

HAPPY TAILS

Every dog has its day at reunion

CAAA brings together adopters, rescuers and dogs for a day in the sun

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Visitors from as far away as Puerto Rico and Georgia descended upon Stage Fort Park last weekend to meet up with loved ones they haven't seen in ages.

Interestingly, this wasn't some venue for a family reunion, or simply tourists coming to visit and maybe hit the beach should they encounter some warm weather in early June.

No, those present were here to reunite with dogs they've rescued or fostered in the past, and to catch up with current owners and adopters as to the status of their canine friends. Known as Rescue Reunion, the event, hosted by Cape Ann Animal Aid, drew a number of dog lovers both local and distant — representatives from All Sato Rescue in Puerto Rico and Companion Animal Rescue Inc. in Georgia were present for Saturday's festivities.

"The event is to celebrate dog adoption and the families who open up their hearts to a rescue dog," said Sunniva Buck, executive director for Cape Ann Animal Aid. "It is a chance for former caregivers to see the rescue dogs they cared for now that they are happy with their new families. The reunion also provides adopters an opportunity to try and connect with littermates or old kennel pals."

Rescue Reunion was originally conceived six years ago as a way to give out-of-state rescuers a chance to connect with dogs they had formerly fostered and cared for. Two years ago, however, it was decided that the event should be a celebration of all of the dogs the Cape Ann Animal Aid has placed, not simply those from out of state.

"As an out-of-state rescuer, they do not get the pleasure of meeting prospective adopters and experiencing the direct joy of making a love connection between a new family and a pup looking for his or her second chance," said Buck. "Often dogs rescued from Puerto Rico or Georgia are in need of a lot of direct care, and time spent in



Claudia, a rescuer from Puerto Rico All Sato Rescue, is reunited with Skippy, a Chihuahua mix she had rescued and fostered before sending to Cape Ann Animal Aid for adoption. COURTESY PHOTOS

foster [care] before they can make the journey to Cape Ann to find a loving family, so there is a big investment emotionally on the behalf of the rescuers."

"It is a leap of faith these rescuers take when they send their precious pups to the Northeast in search of a forever home," Buck added. "For a rescuer getting to visit with some of their old canine charges and getting to meet their new human families makes all their hard work and heartbreak worth the effort."

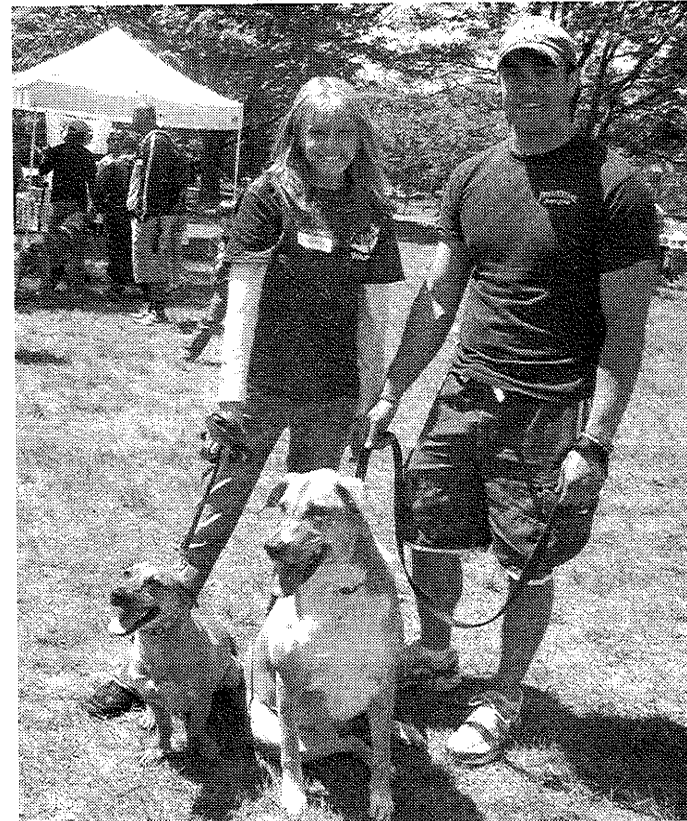
It's not just the rescuers who get something out of

Rescue Reunion. CAAA staff spends time with these dogs as well, and gets something out of the event.

"The staff and volunteers here at CAAA also get a huge emotional re-charge by getting to visit with some of the dogs cared for at the shelter and see how adored they are by their new families," said Buck.

The city of Gloucester gives CAAA the spot during the summer of each year to host Rescue Reunion. Buck says the event will continue on for the foreseeable future.

"People and dogs benefit from this event," said Buck.



Volunteer Krisitie Nicastro, her husband, Mark, and their two rescue dogs Paola and Sadie enjoy Cape Ann Animal Aid's Rescue Reunion at Stage Fort Park last weekend. The event brought together rescuers, shelter volunteers, former rescue dogs and their adoptive owners.

"It is a time to get together and share stories of triumph about overcoming less than perfect beginnings, dealing with loss and change, or learning to love and trust

again. [It's] both for the dogs and the people involved in pet adoption, because sometimes it seems that there is no clear distinction between who rescued who."