

Don't Pay For A Purebred—Adopt One

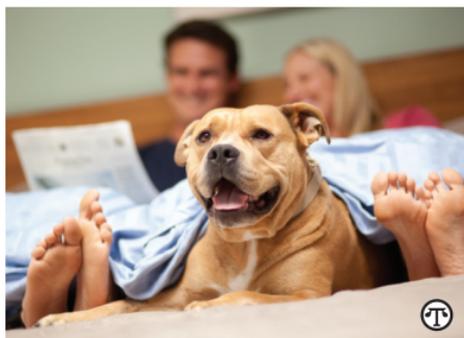
(NAPSA)—Are you looking for a certain kind of furry family member? Consider adoption as an option. Despite popular belief, not all pets needing homes are mixed breeds. In fact, as many as 25 percent of the 8 million dogs and cats in the care of animal welfare agencies are recognizable breeds. All kinds of pets end up homeless for a variety of reasons—frequently due to “people issues” rather than problems with the pets themselves. As a result, local animal shelters and breed-specific rescue groups are great options for people interested in adding a specific breed of pet to their family.

For example, when Destini Hollis decided to get a dog, she had her heart set on a Bouvier des Flandres, a large dog originally bred in Belgium. Rather than turning to a breeder, Destini sought out rescue groups that specialized in caring for homeless dogs of her preferred breed. She soon found her match: Baku, a 113-pound gentle giant whose family could not keep him in their small apartment.

“We did our research,” Destini said, “and we found exactly what we wanted. I highly recommend searching out a purebred rescue group if you want a specific type of dog.”

Narrowing down your options can be tough, but some online tools can help prospective pet parents with their search for the right pet and the right adoption agency. The PetSmart Charities Adoptable Pet Locator, found on its People Saving Pets website (www.peoplesavingpets.org), allows you to search for local adoptable pets based on criteria such as size, gender and breed.

Many homeless pets end up that way because their original



Purebred pets are available at animal shelters.

owners couldn't provide what they needed. Every breed has websites that can help you find the right match for you. Here are some basic criteria to consider:

1.Space: Some pets do just fine in an apartment; others need more room. Energy is the key, rather than size. Many large-dog breeds spend lots of time sleeping and are content with daily outings and play, while some small and medium breeds need more opportunities to run and explore.

2.Time and energy: Herding, hunting and other types of dogs—and several cat breeds—need to keep their brains and bodies busy. Some others are napping professionals. The time needed for training, attention, play and outings can vary depending on breed type.

3.Coat: Some dog and cat breeds must be professionally groomed to stay healthy and to keep you happy. Almost all dogs and cats shed, so ask yourself how much hair you are ready to handle.

Most pets available through adoption come spayed or neutered, vaccinated, licensed and often microchipped for a very affordable adoption fee. You can find a listing of local adoption agencies by using your zip code to search on www.peoplesavingpets.org.