

# Dedication to rescue: How we started "A Place to Bark"

With all of the publicity surrounding Sumner County's pound on Long Hollow Pike, it is time to focus on what is being done in a positive manner to help the unwanted, lost, or abandoned animals in our county. Bernie Berlin and her husband Jeff, along with a neighbor, Terry Cole, treat their rescue efforts as fulltime jobs. This account of the difference they are able to make in the lives of animals is an example of what people are able to accomplish when they combine their talents and resources for the larger good. Bernie freely credits other people and agencies with providing her with the means to participate in a charitable effort, and she continually focuses on the need for people to volunteer their time and strengths, no matter where, and the success of networking. She was recently appointed to the Animal Welfare Committee to study the pound and make recommendations for improvements.

By Bernie Berlin

"A Place To Bark," the animal rescue organization my husband Jeff and I, along with our neighbor Terry Cole, manage, is a private no-kill rescue that began in 2000 in Grafton, Wisconsin.

We specialized in Jack Russells and then evolved to include dogs in need with temperament, special needs or behavioral problems.

We would work with them, retrain and then find

proper placement in homes that would love and accept the dogs and their issues. From 2000 to 2005, we took, on average, about 30 dogs a year.

We moved to Tennessee, Christmas Eve 2005, and since then, we have saved over 700 animals, mostly from the animal controls in Sumner County in this two-year time. "A Place To Bark" works mainly with the animal control in Portland and the Sumner county pound in Gallatin. We try to focus our rescue efforts where we live.

We do very limited private adoptions, only because there are so many animal welfare agencies and rescues in Tennessee with animals needing homes that the public can very easily adopt from them. What we do is take the overflow from our animal control, so that the animals are saved and not needlessly put to sleep.

What "A Place To Bark" does is this: we pull the animals from animal control; we provide every animal that we take in with shots, worming, flea preventative and all veterinary care. We quarantine the animals for a full three weeks.

We do this to ensure that the animals are disease-free when they are placed. If they break with a disease, they are treated by a veterinarian. If they have other medical issues, we keep them as long as needed. We work alongside many rescues, providing transport or foster care until they can take the animals

Once the animals are ready to

**"In rescuing animals, I lost my mind, but found my soul."**

go. I rent a cargo van and drive them eight hours, which turns into 10 hours, due to having to stop to clean cages and walk the dogs. We mainly work with "The Anti Cruelty Society" in Chicago. The Anti-Cruelty Society Clinic is one of only two non-profit clinics in the country to receive three-year (Class IV) certification from the American Animal Hospital Association.

"A Place To Bark" is the only out-of-state program Anti Cruelty takes from. We have qualified to be accepted by them because of the health of the animals brought to them.

By having an interim place for the animals, between the animal control and the humane society, we try to create a true no-kill vision.

These animals are healthy and are assessed for placement. If they have shyness or have been abused, they are sent to private rescues. If they are outgoing and unafraid, they go to the humane society.

Chicago's Anti Cruelty try to focus their efforts on the animals of their state, but, because their spay/neuter programs are so successful,

they can help other areas in need. The cost of a spay/neuter for dogs for cats is minimal. Pit Bulls and Pit mixes and feral cats are done free of charge. They also have a wonderful Pit Bull program that encourages responsible pet owners to adopt the breed.

You will most times find me at either the pound, my vet's office, The Critter Clinic in Gallatin, or my art studio. My schedule is so very hectic. I truly never

have a moment to myself, always on the go, but I figure I will have plenty of time to sit and relax when I get older.

Jeff and Terry and I do this because we feel it is the right thing to do, putting much of our own finances into our rescue efforts.

I am on the road teaching at least once a month; the other days, I am caring for the animals, writing books, magazine articles, working on artwork, caring for my husband plus driving to Chicago every month.

I receive almost all of my financial support from out of state. My art career has enabled me to work in tandem with my teaching schedule, to travel and network with foundations, humane societies and rescues.

The Zoline Foundation, which is based out of Los Angeles, California, is our primary supporter. We also do art auctions one or two times yearly on e-bay and accept private donations, all

of which are tax deductible.

The county has agreed to help support our rescue efforts and pays the same amount to write a health certificate by a veterinarian as they would to put the animal to sleep. So it is a win/win situation for all. We then provide a printout back to the county of all animals

working also with groups in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Nashville and hope to expand our area as volunteers and funds become available.

My hope in time is to create awareness,



Bernie Berlin and kitten (Photo submitted)



Bernie with some puppies (Photo submitted)

Barker, Dr. Bryan Bondurant, and Commissioner Jim Vaughn. I will be working on a committee to help fund-raise and build a new animal control and hopefully an adoption center.

All is still a dream and in the works, but my belief is good things come of good deeds and good thoughts, and we as a community need and want what is best for the animals. I repeat daily in my head, "Faith leads me and belief will get you there. So here's looking to a better future for the animals!"

If you are interested in receiving a newsletter or possible volunteer opportunities, please send an e-mail to: [aplacetobark@aol.com](mailto:aplacetobark@aol.com)

delivered to the Humane Society. "A Place to Bark" is also working hand-in-hand with The Fix Foundation (<http://thefixfoundation.com/>), a non-profit organization located in Franklin, Kentucky.

We are dedicated to helping the community by providing low-cost spay and neuter options for people who couldn't afford it otherwise. We actively participate in TNR for feral colonies. We provide transportation (pick up and drop off) of a pet if you can't make the drive. We are currently

responsible pet ownership, a network of foster homes in our community and help make a difference for the animals of Sumner County.

Recently I was appointed to the Animal Control Advisory Committee with Sheriff Bob

Interest

us." The commission vote for non-

Hyde, Anthony Holt of Gallatin, Chris Hughes of Hendersonville

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