

Common Misconceptions About Rescue

Myth: Rescue groups are so desperate to find homes for dogs that they should just give people whatever dog they want so they can help more dogs.

Truth: Rescue groups work to find the RIGHT home for a dog. There are many factors to consider when adopting out a dog to a family:

- What is the family's lifestyle, and does it match the needs of the dog? Some dogs are more sedate and would be fine with a family who has a small yard or who isn't as active. Other dogs, such as retrievers and other large breeds, require more exercise and will need a family with a large yard or someone who is prepared for going for long daily walks.
- Does the dog have special needs, health considerations, and is the family able to provide the care for the dog? Some dogs will need to take medications, or have conditions that will require extra veterinary care.
- Is the family familiar with the particular breed of dog, and do they understand that particular dog's traits? Many dogs are given up by owners to shelters and rescues when their original owner was unaware of the needs and personality of the breed. Again, we want people to make informed decisions, and a good rescue will help them select a breed that matches their lifestyle and own personality.
- Is the family able to provide the training that the dog needs? Some dogs that enter rescue are already house trained and may have even had some obedience classes. However, most dogs will require instruction, and families should be ready to go to basic obedience and teach their dogs house manners. One major advantage of adopting a rescue dog over a puppy is that they are more focused and often more easy to train when they are older and more attentive.

There are only a few of the things that a rescue considers when adopting out a dog. Our goal is always to make sure that the family is adequately prepared for the dog they have chosen, that they are able to make a LIFETIME commitment to the dog, and that the dog will be happy, safe, secure and part of the family.

Myth: A rescue group is a great place to go to adopt a purebred puppy.

Truth: While rescues may VERY OCCASIONALLY have pedigreed puppies or young dogs available, it is usually mixed breed puppies or purebred ADULT dogs that are typically available for adoption. The most common ages for dogs in rescue is 1 to 3 years. Dogs in this age are generally easier to train than puppies because they are older and more focused, more ready to

please. In addition, rescues often have senior dogs (six years or older) that also need homes. These dogs are especially wonderful to adopt - they are often fully housetrained, very loyal, and make great companions.

Myth: Rescues are a good place to give up a dog, especially if I'm in a rush to find it a home.

Truth: Rescues are typically staffed by just a handful of volunteers. These generous people often have full-time jobs, and donate their time to helping dogs find homes. When a rescue is unable to assist immediately with picking up a dog or finding it a home, people sometimes assume that the rescue worker doesn't care. It isn't that they don't care, but rather that there simply aren't enough resources (time, foster homes, financial assistance) to help every person who has a dog to give up. Those needing assistance must be patient when working with rescue workers who are unpaid volunteers that give up most of their free time to help dogs in need. When contacting a rescue, allow a couple of days for them to get back to you.

Myth: Rescue people are just trying to make money. The dogs should be available for free - they shouldn't charge an adoption fee.

Truth: Rescues often have horrendous expenses. Veterinary care costs money. Many of the dogs that enter rescue have had little or no previous veterinary care. Most need to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. In addition, rescues will provide medical care for any other conditions that a dog may have. Many of the dogs that enter rescue are "bought" from the shelter. Animal shelters do not allow rescues to take the dogs for free; there are fees that must be paid to the shelter in order to take the dog into a rescue program. There are also transportation costs, phone bills, and other miscellaneous expenses involved in rescue, and adoption fees and donations help to cover these costs.

Myth: Rescues will help find a home for my dog that has bitten or been aggressive with people. My dog just needs a home without children.

Truth: Rescues usually do not take dogs that have demonstrated aggressiveness towards humans. There simply are not enough resources to care for non-aggressive dogs, much less dogs that have bitten or tried to bite. In addition, if a rescue knowingly adopts a dog to someone when the dog is known to have been aggressive, the adopting family may pursue legal action against the rescue organization. The liability in placing a dog that has bitten is simply too great. The best thing to do if you own a dog that has tried to bite is to consult your veterinarian to rule out medical causes for the behavior. Ask for a referral to a behaviorist. If you have consulted with the above specialists and your dog is still at risk of biting, the most humane thing is to have your dog gently put to sleep. Do not take your dog to the shelter when you know he/she is aggressive. The shelter will not knowingly adopt out an aggressive dog. The separation from you is very traumatic for your

dog, and it is much kinder to put your dog to sleep than to abandon him/her at the shelter where he/she will certainly be euthanized at the end of the required hold period.

Myth: Rescue groups will go in my neighbor's yard and take their neglected dog in order to find it a new home.

Truth: Legitimate rescues will not violate the law and "dog-nap". If you see a dog that you feel is being neglected, call your local animal control. However, understand that often animal control is unable to assist except in the most extreme cases of neglect involving lack of food, water or shelter. If you have already called animal control, another option is to ask your neighbors if they still want the dog. Often these people are glad to have someone offer to assist their dog, and will gladly give the dog to you. If they do still want the dog and you yourself decide to "dog-nap", you may help the first dog but generally people like this will replace the dog with yet another that will be tied up outside or otherwise neglected.

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