

Best Friends at Dogtown

New book explores the dog population at the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Utah.

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With approximately 2,000 animals housed within its 3,700-acre facility, Best Friends Animal Society in Angel Canyon, Utah, is the largest no-kill animal shelter in the country.

The majority of the nonprofit group's residents are dogs, and they also are the subject of the first of four books about the society.

"Dogtown: A Sanctuary for Rescued Dogs," by Bob Somerville, takes a look at the facility's canine population, which includes the infamous Michael Vick dogs, as well as refugees from New Orleans and Beirut.

In addition to describing some of the charity's more famous rescues, Somerville also spotlights some of the lesser-known residents, like three-legged Soldier, who was tied to a tree and abandoned, and Grover, who suffered from severe separation anxiety and constantly jumped fences.

Somerville also traces the nonprofit's history back to its humble roots. Started by a group of friends in the 1970s, the organization first worked with local humane societies, then expanded to form its own sanctuary in Arizona, before finally purchasing in 1983 the canyon lot that would become its permanent home. Dogtown was born in 1987, and as its population grew, so too did its amenities.

"Dogtown" also looks at some of the people that help make the facility a loving refuge, like animal behavior expert Sherry Woodard, veterinarian Frank McMillan, and animal care adviser Jess Popowich.

"Dogtown: A Sanctuary for Rescued Dogs," by Bob Somerville, is on sale now.