornerstone, surrounded by an army of volunteers. Then there are the people who brought these animals into their families.

“The dogs show resilience, but the people show how it can be done,” Russell says. “When everyone shoots for the common goal of making life better for the dogs, in the process they find more compassion for everyone.”

**Respond to one of the following prompts. Use the a separate sheet of paper.**

1. What do you see as the benefits of programs like these for dogs and other rescue animals? Explain.
2. Select a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph and respond to it.