

Petland Adopts Out 270,000 Pets in Past Decade

Individuals with "accidental" litters can contact local stores for adoption assistance.

Posted: May 8, 2008 2 a.m. EDT

Children play with a kitten at a Petland grand opening. U.S. Petland stores have placed 212,534 homeless cats and kittens and 59,945 homeless puppies and dogs since 1998, when the company began tracking adoptions made through its Adopt-A-Pet program.

The program actually started in 1967, but the company did not formally track adoption data for its first 20 years, says Julie Washburn, Adopt-A-Pet coordinator.

"In the past 10 years, Petland has placed more than 270,000 homeless pets," says Frank Difatta, president of Petland Inc. "We want our Adopt-A-Pet program to grow even stronger in 2008, so we are inviting more pet care organizations and more individuals to take advantage of the program locally."

In addition to trying to work with shelter administrators and organized pet rescue groups, the chain encourages individuals with knowledge of healthy, homeless puppies and kittens to contact their local Petland stores about the program. This includes "accidental" litters.

Cats and dogs accepted into the adoption program must be at least 8 weeks old and pass a wellness check by the local store's consulting veterinarian. Accepted pets then receive vaccinations and dewormings, and in they typically are microchipped for identification and scheduled to be spayed or neutered.

An adoption fee is charged to cover veterinary care, staff labor and associated shelter or rescue group charges. "The homeless kittens or puppies we offer to our customers must be healthy and well-socialized, ensuring they will make good pets for adopting families," Washburn says.

Ninety-five percent of U.S. Petlands run Adopt-A-Pet programs, in which the stores allocate store space to homeless animals. Each franchise is required to support such programs, but a few of the stores have been unable to establish regular programs and raise funds for local organizations instead.

"Some of our larger-format stores have separated Adopt-A-Pet Centers," says Brian Winslow, Petland's director of business improvement. "In nearly all of our Petland stores, we dedicate some of our highly visible retail display space to showcase healthy, homeless pets. Our goal, as with all of the animals we place, is to match the right pet with the right person and meet the needs of both."

The larger-format stores also allow mature, larger dogs that are too large to be housed in smaller stores to be adopted out on a regular basis, rather than just at special adoption events where local organizations bring pets on-site for the day.

Washburn attributed the fact that the programs adopted out more than three times as many cats as dogs to a far greater supply of homeless cats, particularly at the height of kitten season in the spring. Canadian Petland stores have adopted out more than 9,000 homeless cats and dogs since July 2001, when they launched the Pets for Life Foundation adoption program.