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THE WORLD'S MOST UNUSUAL VALENTINES WENT TO THE DOGS

16,880 Valentines delivered to America's 'Forgotten Dogs'



Tipton, PA, February 16, 2011—16,880 Valentines were delivered this week to some very unusual recipients: dogs. Dogs of every breed, size, and color may have received one, but all that did had one thing in common—they are America's 'Forgotten Dogs.'

Dogs Deserve Better, a national rescue and advocacy group dedicated to ending the suffering endured by chained and penned dogs, annually sends Valentines and dog treat coupons to canines across the country. The 2011 campaign has reached a milestone: almost 17,000 dogs received Valentines between February 7-14, yet this was still a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of dogs living on chains and in pens across the United States.

Dogs of every breed, size, shape and color end up outside through no fault of their own. Caretakers claim they are not housetrained, too big for the house, or too dirty to be inside. Yet through it all dogs just want to be with humans, part of our pack, and putting a dog outside for life when he/she becomes a burden is not an acceptable solution.

The mailing includes a Valentine for the dog and a brochure for the dog's caretakers, explaining why the practice of chaining dogs for life is a form of abuse and neglect. The materials encourage people to bring their dogs into the home and family or to find better homes for the animals.



"We call these dogs the Forgotten Dogs, because they may technically have a home, but do they really? Left alone in the elements, enduring extreme heat and cold, often withstanding inadequate or no shelter, food, or water, there's no doubt that these dogs suffer, and suffer immensely. Winter is a critical time to reach out directly to the people who chain their dogs, and what better excuse than Valentine's Day to send these forgotten animals a little love," says Tamira Thayne, founder and director of the eight-year-old non-profit. "Every winter our rescuers see dogs that have frozen in the snow, suffered frostbite, or otherwise endured horrific living conditions because of the longstanding misperception that it is ok to chain a dog and let it out there for life. It isn't."

"This is the perfect opportunity for people who pass chained dogs every day but feel powerless to help them to make a difference," continues Thayne. "People anonymously provide us with the addresses of these dogs, or make us a batch of Valentines, and we do the rest."

Schools, scouting troops, and other similar organizations create the Valentines, expressing love and such unusual sentiments like "Chains Break Hearts" or "I Promise to Spread the Love, Not the Fleas." "Children have a natural affinity for animals and they enjoy making art projects," says Thayne, an artist herself. "In

this way we remind children of proper pet caretaking, and educate guardians as well."

Although the practice of 24/7 chaining is pervasive in many parts of the country, states and cities have started to pass laws against the practice. So far four states have passed limitations on chaining: California, Texas, Connecticut, and Nevada. Hundreds of cities and counties have passed limitations or flat-out bans.

Meanwhile, countless backyard dogs are spending yet another winter in the cold. Often, they shiver day and night in hole-riddled doghouses, suffer from thirst because their water is frozen, and pace neurotically from lack of exercise and attention. Perpetually chained dogs often become aggressive from their constant confinement, thereby posing a danger to people, especially small children.

For more information about the Valentine's Day outreach, go to <http://www.dogsdeservebetter.org/Valentines2011.html> or email info@dogsdeservebetter.org.

For general information about Dogs Deserve Better go to www.dogsdeservebetter.org.

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