



Brothers Pets in Aspen Hill, Maryland, has made the unheard-of move of discontinuing the sale of dogs and cats in order to donate its kennel space to the local animal shelter.

"This is a decision we made out of our hearts," says *Brothers* owner Don Ryan. "This is something we wanted to do. This is something we felt very strongly could be done and should be done."

Ryan claims he had wanted to institute a program like this when he opened *Brothers Pets* three years ago. At that time the Humane Society of Montgomery County shied away from the suggestion because *Brothers* was a pet shop. However, in autumn of 1991, Montgomery County Humane began showcasing adoptables in pet supply-only stores, with very favorable results.

"I'd love to say that we just sat down and planned the whole thing out and it was a wonderful idea on our part," said Mary Eno of Montgomery County Humane, "but actually it wasn't. Becky Pugh, the woman who owns *Bone Jour Pet*, used to be in Georgetown [DC] and had worked out some kind of program like that with Washington Humane. She had a big display window, so Washington Humane would drop an animal off in the morning. She'd collect the applications, then the animal and applications would go back to Washington Humane that evening."

An afghan hound named CoCo was abandoned at Pugh's Georgetown store. Pugh called Washington Humane, who gave her two options: she could either take CoCo to them, or register the dog as abandoned, wait 10 days, then find her a home. Pugh took the second option and found CoCo a home the first day she tried.

Pugh then called Washington Humane and asked them to bring over adoptables for her to display on a daily basis. They did, and Pugh started getting immediate results.

When *Bone Jour* moved to Bethesda, Maryland, Pugh contacted Montgomery County Humane to see if she could set up the same kind of program there.

"We went down there and checked it out," Eno recalls. "She was obviously familiar with working with Washington Humane about how humane societies operate. So, we started with her and the program just took off from there."

"Then the owner of another pet supply place, Discount Pets Supermarket, approached us and wanted to distribute our literature and pictures, anything he could do to help adoptables. When we told him about the *Bone Jour* program, he was really excited by it and wanted to participate. When he started participating, two more pet supply stores came on line."

About that time, Eno was featured as a guest on Ryan's weekly pet-care radio show on local WINX-AM, and Ryan mentioned that he was still very interested in participating in such a program, but Montgomery Humane once again balked because at that time *Brothers* was selling dogs and cats from local breeders (he refused from the start to handle animals from "puppy mills"). Even so, Montgomery County Humane's president and executive director went to *Brothers* to meet with Ryan.

"His facility is a new facility, and as facilities go it is an excellent one," Eno explained. "It wasn't one of these pet stores where we constantly have complaints. He was selling dogs and cats, but he was doing it in a clean environment."

"We said to Don, 'We'd really like to work with you. You've got a good record with animal control. But we just don't feel that we can be in the position of looking like we endorse selling dogs and cats.' So, Don called us back a few days later and said, 'Well, how about if I stop selling dogs and cats, turn over what I have to you and we can start the adoptions with those. How does that sound?' We said, 'It sounds good to us!'"

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) approves of the program. Spokesperson Jenni Norton comments, "We think it's wonderful! They're showing people that there are wonderfully adoptable animals at the Humane Society, and it makes the Humane Society more accessible to people."

Brothers Pets has successfully placed every animal that has come in, which has not only been dogs and cats. Adoptable rabbits, rats, hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs have also found homes through this program. From the time the animals arrive at *Brothers* to the time they go

(Continued on p.42)