

Rescuing and Adopting Purebred Dogs

Breed rescue affects purebred dogs well beyond the show ring.

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In this series, we explore a side of the fancy begging for exposure, if not crying out for help. Breed rescue affects purebred dogs well beyond the show ring, and the numbers are growing steadily. Much of the upward trend is linked to irresponsible breeders continuing to prey on an uneducated public, most of whom still don't know where to find good breeders. The volunteers who tirelessly devote time and resources to rescuing purebred dogs are the unsung heroes of the dog world. Thousands of dogs are saved every year by these dedicated folks, who do so not for personal gain, but for the welfare of their beloved breeds. Fanciers busily running the show circuit aren't always aware of what's happening beyond that microcosm of dogdom, and rescuers would like to see more involvement from the "top dogs." This is an opportunity to not only acknowledge rescue efforts, but to provide fanciers a broad picture of what's happening to the distant cousins of their show champions.

While some rescue folks candidly shared thoughts of being unappreciated or invisible to the "show crowd," I don't believe that to really be the case it's more a lack of information. Rescue statistics aren't readily available and all clubs operate differently, as I discovered while researching this series. I really had to dig. After three weeks, some folks still haven't gotten back to me.

My hope is to provide information that fanciers may otherwise not have and in doing so spark a connection with affiliate rescues across the country. Below are the unique challenges facing three breed rescues, all reporting increases in surrenders over the past five years:

Siberian Husky Reasons for Surrender: "Sibes are very energetic, suffer greatly from wanderlust, are highly prey driven and can be stubborn and destructive. They are escape artists and can frustrate even the most ardent owner. The prey drive causes trouble with small animals, such as cats and even tiny dogs. They are also great diggers, so anyone who wants a Home & Garden backyard should own a different breed."

Ideal Adoptive Home: "One with breed experience is best, but they are few and far between. It must have a secure, fenced-in backyard or appropriate sized pen. Someone must be able to devote a good amount of time to the dog; lots of grooming is involved and they shed a lot! We do not adopt out to persons with very young children, nor people who want beautiful backyards. Kids over 5 years are best with this breed."