

DT: August 25, 2010
TO: Open Letter to All Rescues, Shelters and Humane Societies
FR: *Sammy the Show Dogg*
Retold by *Papa J* (interpreter for *Sammy*)
Editorially approved: *Maddie the Queen and Frankie 2 Paws*
RE: **Do more! NOW!**



Me at my first job – The Early Years

I received a copy of this email from Peggy, Exec. Producer for Chicago Pet Show. It reads, in part,

. . . our policy is that we cannot recommend rescues unless we know them personally and can guarantee that they are reputable. We don't want to send an (animal) to a worse place than it is currently in, and sadly enough, that happens more than you'd like to know. I get a good number of requests to take (animals) from people who adopted them from other rescues and who were misled about the temperament, behavior, health, and care needed for their new pets. That's part of the reason we keep ours so long before adoption; it takes a good while to assess, train, and rehabilitate a (breed), and our goal is to have no surprises at all with a new adopter.
(underline added)

It's the thoughts that count, right? Right. So, as a concept-dog behind the scenes at the CPS, here's some on-point thinking (I think) – why the Show would work to solve these problems.

"Knowing them personally" is a dog good idea. But, taking that a step back, first, you must *meet* them. If there's another name more suitable for describing shows/expos, it'd be "sniffs and licks."

As a show and therapy dog, I know the purpose of shows is exactly that: greet and meet.

Now, granted, the majority of exhibitors – focusing on Rescues, Shelters and Humane Societies – are there to greet and meet the public. Yet, in my 25 (dog) years walking shows (aka, expos), I've never known of a single show – NOT ONE – where exhibitors failed to greet and meet neighboring exhibitors, or, *the cute guy/gal in Aisle 3 with the poodle named Fifi*.

The next phase of relationship development is whether or not someone can **"guarantee that they** (the public or another org) **are reputable."** ("Trust" is an apropos synonym.)

I respect the 'goal of trust,' yet see exceptions. Are there any amongst us that can say unequivocally, *"Every time our parents ordered a pizza, we got the right toppings - SNAUSAGE!"* Or, when meeting another at the park, we knew instantly that s/he was or wasn't a 'perfect match'? You must take care to assure adoptive/foster parents are good and suitable, but there's always a risk.

Meetings are merely an extension of a 'greeting' – a starting point in the communication process of developing 'trust.' The alternative is avoidance – stay home / do nothing / risk not, and, want not *too*.

A **"worse place than it (pet) is currently in"** is the core of delight in justifying inaction. To deny an animal a chance to be rescued is to keep another in a hoarding collection. 'Three dog night' becomes four... ten... a 'thirty-dog-night.' Unfortunately for all, pets and humans, that's a human decision that screams for a re-review of your Mission Statement – which I assume suggests "adoptions," somewhere between, *"We take rescues ..."* and *"... to happy, healthy homes."* It's inhumane to be so humane as to assume the new home is riskier than that which the rescued pet just left – if it had a home.

If adoptions is NOT your foremost purpose and in your thoughts, then you may be sympathetic to each pet's plight, empathetic to their conditions, but you're problematic to fulfilling your aims. To extrapolate further, you've become a 'death panel,' choosing amongst the needy pets and delaying or avoiding adoption to any potentially supportive pet parent. You can't help more unless you adopt out

more. There can be no accomplishment in inaction and inability to “trust.” Doing your best to help pets demands you ‘act’ and here, adoption is at the core of action.

If a group has reached a crescendo – **“requests to take (animals) from people who adopted them from other rescues”** – that is status du jour and the risk associated. It strains me to believe anyone would take on a pet without knowing all the demands. But then, it’s also incomprehensible that teens have babies. (The exercise may be delightful, yet the outcome is traumatic.) None-the-less, as a nation of humans AND pets, we manage. Whether that’s carefully, naively, or, in some instances, poorly – we manage. And “managing” is better than the alternative of ignoring the situation.

I can not lay fault on the overburdened rescues who’ve placed their trust (even occasionally, inappropriately) in the adoptive pet parent. It’s simply the risk inherent in finding that animal a “happy, healthy home.”

Therefore, withholding an animal from potential adoption is a disservice to all the others that need saving – and there’s more and more pets coming on-line for adoption every day.

I adamantly disagree with incriminating any org for failing to do it’s job while alleging they, **“mislead about the (pet’s) temperament, behavior, health, and care needed.”**

If speculating reasons for failure in an adoption are so hastily had, consider the lineage of pet parents (including the puppy/kitty mills); the age of the aging population – some, tearfully surrendering their pet(s) to take a place in retirement communities or nursing homes; and, the economic slide of a population that’s gone from wealthy to middle-class, and middle-class to impoverished.

