

“A Parade to Remember”

When the Chihuahua Club of America (CCA) decided to have a rescue parade as a special event at the National Show in Chicago this year, no one had an inkling of just how special it would be. Linnie Bunten, President of Chihuahua Rescue and Transport, and long time CCA member had proposed the rescue parade be held, and the show chairman and board felt that it would be one more way in which to show the club's ongoing concern with the problem of unwanted or abandoned Chihuahuas. The CCA has encouraged rescue efforts in its regional member clubs, and has donated to many disaster relief efforts. In 2005, CCA began donating to the Chihuahua Rescue and Transport (CRT). CRT, a rescue organization which has volunteers and foster homes in over fifteen states, was given a time slot after the morning judging on Saturday the 28th of October in which to hold the event.

CRT contacted their volunteers to see who would like to participate, and twelve dogs along with their adopters or foster parents were signed up. The event was announced in the judging schedule, and the first “Parade of Rescue” at the CCA National show was on.

I had wondered how many people would stay in the show room to see the Parade, since technically, it was being held during the lunch break in the judging schedule. When it came time for the parade, to my surprise hardly anyone left the room. Our Specialty judge Anna Katona asked if the start could be delayed five minutes so that she could watch. There were over a hundred and fifty, and probably closer to two hundred hard core dog show people in that room, all staying to watch and honor the rescue dogs.

As each dog entered the ring, and went around to center, their story was told--stories of how they came to be rescue dogs, and their journey to their “forever” home. As I looked around at the gallery, there were a lot of visible reactions to these stories, and more than a few tears. I realized that to all of us witnessing this event, those twelve Chihuahuas reminded us of the thing we all fear the most; that it could happen to one of ours.

After all the dogs had been introduced and taken their place in line, Ms. Katona moved into the ring and asked that all the dogs go around together. I wondered how these dogs would react to applause and moving together, but there was no reason to worry. The dogs went around the ring like show dogs, because that day they were. They knew it was their day, and that we were all there for them.

This event, this 'Parade to Remember' benefited everyone involved. The CCA members and all the exhibitors gained a new appreciation of the rescue effort and the need for their support. The CRT rescuers and adopters realized how much they were appreciated by the CCA and its members. The dogs? I think they realized that they were loved by more than just the people at their "forever homes".

For more information on Chihuahua rescue organizations, please go to chihuahuclubofamerica.com .While you are there, you can get information on the CCA Spring Rotating Specialty show that will be held in Dallas, Texas, May 4,5,and 6th, 2007.

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