

Support Organizations that Benefit Animals

Christmas may be over, but somehow catalogues are still arriving at our house. The current Signals catalogue, which supports Public Television, has a doormat available (page 21, item #HM1302, \$19.95) that has a bone at the top, a lab-looking dog silhouetted in the bottom right corner, and the words, "A Shelter Dog Rescued This Family" written across the middle. Yes! That's the job of shelter dogs. That's what they have done for us and can do for you.

Shelter pets are almost too available. In the greater Little Rock area, there are several animal shelters, among them the little Rock Animal Village, Last Chance Arkansas, the Humane Society of Pulaski County, Care for Animals, Dogs Only, and the North Little Rock Animal Shelter. Maumelle, Sherwood and Beebe have their own animal shelters. Specific breeds have their own rescue entities. Why so many? Because of the need. There are so many shelters because there are so many strays. Today's repossessed houses and lost jobs of a struggling economy result in even more strays. On top of that, there's always an even greater need here in the South because the South has less strict and stringent spay and neuter laws, which leads to too many unwanted litters. In the Spring, when a young dog's (or cat's) fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, there's soon a glut of the resulting puppies and kittens crowding the animal shelters. Help for these animals is available in the shelters because of donors who support the shelters, because of volunteers who help at the shelters, because of pet lovers who adopt from the shelters, because of you. Unfortunately, supply always outstrips demand, and the need for help is constant.

I try to help, and so can you. Support your shelters, give generously to them, volunteer there, spread the word about rescuing a pet, and go ahead and rescue a pet yourself! What's in it for you? Everything. The American Psychological Association has determined that just thinking about a cherished animal improves the emotional well-being of a pet owner. Pet owners have lower blood pressure and less anxiety and depression. They are less lonely, less preoccupied, and less fearful than non-owners and are more physically fit, more conscientious, more extroverted, and enjoy a greater self esteem. The increased activity of walking for and caring for the pet leads to better health and less weight issues.

I grew up with a series of rescued dogs and cats: Jimmy, Johnny, Jerry, Jody, Jacques, Jesse, and Snowball and Fluffy. (Guess which ones the child named!) As an adult, three have graced my life; one arriving as a puppy when my own children were young; the next as an older dog who lost her home; and the current saint is a middle aged lady who daily delights us. Her tail wags constantly, and we smile when it does, meaning we smile constantly.

That you've read this means you care, and this is one of those problems that you can help with. Give: some money, some time, a home. As a rescuer, you won't be sorry, and neither will the rescuee!

Article written by FAV Board Member