

# Your Community

## Positive pooch inspires kids

By **Monica Lara**  
Special to the Star

Youths learned to keep their heads up through adversity from a local celebrity dog last Wednesday.

Landon, a 4-year-old sheltie, visited an Oxnard Boys & Girls Club to encourage 8- to 11-year-old audience members to follow their dreams. With the help of his owner and manager Connie Coleman, of Thousand Oaks, Landon helped present a motivational slide show about his life and demonstrated tricks for the kids.

The Boys & Girls Club organizers invited Landon to visit as part of the programming offered to promote positive reinforcement for the youths, according to Jaclyn Zaragoza, the Boys & Girls Club youth developer.

"There are so many negative things nowadays, I wanted to bring in the dog because he is such a positive thing for the kids," Zaragoza said. "We want to motivate the kids so they learn no matter what happens in life you can always find a way out."

The Boys & Girls Club, at 1900 W. Fifth St., is one of three facilities that make up the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme. The organization provides a place for learning and recreation for youths when they are not at school.

Xavier Harvey, 9, of Oxnard, learned a lot from Landon's visit.

"You should not worry, always be kind, and be a positive influence," Xavier said.

Landon was a rescue dog Coleman took home to be a part of her family three years ago. When he was estimated to be less than a year old, Landon had been hit by a car and abandoned before he ended up at the animal shelter where Coleman found him. It took Landon about a year to fully heal from his injuries from the accident and surgeries he underwent.

Since he has been back on his feet, he has been active both professionally and within his community. He models dog fashion, trains with an agent for movies and is a therapy dog.

Last Wednesday's event was Landon's first time presenting to kids. Coleman hopes Landon can inspire people to never give up. Helping people, being active and eating healthy foods are included in his message.

"I hope for kids to take way the collective message of thinking positively and to always follow your dreams," Coleman said. "They can be what they want and do what they want in life, and once they realize, that it's a lot more encouraging."

Landon visited with the kids for about an hour. For the first portion of the presentation, Landon calmly sat as Coleman ran a PowerPoint show. The show featured several

photos of Landon throughout his life and lessons that could be learned with them, such as being a positive influence, working hard and making friends.

After the show, Landon took center stage to show tools he uses in his modeling and acting career. Landon interacted with the kids, as well.

The kids received a bookmark featuring Landon and 10 lessons, such as focusing on learning, deciding to be happy and always being kind.

"It was good," said Zion Davis, 9, of Oxnard. "We got to see what his life was like and we got to pet him."

On the Net:  
<http://landonthesheltie.com>



PHOTOS BY CARLOS CHAVEZ  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**FAR LEFT:** Landon was the special guest at the Boys & Girls Club in Oxnard on last Wednesday.

**LEFT:** Hugo Alfaro met and was able to pet Landon.