

## **So what's so great about volunteering with Pet Haven Dogs?**

By Celayne Jones

For me, it's about getting to know all kinds of dogs, breeds I'd never considered before and breeds I knew nothing about. I was comfortable with the ways of German Shepherds and Bullmastiffs as those are the dogs I'd had in my adult life. Labs? Um, they're big and black and happy. Beagles? They have a peculiar howl. Greyhounds? They run races.

In the past year or so, I've learned that Beagles are smart and were bred for tracking game. That's why they will walk along, nose to the ground. Greyhounds are actually couch potatoes once they've gotten a good run out of the way. And Labs are large and happy dogs who love to be active and share good times with their families.

I've learned that Pit Bulls are loving, sweet family members and not the frightening aggressive dogs the media loves to show us. Small dogs can be darling little companions and not just somebody to step around on the way to greet the big dogs.

There are a lot of ways to help with our dogs. You can foster, which means that the dog lives as a member of your family until she is adopted into her forever home. If you can't commit to a month or two, try respite fostering. Respite fostering means that you take a foster dog for a week or a weekend, so the dog doesn't have to go to a boarding facility while the foster parent takes a vacation or a business trip.

Just can't bring a dog into your home? Be a foster buddy. Visit one of our dogs at Downtown Dogs or Auntie Ruth's, boarding facilities who kindly allow us to board dogs while we wait for a foster home to open up for them. Take the dog for a walk, a ride, a game of fetch in the park.

Have a couple of hours to share on a Saturday morning? Pick the dog up from boarding or his foster home and bring him to our twice-monthly adoption events. Volunteer to handle a dog at an adoption event. You can socialize with other fosters and with potential adopters and get to know some wonderful rescued dogs.

I have to warn you that working with these dogs is not always easy. You will meet dogs that you would gladly bring home, if only you could take just one more. You will have the bittersweet pleasure of seeing a family happily leave an adoption event with their new friend and know that you may never see that cute dog again.

All of it, though, is worthwhile. The dogs will come and go. A certain few will stay in your heart always. With every dog you touch, you know that you have helped to change a homeless dog's life forever.