

Polett's Email:

"In 2007 as I was in my power wheelchair "riding" along Layne Blvd with my Service Dog, a man was rolling down the street in skates with a beautiful Siberian Husky off-leash. The Husky saw my dog and lunged at her, pinning her down and injuring her in multiple places. The dog's owner ran over, grabbed his dog and took off without saying a word, calling for help or anything.

Now well, as a quadriplegic there was not much I could do to help my dog. She was crying, bleeding and helpless at the end of my leash. Luckily my Mother was a block away and drove over as soon as I called her, taking my dog to the vet for me.

Service animals are specifically trained to release all control to their owners. They trust us to keep them safe. That night I didn't only lose thousands of dollars in training, plus vet bills, I lost my dog's trust completely, and even though she still respects my leadership, I no longer take her into public places as she'll bark and try to hide under my chair anytime people approach.

Having 90% of my body not working, sitting in a wheelchair with a leashed dog who is injured, needing help and TRUSTING me to keep her safe and nobody around to assist is an extremely frustrating and powerless experience. I was "lucky" that my Mother was close by that night; this proposal - which I was delighted to hear about - would provide me a sense of relief in knowing that should I ever find myself in that situation again, I can call for help, get my Service Dog taken care of immediately, and focus on keeping her safe, healthy, trusting and working once such ordeal is over.

This would also empower our Police Department and/or Fire Rescue in my opinion, by providing them the legal grounds to assist without risking their jobs. I always say that Hallandale Beach has the BEST PD, and giving them the tools to do good would most definitely benefit us all as a community.

I have resided in Hallandale Beach for over 17 years.

Polett Villalta."