There’s several *other* answers why some can no longer care for their pets. None have anything to do with poor communication or misrepresentation. Sometimes, ‘stuff’ just happens.

To hesitate – to delay – to define that as **“part of the reason we keep ours (adoption ready pets) so long before adoption”** is vaguely laudable, all-be-it, saving only those you select for saving. However, it’s not practical. It’s not enough – not now. Maybe not for a long time as the human population ages, as the pet population grows, as pet care becomes incompatible with shrinking family budgets.

We have to do more.

The **“goal ... to have no surprises at all with a new adopter”** is absolutely critical. Or, maybe admirable. Or, perhaps middling. Or, in failure, the pet becomes an ‘adoption ready pet’ once again. There’s a potpourri of possibilities ... some, impossible to avoid. Does that mean “step cautiously” through a triosh of rescued and abandoned pets waiting in queue for a home? I think not.

Chicago *“impounds approximately 24,000 animals a year ... average daily population is between 300 to 500 animals ... dogs, cats, reptiles and others.”* They seek placements with parents and rescues everywhere. That’s symptomatic of the aforesaid societal changes and presents a huge need.

As a community, we’re falling behind. Fall behind long enough and animals die.

This is your CHOSEN community. It’s a community protecting former family pets from a pitiable demise. Loving animals is a burden. You see them suffer. Yet, to shun many (or any) in favor of a conservative policy of selective adoptions is too slow a course to escape this avalanche of demand.

We have to do more . . . **and, we have to do it faster.**

Final Thoughts...

My mom, Peggy, had done five years (?) training me, Sammy; adopted Maddie; and, fostered Frankie. When I first learned about Rescues (specifically, Greater Chicago Cavalier Rescue / Helen Cordell & Company), I was sympathetic – well, as sympathetic as a Lhasa can be when forced to share food and water bowls with two others. I adjusted.

In addition, we attended plenty of benefits and events. Info trickled-down to Mom and me. It was a tsunami of pleas sent from various orgs seeking emergency placements of pets slated for euthanasia; education about puppy / kitten mills contributing to the crises; understanding the difference between a

'abandoned' and a 'surrendered' animal; how full the shelters are and continue to become; and on and on. The needs of the orgs we came to know are far greater than public response.

What to do... what to do? (I'm just a marketing dog – a glorified name for "sales." And, we've got three dogs already – including me.)

Peggy the House Marm suggested a show (an obvious choice) to create awareness for those in need – pets. (You see, it's the pets that need homes – not volunteers, administrators or staff – it's PETS.)

A long hard look at the *Other Guys* (other pet show promoters) indicates they're doing nothing for Charities. They're seem to be in it to make money.

Our goals were different.

For example, I, *Sammy*, suggested *Revenue Sharing* with Charities to help them financially. To draw attention to the need, *Maddie* suggested promoting awareness with an the *Adoption & Foster Care Board*. *Frankie Two Paws* wanted a *Donation Bin* at the entrance for pet food and products to pass on to the needy.

And, the Show will advertise – *Papa J's* idea – something the *Other Guys* don't do, or do poorly. But, advertising takes money – lots and lots. With a background of over 150 home shows over a quarter century (the two leggers, not the fours) we developed an optimistic budget for Chicago Pet Show. [In the show biz, you have to be an optimist or stay out of the business.] Achievable? That depends on YOU.

An old adage: "Nothing happens until the top sales dogg arrives." With our optimism and yours, sales men and women will arrive. You have to be optimistic to promote and exhibit in ANY event these days. If not, you'll be plagued with doubt, uncertainty and dissonance. That leads to 'No-wheres-ville.'

I think *selling* you on this event is the best thing that'll happen for your pets.

The show will save pet lives because we'll have promoted it, you'll have exhibited in it, the public will have attended it, and pets will have benefitted from adoptions and fosters to *happy, healthy homes* – at least, that's the plan.

So, please join us. It is the very best we can do to help you help your pets.

Sammy the Show Dogg

As retold by Papa J (Papa to Sammy the Show Dogg, Maddie the Queenie, and Frankie 2 Paws.)

P.S. To the writer of the subject email, I apologize for being brassy and hope you'll accept my opinion as merely, my opinion. But, as a canine, there's things I sniff out that need attention.

Personally, I have a more radical view of grass roots activism which attacks 'millers' as deplorable and despicable human beings, worthy of public flogging. However, the many 'humane' people in the Humane Societies, Rescues and Shelters serve as governor to my vitriolic views.

Lucky thing . . . for the *millers*.

We need to do more.

Sammy the Show Dogg

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This is our way.

*As retold by Papa John
Edited by Maddie the Queen*



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