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Canines charm would-be owners

Adoption event organized by UnderDog Rescue of Florida draws crowd to park

By SARA KENNEDY

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MANATEE — Leaping and yapping, friendly and frolicking, it was canine party time Sunday as dogs who were candidates for adoption charmed potential owners.

The meet-and-greet event organized by UnderDog Rescue of Florida drew a crowd to a fancy new dog park, complete with play equipment and plenty of doggie treats, at Neal Communities' River Sound development.

Those interested in adoption cruised among the dogs available, trying to decide which one might be a suitable pet.

"The purpose is to rescue as many dogs as we can, and find them 'forever' homes," explained Shona Otto, president of the organization.

The Bradenton nonprofit helps as many as 500 to 600 dogs a year, providing sanctuary for surrendered, stray and neglected dogs. It also acquires dogs from shelters where they would otherwise be euthanized, she said.

"We need donations and foster homes," said Otto. "Our medical bills are astronomical, and adoption fees do not cover medical bills."

Those applying to adopt dogs filled out paperwork so the organization could check their credentials.

All dogs available for adoption had been heart worm-tested and treated if necessary, checked for other types of medical conditions, wormed, vaccinated, spayed or neutered, groomed and provided with heart worm and flea or tick medications. They also got an identifying microchip to more easily locate the owner if the dog should become lost.

Briana and Neal Hockett, both 25, of Parrish, were among those who chose to adopt. They met a furry mutt they wanted to keep.



“He’s very sweet, he has an adorable face,” said Briana Hockett, who is a marketing assistant at Neal Communities. “We have one at home, he needs a playmate.”

Patricia and Richard Flood, 59 and 60 respectively, of Bradenton, volunteered as foster caregivers for the organization, but were considering adopting, too.

After reading in the newspaper about the number of animals put to sleep because no one adopts them, the couple volunteered as a foster family for UnderDog Rescue.

“They’re really doing a wonderful job, these people,” said Patricia Flood, who works as a nurse.

For information, go to UnderDog Rescue’s Web site at www.underdogadopt.com, or call (941) 776-7370.

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