



## LOCAL NEWS

## The dog days of summer: Dog pound gets by with a little help from its friends

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Volunteers gather near the play area at the Southington Dog Pound.

By SHERIDAN ROY

STAFF WRITER

A small group of volunteers gathered at the Southington Dog Pound on Saturday, July 29 to spend some quality time with the animals and tidy up.

Throughout the week, the volunteers split up and visited the dog pound each day to help clean cages, provide new bedding, take the dogs for walks, feed them, and do anything else they could to make the animals more comfortable.

“It’s so important for the dogs to have that release of energy—to get out, get some fresh air and move around,” said dog pound volunteer Val DePaolo. “It’s beneficial for the dogs to be around people, too, so that when people come to see them, they’re more socialized.”

The volunteers work closely with the animal control officers. Each dog is tagged with a certain color that tells volunteers about the dog’s behavior.

“When a dog first comes in, we have no idea what kind of temperament they have,” said DePaolo. “The tags tell us if we can walk them, feed, them, and so on.”

The dogs in the facility have a temporary stay, and that can be emotionally disruptive. The volunteers are sensitive to that, and try to provide comfort to the dogs for the time being.

When a dog is brought to the facility, it is scanned for a microchip. Public notices are distributed through local daily newspapers and online to try to find the owner for seven days. At the end of that period, ACOs begin looking to either adopt the dog out or send it to a rescue center.

“It has been fantastic to have the volunteers come and help out,” said ACO Josh Karabin. “The quality of these dogs’ lives have improved dramatically, and their behavior improves, too.”

Over the last year, the dog pound facility has set up four outdoor dog pens, all through support from charitable organizations in the community. The DePaolo Family Foundation and the Calvanese Foundation teamed up to provide one large outdoor play area. The Main Street Community Foundation recently supplied funds for a pen that attaches to the building itself, and the Elks Lodge of Southington donated funds for two smaller dog pens in the rear of the building.

*The Southington Dog Pound is always accepting donations of dog food, toys, bedding and more. Call (860) 628-8053 for more information.*

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