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Companion Animals for Adoption

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Sensodyne
Terrier Mix

Sassyfrass
Shepherd/Terrier mix

Heath
Terrier Mix

Mahi Mahi
Terrier Mix

Dewitt
Shepherd mix

Christopher
Shepherd mix

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History of Stray Rescue

I am often asked how I started Stray Rescue of St. Louis. I ask myself that, too. I never devised a game plan or had a vision; I guess it was born out of necessity. I hated my job as a flight attendant. I figured there had to be more to life than saying, "chicken or beef." Little did I know that this career move would one day evolve into two no-kill shelters with a legion of 200 volunteers, and have an impact on the stray dog crisis in America. I love the dogs I save. I feel their pain, so I keep up the act of "Dog Man" or, as a homeless man calls me, "Coyote Man," so those canines don't suffer and die. That's pretty much why I became the founder of Stray Rescue.

I suffer from social anxiety. I have some phobias. I am gay. I am a shy, private kind of guy - by no means a hero. I have been thrust into the dog limelight from a previous book about my work. It forces me to try to be more outgoing and confident. You know, exude that Rambo-type of confidence.

In 1990 I learned the fine art of cutting dog hair. It's not something I really wanted to do, but I thought it would at least point me in the direction of my dream of working with animals. I'd see stray dogs - some in packs - pass by the Lafayette Square grooming shop where I worked. In an effort to get them off the streets, I'd make the normal calls to the local shelters and government agencies, only to find out that these dogs simply are out of luck. I started to think of ways to catch them, and before long I invented some wacky capture methods. I also enlisted friends to help save these poor guys. Each year, this makeshift organization grew as I overloaded everyone I knew with a stray dog.

Stray Rescue officially was born in 1998 as a full-fledged non-profit organization and shelter. I still have no idea how I did it, except that I had no choice. Stray Rescue has received numerous accolades from the American Red Cross and also has received national media attention from Animal Planet, National Geographic, the Weather Channel and Forbes Magazine. Now with Quentin on board, his story has been featured in People Magazine and on It's a Miracle television show. In the National Geographic feature, Mary Ann Mott wrote: "In St. Louis, Randy Grim, founder of Stray Rescue, is out on the streets every day feeding 50 or more mutts. If these wild dogs don't die of sheer starvation, he said, diseases such as parvovirus, heartworm, or intestinal parasites usually kill them. Their average life span is one to two years. Many of the animals he sees were once "bait dogs" - smaller, passive animals used to train fighting dogs. Great Dane puppies are commonly used, he said, and wire is twisted around their legs to hold them down, so they can't run while being mauled during training sessions. "If they live, they are just discarded onto the streets," said Grim. The animals are recognizable by their missing limbs, and scars from the brutal attacks. Since starting in 1991, I am credited with saving 5,000 feral dogs, all of which - through months of gentle, loving care - have been turned into house pets and adopted by new families. Some have even gone on to become therapy animals, bringing joy to people in hospitals and nursing homes." Animal Planet's "Wild Rescues" television show featured Stray Rescue in action, saving dogs and cats from abuse and neglect from a dilapidated abandoned puppy mill in Cuba, Mo. More than 17 lives were saved, but the woman responsible never was prosecuted. Since 1998, more than 45 households have participated in the Stray Rescue foster family network. These generous people take in sickly, traumatized animals and, with time and the support of professional animal trainers and behaviorists, give back healthy, loving companions ready for adoption. Stray Rescue's foster network is the largest and most effective program of its kind in the St. Louis area. Stray Rescue has made a significant impact and become a voice for stray animals everywhere. With fabulous volunteers, veterinarians, trainers, behaviorists, shelters and programs, I continue to be amazed at how this organization has evolved. But there is so much more work to do because these poor animals continue to suffer. Some days it feels as if I'm fighting a never-ending battle, but it's a battle that I must wage - for their sake.

‹ Feral Dog Information | up | Hurricane Katrina Relief ›

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