

## Residents Train Dogs For Veterans

On November 4, three MercyFirst residents received special recognition for their hard work and commitment to training Service Dogs for Military Veterans. The residents are part of Mercy-First's Service Dog Training Program, ECADemy, where the teens learn to train dogs to work with individuals who are disabled. The teens attended the November 2009 Service Dog graduation ceremony where they got to see their work finally pay off when the dogs which they trained were placed with their new owners. The five graduating dogs were trained to work with Military Veterans as part of East Coast Assistance Dog's program, Project HEAL. The program honors and empowers the veterans by providing Service

Dogs to increase independence and make a difference in their lives.

The graduation, which was held for the dogs and their new owners, took place in Dobbs Ferry, NY. The teens worked very hard to train these dogs with various skills that would help the Veterans. These specially trained dogs pick up dropped objects, open and close doors, pull wheelchairs, interrupt nightmares and flashbacks, remind to take medications, and reduce anxiety and stress, at the same time providing unconditional love and comfort. Thanks to the dedication of the students, the Military Veterans now have very skilled and loving companions.

