

# Helping Keep Dogs Out Of Shelters

While many Americans consider their four-footed friends to be a part of the family, more than 4 million dogs end up in shelters every year. Sadly, nearly half of those canines never find a place to call home. Now it's easier than ever for dog lovers to find a way to help.

Kate Walsh, star of television's "Private Practice" and loyal owner of an adopted dog, partnered with PEDIGREE to launch the PEDIGREE Adoption Drive Foundation, a new nonprofit organization that provides funding to select animal shelters and breed rescues nationwide in order to help dogs find loving homes.



"It breaks my heart to know that there are so many loving dogs in shelters just waiting to find homes," says Walsh. "It's impossible to articulate the happiness that my adopted dog Lucy brings to my life—so I'm excited to be a part of a program that is committed to raising awareness of and funding for these wonderful animals."

It's important to note that adopting a pet is a decision that should not be taken lightly. Caring for a pet is a big responsibility, but most

dog lovers will tell you that adding a canine to your family will bring a great deal of joy and happiness. The dog lovers at PEDIGREE created an Adoption Drive to shine the spotlight on the plight of homeless dogs. Here they provide some tips for responsible pet adoption:

- **Make sure your home is ready for a dog.** Many items in your home can be harmful or even deadly to your dog, so "doggy-proof" your home in the same way you might for a young child. Remember, the breed of dog you choose might require more space to roam.
- **Consider how your pet will fit into your life.** In deciding what type of dog you should get, consider what you're looking for in your future pet. Is he going to be a fun playmate for the children or perhaps a silent soul mate for long walks? Visit [Dogsrule.com](http://Dogsrule.com) to take the Select-A-Dog Questionnaire to help determine what breed is the best match for your lifestyle.
- **Make sure you're financially prepared to own a dog.** Remember that toys, training, grooming and medical costs are important factors in your budget as an owner. Look for quality food products that provide lasting nourishment. PEDIGREE is the dog food that gives back. A percentage of each sale is donated to the foundation.
- **Learn how to identify your dog from the start.** Providing a collar with an ID tag or microchip is one of the first things you should do as a new owner. This adds a level of safety for your pet and provides piece of mind for you.

### Show Your Support

Dog lovers who want to learn more about adoption and find a shelter nearby can visit [Dogsrule.com](http://Dogsrule.com) for a downloadable Adoption Guide that offers tips and checklists handy for first-time animal shelter visits, vet trips, and even shopping for your new four-legged friend. Owners can also show their support for the cause by making a tax-deductible donation to the foundation on the website. Those who adopt a dog from a local shelter or breed rescue anytime during 2008 are eligible for one month of free food as a thank-you from the dog lovers at PEDIGREE.