

## Puppy Showers of Love

**Not just for brides- and moms-to-be, puppy showers specialize in cute.**

*Patti Roth*

For plenty of folks, welcoming a dog into the family is a happy occasion that warrants a party. Inspired by the festivities involving brides and babies, friends are throwing puppy showers and dog adoption showers full of giggles, gifts, and gushing.

Stacy Kahmann of Kansas organized a shower for a fellow teacher elated about acquiring Alaskan Malamute Lincoln. Kahmann tied green and blue balloons to a tabletop piece that read, "It's a Boy," and served carob-dipped strawberries with "Woof" printed in blue icing. A mini bassinet stuffed with dog products served as the centerpiece.

"It was just like a baby shower, except it was for a dog," Kahmann says.

Jean Donihee-Perron of Connecticut has thrown puppy showers for four of her friends, showing up at their doors with friends, food, favors, and a tote bag stocked with gifts. For party-themed ambience, she bought balloons with paw prints and used her homemade tablecloth sewn from doggie-print fabric trimmed in pompoms.

Dog showers range from simple office gatherings to elaborate affairs, with hosts often organizing whimsical games and activities. For a friend with a Boston Terrier puppy, Darlene Mitcheltree of California set out a jar packed with treats so that partyers could guess the number for a prize.

And when Mitcheltree adopted Irish Wolfhound Brighton, daughter Leith threw her a shower featuring an assortment of games she adapted from baby shower activities. Guests walked around with dog-treat necklaces that they surrendered if they inadvertently said the words "dog" or "puppy." They also vied for prizes by listing songs with "dog" in the title and matching photos of celebrities with their corresponding dogs.

Food also allows for fun, creative spins on doggie themes. At the Mitcheltree party, human guests nibbled on chocolate candy that resembled kibble served in a pet dish. Friends ordered a cake shaped like a dog for Robyn Shipp of Florida. They also outfitted the guest of honor, Chinese Crested pup Kona, with a ruffled purple-and-pink party collar.

Pet retailers such as FunStuffforDogs.com and Bark Avenue Pet Boutique are taking advantage of dog showers' popularity by offering gift registries and party supplies, including shower invitations and goody bags.

"The cute factor is just right off the scale," says Lisa Woody, president of FunStuffforDogs.com. Puppy showers are generally thrown by gals for other gals, but guys also enjoy people fussing over their dogs. They like a party, too; just label it something other than puppy shower, she says.

For a simple shower activity, Woody suggests taking turns offering dog tips to the new puppy parent or hiring a professional trainer to give a demonstration.

Gifts run the gamut, from dog spa products and apparel to leashes, pet beds, toys, books, and gift certificates for training. One dog owner, Woody says, requested her guests bring gifts for dogs at the local animal shelter.

At Mitcheltree's shower, a pooped-out Brighton stretched out and snoozed for much of the party, that is, until his mom — appropriately outfitted with blue puppy ears — began opening his gifts. After all, what puppy could resist the sound of paper peeling back to expose a shiny new gift?

Patti Roth is a freelance writer who lives in Florida.