



There's "natural" - and there's

HALO natural

"I love my pets so much that I'll only give them Halo"

Ellen DeGeneres Animal advocate Co-owner, HALO



www.halopets.com

ADOPTED DOG THE LUCK OF A SECOND CHANCE

It's hard to call dogs housed in a high-kill shelter "lucky," but those who cross paths with the foster group founded by Mirah Horowitz are very lucky indeed.

Lucky Dog Animal Rescue, based in Washington, D.C., zeroes in on adoptable animals at high-kill shelters in rural parts of South Carolina, as well as in Virginia, North Carolina, and even Puerto Rico. The group targets dogs facing almost certain death and brings them into the safety of the rescue.

"I really try to focus on the dogs that have no options," says Horowitz, executive director and founder of LDAR. "They are highly, highly adoptable dogs."

Since Horowitz founded LDAR in May 2009, the group has rescued more than 6,200 animals from overcrowded shelters. A few of the dogs were found to have terminal health issues, and could not be placed, but otherwise all of the others — more than 6,000 — are now in forever homes.

"We have a 100 percent (placement) success rate," Horowitz says.

Major reasons for this success include LDAR's extensive "matchmaking" adoption process, working one-

on-one with potential adopters, and detailed descriptions and attractive photos of available dogs. Oftentimes, would-be dog owners search a rescue group's website and fall in love with a particular dog. If that dog is already adopted or not a good fit, that family just falls away and goes elsewhere. But not at LDAR, Horowitz says.

Instead, volunteers work directly with applicants to learn as much about them as possible, to understand their lifestyles, activity levels, and ability to house an animal. Then they work to educate the people and match them with the right dogs for their circumstances.

Once they understand what an adopter needs, they can better choose potential dogs for placement. This work is made easier because most of the 40-plus dogs being housed by LDAR at any one time are kept in foster homes, which gives foster volunteers an opportunity to discover the quirks and characteristics of each dog.

YOU CAN HELP CURB CANINE HOMELESSNESS

More than 16,000 dogs are born every day in the United States, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and each year millions of unwanted pets end up in shelters. But there are ways you can help curb this over-population problem.

- 1 **Spay/neuter your pets**, even if they never leave your house or backyard.
- 2 **Tell your friends about the benefits of sterilization.** For example, it reduces or eliminates certain types of reproductive-organ cancers, you don't have to deal with messy heat cycles, it leads to a reduction in spraying/marketing territory and aggression, and you pay lower licensing fees.
- 3 **Dispel the myths.** Spaying and neutering does not make your dog fat or lazy. Breeding your beloved Fluffy does not guarantee her offspring will be exactly like her. Kids don't need to watch their family pet give birth to understand the miracle of life.
- 4 **Donate or otherwise support low-cost or free spay/neuter efforts in your community.**
- 5 **Spread the word** about low-cost sterilization clinics in your area. Check with animal control, humane societies, and local veterinarians to locate them. — K.K.

Dogs being rescued by Lucky Dog Animal Rescue give some love to Mirah Horowitz, the organization's founder.



COURTESY, LUCKY DOG ANIMAL RESCUE

The group's website also offers detailed information about the dogs, well beyond the "male, brown, Poodle mix" description. For example, Brewski, a 1½-year-old Siberian Husky-German Shepherd Dog mix, likes to "hold hands," and Luke Skywalker, a 2½-year-old Finnish Spitz mix, would make a great running partner who also loves naps on the couch.

All of this is possible because Horowitz has built up a huge network of LDAR volunteers. In fact, more than 1,000 dedicated animal lovers are affiliated with the group, Horowitz says. Some volunteers do a home check at a potential adopter's house once a month, while others dedicate 30 or more hours a week doing everything from transport to paperwork. At weekly adoption events, every single dog there has its own handler, too, which means that there may be 60 volunteers at a single affair.

"Every aspect of Lucky Dog breaks down to a volunteer role," Horowitz says. "We have a very robust volunteer base."

While LDAR could pull potential rescues from shelters in the Washington, D.C., area, Horowitz focuses her rescue efforts on shelters in rural areas with high-euthanasia rates.

"We work with shelters where the animals have either no alternatives or a less than 10 percent chance of survival," Horowitz says, noting that one of the shelters in South Carolina she pulls from has a 100 percent euthanasia rate.

Horowitz, a lawyer by trade and an executive recruiter by profession, began LDAR because she saw, through her volunteer work with other rescue groups, what could be done to really make a difference for both dogs and people.

"The real answer of why I keep doing it is the success stories," she says. "I care deeply about the dogs. But what I didn't completely understand when I started and what I appreciate now is the difference we make in families' lives. ... That's what keeps me going."

To learn more about Lucky Dog Animal Rescue, visit www.luckydoganimalrescue.org — *Kyra Kirkwood*

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Halo Pets & FreeKibble.com

The efforts of Lucky Dog Animal Rescue to aid and rescue dogs inspired FreeKibble.com, a website dedicated to providing nutritious food to shelter animals, to donate 5,000 meals of Halo Spot's Stew to LDAR.

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-Mimi Ausland,
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