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Tails ready to wag for homes

BY PATRICE ST. GERMAIN • PATRICES@THESPECTRUM.COM • DECEMBER 12, 2008

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ST. GEORGE - If you are thinking of adding a warm, furry, four-legged critter to your family, there will be plenty to choose from at two pet adoption events this Saturday.

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THE ECONOMY HAS HIT NEW LOWS

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The "Home for the Holidays" events will take place at the St. George Animal Shelter with P.A.W.S (Providing Animals With Support) and at Petco in Washington City with several pet rescue agencies including BAM (Because Animals Matter), Best Friends, Friends of Ivins Shelter, Greyhound Adoption and Rescue of Las Vegas, Greyhound Gang from Kanab, Healing Hearts Sanctuary and Hurricane Shelter Pet Matchers.

Carol Peckham, P.A.W.S president said this is the sixth annual holiday adoptathon that the St. George based animal rescue group has hosted.

The goal is to adopt out 12 shelter animals, one for each of the 12 days of Christmas, or raise \$1,200 to benefit homeless animals.

Helping to make that goal is Cheryl Rogers Barnett, daughter of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans who will be held "hostage" until the goal is reached.

"Last year, we raised \$10,000 and adopted (out) 12 animals," Peckham said. "We always reach our goal."

Peckham said this year is not such an easy year given the current economy with job layoffs and home foreclosures.

People having to move into smaller quarters or out of state has placed an increased burden on local animal rescue groups and shelters as people are having to give up their pets or in some cases, abandoning them.

Peckham said recently two horses were tied up to a dumpster and left by their owner in Veyo.

Peckham said people having to move and unable to take their pets should contact the local shelters or any rescue group rather than leaving a pet tied up in the yard, abandoned in a house or left to roam until the animal is picked up.

Contrary to popular belief, not all shelter animals are mutts. Peckham said about 25 percent of shelter animals are purebreds and right now at the St. George shelter there are purebred huskies and a beagle.

While the goal is to place some of the shelter animals in loving homes for the holidays, Peckham said people should know what type of animal will fit their lifestyle and if a family is adopting the pet, the whole family should be part of the selection process.

Even if a new family pet is on the Christmas list, Peckham said adopting a pet this weekend gives the new animal time to adapt to its new home and family before the Christmas holiday when often it is chaotic and stresses the animal.



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The Kendrick family plays with Eve, while deciding whether or not to adopt a dog from the St. George Animal Shelter on Dec. 15, 2007 during an adoption drive sponsored by P.A.W.S. (Christopher Onstott/The Spectrum)

P.A.W.S (PROVIDING ANIMALS WITH SUPPORT) HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS EVENT IS FROM 10 A.M. TO 3 P.M. AT THE ST. GEORGE ANIMAL SHELTER LOCATED AT 605 RED HILLS PARKWAY.

For more information, contact P.A.W.S AT 688-9748. Additional information about P.A.W.S may be found on the Web site at <http://www.dixiepaws.org>.

BAM (Because Animals Matter) along with several other animal groups will have their Home For the Holidays pet adoptions from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Petco located at 765 West Telegraph Street, Washington. For more information about BAM, visit the Web site at www.becauseanimalsmatter.com.

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J Schilling, president of BAM, said at the Petco adoptathon, there will be some special needs dogs & dogs that are blind, deaf, in wheelchairs or with special health concerns such as diabetes.

Vincent, one of the dogs up for adoption and currently in foster care with Schilling is missing part of one ear that was cut off and a bump on his nose where his nose was broken.

Vincent also has skin problems and an abscess that is being treated and while he is still timid because of his injuries, Vincent greets visitors with lots of tail wagging and what appears to be doggy smile.

Schilling said there are advantages to adopting a shelter or foster animal over pet store animals because those animals often come from puppy mills which Schilling.

After a dog or cat has been in foster care, Schilling said, the foster family will have a good idea of the animal's behaviors, training, whether or not the animal will be good with children or be better suited for older people.

Shelters have a mix of purebred and mixed breed animals and the mixed breeds, Schilling said, tend to be stronger and healthier.

Some people may pass over an adult dog, wanting to get a puppy instead, but Schilling said the advantages with older dogs is they are past the chewing stages, many are already housebroken, are easier to train and have gone through that puppy age when dogs are susceptible to diseases.

Schilling, like Peckham, said the because of the economy, there are more animals up for adoption.

"We have gotten some absolutely lovely dogs at the shelter," she said.

At the Petco adoptathon, there will be a Santa Paws Kissing Booth along with Christmas Carols by the Riverside Elementary School Choir.

In addition to the dog kennel prison at the St. George Animal Shelter, holiday keepsake photos of your pets with Santa will be available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The cost is \$10 for two 4" x 6" color prints by Rocky Mountain Photography with all proceeds going directly to help the animals.

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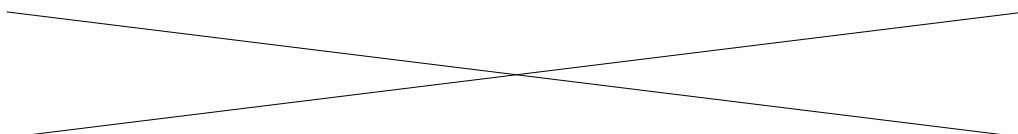
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