

Evergreen nonprofit helps rescue

BY VICKY GITS
Staff Writer

A Evergreen woman with a soft heart - /A. A Afor the plight of the multitude of stray and abandoned dogs on Grand Bahama Island managed to find temporary homes in the Denver area for 30 puppies that otherwise probably would have been euthanized.

On April 2, Ellen Kohn was at Denver International Airport at 12:30 a.m. to greet a puppy lift consisting of 30 dogs flown out of the settlement of West End on Grand Bahama Island to Fort Lauderdale and then to Denver. Another 55 dogs went to locations on the East Coast.

As executive director of the Kohn Foundation, Ellen Kohn has been raising money to support the Humane Society of Grand Bahama since 2005.

Recent budget cuts at the privately run Humane Society in Freeport prompted the puppy placement crisis and inspired Kohn to spring into action.

The puppies coming to Denver were distributed to no-kill shelters like the Max Fund, Lifeline Puppy Rescue of Brighton, Poudre Puppy Rescue, Front Range German Shepherd Rescue and half a dozen foster homes. Most are about 12 weeks old. The dogs are all clean, vaccinated and come with a health certificate.

"They are very smart, loyal dogs. They are eager to please and very grateful," Kohn said. "We all adore our dogs."

She had only a couple of days to pull all the logistics together while the health certificates were in effect. A Max Fund volunteer was



Photo provided

ABOVE ARE SOME OF THE DOGS that were rescued from a Humane Society shelter in Freeport, Grand Bahama, with the help of the Evergreen-based Kohn Foundation. Thirty dogs were delivered to various rescue agencies and foster homes in the Denver area on an emergency basis on April 2.

AT RIGHT, ELLEN KOHN WITH HER DOGS, Simon, a Bahamian "potcake," in the foreground and collie mix Tucker, from puppy rescue shelter.

found to open the shelter at i a.m.

Placing so many animals required hours and hours of calling back and forth.

"I was screaming when Lifeline said they would take 10 puppies, because that's a lot," Kohn said.

The outlook for the average dog in Grand Bahama is bleak. They don't live in houses like pets but are mostly abandoned and starving, trying to live on their own. There is a large population of homeless animals. "There are good owners who really care, but it's not a priority," Kohn said.

About 100 to 200 dogs are collected each month and sent to the shelter, but only 5 to 10 percent are adopted out. The rest don't survive.

To an observer, the situation may seem hopeless, but Kohn believes in doing what she can. Plus, it seems there is always a demand for puppies.

"People like puppies. It's still saving a life. In my view, we are all connected. These are orphans," Kohn said. "I saw the need, and nobody else was doing anything."

Five years ago Kohn adopted a popular Bahamian mixed-breed called a "potcake," after the native dish of beans and rice. (The leftover peas and rice are often fed to the dogs; hence the name.)

Kohn became interested in animal conditions in the Bahamas after purchasing a condo vacation home at an island resort there.

Bahamian puppies



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Contributions are tax deductible.

The foundation initially was conceived to raise money to help young men and women who live in the West End pay for college educations at a local university. Kohn not only finds the money for the scholarships, but also mentors the teenagers and encourages them to stay focused on school.

In 2005 she formed a partnership with the Humane Society of Grand Bahama and organized a spay and neuter project, staffed entirely by volunteer veterinarians and technicians, using the community room of a local church.

It took two years to organize the project and in five days in 2007, 253 dogs and cats were sterilized.

When Kohn is not saving puppies and mentoring college students, she uses her talents as an animal communicator and healer. The website is www.enlightenedanimals.com.

More information on the Kohn Foundation, how to help and make donations is available at www.thekohndfoundation.org.

People who want to adopt the dogs can contact Ellen Kohn at 303-670-1023 or by e-mail at horsegal52@aol.com.