Cat Rescue Organizations

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Animal rescue organizations are made up of concerned breeders and other citizens who work to find new homes for the particular species of animal in which they have an interest. In the case of cats and dogs, many rescue organizations are breed specific. Some rescue organizations will also place animals of mixed breeds. There are rescue organizations for cats, dogs, rabbits, horses, ferrets, birds, and other species of animals.

Why are pets placed with rescue organizations?

The pets that come to rescue organizations do so because they can no longer live in their current homes. In the vast majority of cases, their need for a new home is no fault of their own. Typically their owners:

- Are moving and cannot take their pet with them
- Have health problems
- Have become incapacitated or died
- Do not have time for the pet because of changes in their lifestyle, e.g.; a new baby, an ill family member
- Have other pets who do not get along with this one
- Realize they should never have gotten a pet

Some pets come to the rescue organizations because they were rescued from an abusive situation.

What happens when a pet is placed with a rescue organization?

When an animal is placed with a rescue organization, a member of the organization will first evaluate the animal to determine if it will make a good pet for someone else. If the animal has a history of biting, aggression, or other severe behavior problems, the animal will not be placed. The behavior of some pets may make it necessary to restrict the type of home in which they can be placed, e.g., a home with no other pets.

All pets are examined by a veterinarian and certain laboratory work will be performed depending upon the species. For instance, dogs are heartworm tested, and cats are tested for Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. Almost all cats and dogs will be spayed or neutered before being placed.

If the pet is adoptable, she will be placed in a foster home until a suitable new owner can be found. For certain popular breeds, there are long waiting lists since there are many people wishing to adopt that breed, and the number of rescued animals is far less than the demand. For other breeds, the time in a foster home may be much longer since there are fewer people who would like to adopt an animal of that breed.

Do rescued animals make good pets?

In almost all cases, YES. Most of the rescued animals are adults who have been housetrained, and are over the behavior problems common in young animals, e.g.; chewing, climbing the curtains. When adopting a pet from a rescue organization, you know the health of these animals has been checked, and their temperament has been well-evaluated. The rescue organization will also be able to give you an insight into the animal's personality. Many of these animals will simply blossom when placed in a loving home.

How do I find a rescue organization for the breed in which I am interested?

The Internet is a good place to start. By searching the Internet you will find other listings for cats, as well as listings for dogs, ferrets, rabbits, and other species. Your local animal shelter or veterinarian may know of rescue organizations in your area. Contact the breed clubs in your area; they will be familiar with their respective rescue organizations.

What does the adoption process entail?

Be prepared to answer a long questionnaire regarding your family, lifestyle, living arrangements, schedule, etc. You will often need to provide references. The rescue organizations may request to talk to your landlord. Some rescue organizations will schedule a home visit so they can see firsthand the environment the pet will be in. Most rescue organizations will not place a pet in the home of undergraduate students, or anyone else without a permanent address.

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In addition to determining if you will be a good placement in general, your answers to the questionnaire will also help the rescue organization make the best match between you and the animals who are available. For instance, if you want a 'cuddly' pet, they will try to match you to one who loves attention rather than one who is very independent.

Rescue organizations are very careful when placing a pet. The animal has already lost one home and they want this placement to be permanent, and a good one. Be thankful they are as thorough as they are.

In almost all cases, you will need to pay an adoption fee for your pet. This will usually be more than the fee you would pay at an animal shelter, but less than the cost of a pet purchased from a breeder. This fee will reimburse the rescue organization for the customary veterinary services, pet food, cost of phone calls, and travel, etc. This is a general fee and may not reflect the actual cost incurred by the organization for taking care of your new pet. In many cases, the actual costs exceed the fee. Breed rescue organizations are 'nonprofit' in the strictest sense of the word.

Depending upon the breed, you may be able to obtain your new pet in a few days. In other instances, you may need to wait a long time. Keep in regular contact with the representative from the organization so you will know if the time for you to adopt is getting closer. In the meantime, learn what you can about the breed, health care, nutrition, training, etc., so you are prepared when your new pet does arrive. If you do not have one, find a veterinarian who you will enjoy working with for the life of your new pet. Remember, anything good is worth waiting for!

You may not be able to take your potential adoptee home the first time you meet. Depending upon the organization, the pet, and how you get along at your first meeting, the pet may need to stay in the foster home a little longer.

In most cases, you will not get registration papers for your new pet, even if it is a registered purebred. Dogs and cats may obtain special papers, however, to allow them to participate in agility and obedience events and in certain cat shows, respectively.

Summary

Rescue organizations provide an invaluable service to the pets they place and to the people who receive them. By obtaining a pet through a rescue organization, you will give new life to a homeless animal and have confidence the pet is healthy and has a good personality.

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