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## UnderDog Rescue adoption center celebrates opening

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MANATEE — Tails wagged as potential pet owners visited with dogs Saturday afternoon at the grand opening of a dog rescue adoption center.



UnderDog Rescue, a nonprofit volunteer organization that takes unwanted and abandoned dogs into foster care, opened its doors to the public. The organization, which rehabilitates dogs and finds them homes after screening perspective owners, has been in existence since 2005. To date approximately 1,400 dogs have found homes, said Julia Johnson, a co-founder of UnderDog.

The organization has about 80 dogs in need of homes right now, she said.

The rescue opened an adoption center at Dog Gone Beautiful, 5223 26th St. W., which allows people to come in and make play dates with potential pets.

Kelly Hood, 32, of Tampa bent down on the ground visiting a small black puppy. She found the rescue organization online when she was looking for a cocker spaniel, she said.

“I’d definitely like to adopt a shelter dog,” she said. “I’ve been going to different events looking for the right one.”

UnderDog has a screening process to ensure dogs find suitable environments and loving homes, said Deb Sieber, who fosters dogs for the organization. People who showed up Saturday had the opportunity to fill out an application and visit with the dogs.



The organization does a property check and sometimes does home visits before placing a dog. For example, they make sure people are allowed to have dogs in apartments.

New owners are given about a one week trial period. If things don’t work out, the dog can be brought back and their money will be refunded, Sieber said.

“This is something unique we do as a rescue group,” she said. “Even though we work so hard, there’s just no way to know the elements of life.”

Kat Koziel, 36, of Bradenton, brought her Chihuahua, Amazing Grace, she adopted from the rescue

about a month ago just to visit.

Koziel held the dog clad in a sweater across her chest with her other dog, a black poodle on a leash.

She said volunteers came to visit her home before Grace was matched.

“They wanted to make sure she was going to fit with us,” said Koziel, standing next to her 8-year-old son, Sal.

The dogs typically cost about \$200 and up to adopt. The organization makes sure the dogs are healthy, fixed as well as vaccinated.

The adoption fee takes into consideration the cost incurred by the dog in foster care and what money can go back into the rescue group, Sieber said. Veterinarian bills for the group average about \$4,000 a month.

The rescue group is in need of pet supplies and financial contributions.

Beginning this month through October 1, the organization is hosting a supplies drive in which people can drop off donations at ReMax Alliance Group locations in Manatee County. Supplies needed include dry food, shampoo, flea protection, towels, paper towels, laundry detergent, food bowls, leashes, harnesses, collars and crates. The organization is also looking for foster parents for incoming dogs.

For more information, visit [www.underdogadopt.com](http://www.underdogadopt.com).

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