

## Shelter Dogs Learn New Tricks

**ASPCA hopes showcase will increase dogs' chances of adoption.**

Posted: January 9, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

The ASPCA shelter in Manhattan has staged a “charm school” for shelter dogs to show off the dogs’ new tricks.

Porky, who along with his sister Petunia had been tied up and nearly starved when rescued from an abandoned apartment, posed for the assembled reporters’ cameras and showed off his skills at lying down, rolling over, and sitting up.

While the pet tricks may seem simple, ASPCA trainers are hopeful that these skills will help the pooches snag new homes. “They are available for adoption, but they are much more adoptable if they have some tricks,” explained Victoria Wells, the ASPCA’s manager of shelter behavior and training, who served as emcee for the event.

The ASPCA shelter has about 300 resident dogs and cats at a time, and most are adopted within two years, according to the ASPCA.

But socialization is the key, especially for dogs acquired from collectors or hoarders who often have more animals than they can care for, said ASPCA vice president Gail Buchwald. These dogs “have a great life here and it’s only going to get better when they’re adopted.”