

# Dogs, cats find homes after flood

30 animals brought to city from crowded facilities

By Robert Mitchum  
TRIBUNE REPORTER

Last month in flood-ravaged towns like Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Quincy, Ill., they were left behind, found floating down swollen waterways or tied to posts on abandoned front porches.

But on Saturday, Wags the beagle and the trio of Shih Tzus named Larry, Moe and Curly were among 30 four-legged refugees from June's spate of Midwest flooding given a new chance as they were made available for adoption on Chicago's North Side.

"When we opened up the doors of the vans, everybody's tails were wagging," said Rochelle Michalek, executive director of PAWS Chicago. "They were very, very happy dogs."

Volunteers from PAWS Chicago traveled to Cedar Rapids and Quincy shelters last week to pick up the 23 dogs and seven kittens, some of the estimated hundreds of pets

that were left behind or given up by families after the June floods.

Shelters and humane societies filled to capacity in heavily affected areas appealed to shelters in the Chicago area for help in finding new homes for the animals, and PAWS Chicago stepped in to take some of the now-homeless pets.

"Original owners did have an opportunity to reclaim pets, but in most cases they didn't because of the devastation," Michalek said. "People were obviously worried that they could take care of their family first."

Michalek said animals picked up in Quincy and Cedar Rapids were given full medical care, including being spayed or neutered, having an identification microchip implanted and receiving full sets of vaccinations. After a day to further acclimate to their new surroundings, the dogs and cats were made available for adoption at the PAWS center at 1997 N. Clybourn Ave.

Traci Peterson and her fiancé, Steve Johnson, both 32, were at the center Saturday afternoon to adopt a second dog to be a companion for



Tribune photo by Candice C. Cusic

**Traci Peterson and her fiancé, Steve Johnson, pet Foxy, a yellow Labrador, outside PAWS Chicago. Foxy had become homeless after flooding in Quincy, Ill., and was brought to Chicago because of crowding at another facility.**

Buddy, a beagle-lab mix they adopted after he was brought to Chicago as part of Hurricane Katrina rescue efforts.

"We're both very much animal lovers, and knowing these dogs need a good home is something that kind

of motivated us," Peterson said.

Saturday, the couple picked out a 7-month-old female yellow Labrador named Foxy who came from the Iowa rescue mission.

"We just kind of fell in love with her," Peterson said.

And, most important, Buddy approved.

"Their tails were wagging, all that good stuff. I think they liked each other," Peterson said.

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