

The Lowdown on Dachshund Adoption

There is a special charm surrounding the lovable, long, low breed that is the Dachshund. What they lack in size, they more than make up for in personality. They're stubborn, yet caring; selfish, yet so friendly and outgoing. It's a unique breed of dog whose traits and appearance can be appreciated by anyone, and whose popularity has grown exponentially over the years as a result of their undeniable appeal. However, it's the unfortunate truth that these dogs are genetically prone to serious health issues, especially pertaining to the spine. Intervertebral disk disease, for example, affects more dachshunds than it does all other dog breeds combined¹, and not only means unbearable pain for the dog, but incredibly high medical expenses for their owners as well. Their ever-growing popularity, in combination with their high risk of such health issues, has led to a shocking number of injured dachshunds placed up for adoption. Their popularity among pet owners has inevitably increased the number of dachshunds found to be in abusive homes, another contributing factor to the incredibly high number currently living in shelters.

Abused, facing health issues, struggling with emotional issues, or all three, placing such dachshunds in adequate homes is a difficult task to take on. Spinal injuries are obviously something many adoptive families can't afford to fix, taking those dachshunds out of the picture for the majority. An abusive past can often lead to behavioral issues, another hindering factor for potential foster families. Emotional problems, sometimes formed as a result of past abuse or transitioning to a shelter, may lead to similar behavioral complications that can render a dachshund unadoptable for many. With so many dachshunds facing these issues, their adoption

¹ The Nest Pets- The Genetic Problem in Mini Dachshunds

rate, despite the breed's popularity, is low. A high return rate on the breed can be seen at shelters because health and behavioral issues many times can seem irreversible to even families who choose to adopt despite known problems. I myself have adopted one such dachshund, Bella, and have witnessed first hand the hardships of owning a dachshund who has faced abuse and health issues. Overpopulation, a significant problem within the US, has led to an estimated half of all cats and dogs that enter shelters facing death before they find an adoptive family². Such a large number of "unadoptable" dachshunds has added to this statistic a great deal, and requires a special focus on the breed to deter its effect.

I have taken the initiative to help stop the problem of overpopulation at one of its many roots: intervertebral disk disease within dachshunds. My work has also been done with the intent of helping the cause by giving assistance to shelters in placing dachshunds, as well as helping to inform the public of health risks in the breed, and how to prevent any problems from arising. I, alongside a devoted team of volunteers and like-minded dachshund lovers, have taken steps toward alleviating these issues through our annual fundraising and informational event, Cape Cod Doxie Day.

Doxie Day, now on its ninth year, was created by myself, my mother, and a few other volunteers. We've since gained a number of other members who have been essential to the success the event has seen. A day filled with fun for attendees, Doxie Day's aim is to bring in donations for both the MSPCA and Coast to Coast Dachshund Rescue, a nationwide non-profit organization devoted entirely to rescuing, treating, and finding homes for dachshunds and

² Georgia SPCA - Companion Animal Overpopulation: What You Can Do

dachshund mixes in need of help. Physical donations, like food and toys, go to the MSPCA, while all money raised goes directly to Coast to Coast Dachshund Rescue, the event's sponsor.

Held in early fall, Doxie Day is packed with dachshund-centric events and fun. Live music, including the "Dachshund Song", is performed throughout the day. A dachshund fashion show is held, in which, for a small donation fee, owners and their dogs can walk the red carpet and show off their homemade costumes and outfits. This is followed by a number of contests that can also be entered for a small donation, some of which include "Teeniest Weenie", "Foxyest Doxie", and "Owner-Pet Look Alike". The "Doxie Dash Fun Run," where dachshunds race to their parents through a short track is another event that attracts lots of spectators and donations for Coast to Coast. In between events, attendees can buy food (our best sellers are hot dogs) and refreshments, have their dachshund's picture taken in the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile, or place a bid at our extremely successful silent auction. A newer addition to the event is the ability to bid on "Dox Art", dachshunds painted in various creative manners by local artists.



Dox Art



Painted pumpkins available in the silent auction

All of the donations and money from purchases come together by the end of the day to raise thousands of dollars for Coast to Coast. To date, the event has raised close to \$50,000 for the organization. While the money is hugely beneficial for dachshund rescue, the information provided at Doxie Day is just as important. A local vet, who specialises in Intervertebral Disk Disease, gives a speech to all attendees, and is willing to answer any questions owners or potential adoptive families may have about preventing health issues and lowering the risk dachshunds face of the disease.

Between the donations and information shared at Doxie Day, it's not only a fun way for dachshund owners to share their love of the breed with one another, but to help out a very worthy cause, and gain important knowledge about helping to prevent any further problems among dachshunds. Taking part in the creation of the event has been a very valuable experience for me, and while I have a lot of fun judging contests, running stands, and making sure the event goes smoothly, I get the most satisfaction from the fact that I can help the breed I love so much, and do my part in reducing nationwide problems like overpopulation in shelters.



With Bella at the Barnstable 4th of July Parade distributing information about Doxie Day

Coast to Coast Dachshund Rescue
<http://c2cdr.org>

Cape Cod Doxie Day
<http://capecoddoxieday.weebly.com>



Selling snacks and drinks at Doxie Day



Measuring dogs for the "longest dachshund contest" at Doxie Day



Painting pumpkins for sale at Cape Cod Doxie Day



Helping to judge contests and hand out awards at Doxie Day. Pictured 2015 winner of the owner-dog look alike contest.

Georgia SPCA, "Companion Animal Overpopulation: What You Can Do." Submitted by user

Admin. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.

<http://www.georgiaspca.org/ga-idausa-pet-overpopulation>

The Nest Pets, "The Genetic Problems in Mini Dachshunds" Author Unknown. Web. 15 Apr.

2016.

<http://pets.thenest.com/genetic-problems-mini-dachshunds-7189.html>