



By  
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*As Lily grew, Tara realized that she had a big dog with a lot of energy on her hands.*

Tara knew she had to do something with Lily. When Tara was sidelined by a back injury, she found herself spending more hours on the couch than behind the lunch counter. While in recovery, she studied search and rescue dog training.

Tara grew up in Springfield, Missouri, and even before she met her husband, Jeff, she was a member of a search and rescue (SAR) team. Later Tara lived in Newton County, where she worked as a 911 dispatcher. She met Jeff while working as an emergency medical technician (EMT), and the two worked together for a long time before moving to Joplin. There, Jeff continued his career, becoming chief paramedic officer and a rescue diver.

Tara's mother was also a dog trainer. Teaching Lily search and rescue seemed to be the perfect marriage of two family passions.

Search and rescue dogs are animals that are trained to detect human scent. Dogs possess a phenomenal sense of smell and can pick up the scent of human skin, sweat, respiratory gases or gases released during decomposition. There are four main types of search and rescue dogs—airscenting, tracking, trailing and cadaver dogs.

Airscenting search and rescue dogs sniff the wind to find a missing person. These dogs typically work off of a leash, and once their subject is found, they stay with them and bark to alert their handlers that the search was successful.



## CHAPTER 2: Training A Search & Rescue Dog

Tracking dogs have a different style. They usually work while on a leash, searching for their subjects with their noses to the ground. Trailing dogs combine both of these methods. They may smell both the air and the ground, following a specific scent that has been offered to them (through the missing person's clothes or pillowcase) prior to the search.

Finally, cadaver dogs are used to locate a deceased person. Cadaver dogs, like trailing dogs, will use a combination of all of these methods—on or off of a leash, ground or airscenting—to find their subjects. The difference is that cadaver dogs search for people who have already passed away while trailing dogs search for live victims.

Any dog can be trained to be a search and rescue dog. Most dogs are intelligent animals with a strong sense of smell.

As a Weimaraner, Lily is a member of a sporting breed. Tara realized that Lily was an intelligent dog, highly motivated to train and possessing a great sense of smell. Search and rescue seemed like a perfect fit.

As soon as Tara was back on her feet, she trained Lily to become an airscenting dog, picking scents from wind currents and following them with Tara right behind. They started easy, playing hide and seek with Tara's children in the backyard, before graduating to more sophisticated methods, eventually sniffing out tiny clues in order to locate individuals.

Tara used positive reinforcement while training Lily. This means that when Lily did what Tara wanted her to, she was given a reward. Tara capitalized on

Lily's hunting dog instincts, and as Lily followed her nose, Tara praised and rewarded her.



Lily trained as a cadaver dog, prepared to find human remains, but it soon became apparent that Lily had an aptitude for finding live victims as well.

Sometimes a trainer might use food to motivate a dog, but

Tara and Lily have a special bond. They both have a passion for search and rescue work, and for Lily, SAR training is a natural extension of her hunting dog instincts.

Lily loves to make Tara happy and vice versa. The two share a mutual trust. They are the ultimate team.

### Dig A Little Deeper!



Tara knows that search and rescue is a good fit for Lily's personality and background. Visit The Canine Search and Rescue Association: [searchk9team.org](http://searchk9team.org) and summarize three to five important facts that you learn about the association. What is its purpose? How can you request its assistance? How can you enroll your dog for training?

**In the News:** Search and rescue dogs often help in the event of a natural disaster. There are many natural hazards that might make the news: earthquakes, wildfires, volcanic eruptions, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc. Watch for newspaper stories or pictures about such hazards. For each story, identify the natural hazards involved and their effect on people and places.

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