

Dogs Take the Lead at Bark in the Park

Annual event in San Jose, Calif., draws an estimated 3,000 dogs and 14,000 pet lovers.

By Marissa Heflin

Posted: September 23, 2008, 5 a.m. EDT

Preliminary estimates indicate that more than 3,000 dogs and 14,000 pet enthusiasts attended San Jose's Bark in the Park in San Jose, Calif., on Sept. 20, which this year was themed Dogs Take the Lead.

The family-oriented event, which has been ongoing for more than 10 years, included a dog costume contest, herding demonstrations, flyball, a dog agility course, silly dog tricks, a dog water park, grooming and training tips, rabies vaccinations, low-cost microchipping and dog-related vendors and services.

The costume contest featured dogs dressed up as bumblebees, hot dogs, inmates, bikers and ballerinas, just to name a few.

However, it was Wafer, a little Pomeranian owned by Melanie Rosson of San Francisco, who won first place with a red Lego brick outfit. The panel of judges said they were looking for originality. Rosson, who made the costume herself, won a one-year supply of dog food from Sam's Downtown Feed & Pet Supply.

When asked what spurred the costume idea, Rosson said, "the idea just came to me and it was easy to make."

Many Bark in the Park attendees are longtime supporters who keep coming back to enjoy the variety the event offers every year.

"I've been coming to San Jose's Bark in the Park religiously for nine years in a row," said Sherry Anderson of Sunnyvale, who brought her French Bulldogs, Diesel and Miley. "I love the diversity, the variety of breeds, and all the booths and vendors. They always have a huge turnout."

The event showcased nearly 90 vendors, most local, including All Hounds Apparel, An-Jan Feed & Pet Supply, Breeder's Choice Pet Foods, Canidae Pet Foods, Critter Couch Company, Diva Dogs Salon & Spa, Eagle Pack Pet Foods, Happy Go Lucky Dog Boutique, Nutri Source Pet Foods, Precious Puch Dog Accessories, and Spa for Pets.

Since 1996, Bark in the Park has invested more than \$60,000 in its greater community. This year, a portion of the proceeds will benefit the Humane Society Silicon Valley, which cared for more than 28,000 animals in 2007, and the San Jose Animal Care Center, an animal shelter that not only helps dogs and cats find homes, but rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, and rats as well.

Funds will also go to the Campus Community Association, a nonprofit neighborhood association that helped sponsor Bark in the Park, and children's literacy programs throughout San Jose, among other local programs.

Other sponsors included Sam's Downtown Feed & Pet Supply, Bow Wowzer, SPOTS, Gussied Up Dog Boutique, Canine Corral Dog Daycare, A Dog's Life, and the Humane Society Silicon Valley.

Next year's Bark in the Park will be Sept. 19, 2009.