



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Susquehanna SPCA opens doors to dogs facing euthanasia, torture**

*August 1, 2020* – With kennels standing empty due to the COVID-19 slowdown, the Susquehanna Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SQSPCA) has answered the call of animal advocacy groups from both the United States and Lebanon to assist in the rescuing and rehoming of dogs in distress.

According to SQSPCA Executive Director Stacie Haynes, intakes at the shelter have been down over the past several months due to the “New York State on PAUSE” directive, while adoptions have increased.

“At the height of the PAUSE, our shelter saw a 10 percent jump in adoptions. Intakes dropped 16 percent during the same time period compared to last year,” Haynes said.

The national trends have been similar.

“I reached out to see if we could help with any overflow problems or wait lists area shelters might have, but they were all experiencing the same phenomenon – very few dogs,” she added.

### ***Gordon County, Georgia***

On July 15, local dog advocate Kim Condon reached out to the SQSPCA in hopes the shelter would have space to help save Boomer and Wagner, both scheduled for euthanasia the next day. The dogs were being held at the Gordon County Animal Control Shelter in Georgia.

“The Gordon County Animal Control Shelter is in a sad and unfortunate position. Unlike us, they do not have the luxury to not euthanize due to space constraints,” explained Haynes. “Being overwhelmed with dogs, and because Boomer and Wagner had been at their shelter the longest, they had no choice.”

Condon reached out just in time.

With the SQSPCA's commitment, she and a dedicated rescue network were able to pull Boomer and Wagner out of the shelter. After a seven-day hold in a Georgia boarding facility, the dogs were transported to the SQSPCA where they are now available for adoption.

"Boomer is a 3-year-old American pit bull terrier mix. Wagner is an Australian cattle dog, also around 3 years old," said Haynes. "Both are very friendly."

The cost to secure and transport Boomer and Wagner was paid for entirely by the rescue network, which saves dogs from Texas as well as Georgia.

Condon said dog overpopulation in the South is prevalent due to lack of spaying and neutering.

"Many people simply do not realize the thousands of dogs killed each day," Condon explained. "These dogs are often as sweet as can be – beautiful animals with little to no chance of avoiding being killed.

"I became involved in rescue because of my love and absolute respect for animals," Condon said. "My focus has been dog rescue for the past few years. I work with an amazing network of volunteers throughout the country to gain exposure through social media because so many dogs are killed without ever being seen by anyone outside the facility ... given no chance. There are rescues who step up time after time to save as many dogs as they can."

The challenges, according to Condon, are a limited number of rescue organizations and lack of funding.

"It is so important for more people to become involved in helping. Everyone can do something. Sharing posts on social media, pledging an amount for a dog in need so a rescue can help, fostering, volunteering at shelters, and adopting are some ways to save lives. Stacie at the Susquehanna SPCA goes above and beyond to save dogs. She did not skip a beat when I reached out to her, desperately trying to help Wagner and Boomer. They were on the kill list and most definitely would have been euthanized."

### ***Beirut, Lebanon***

On the other side of the world, economic collapse and a culture of canine cruelty, neglect, and violence is prompting the arrival of 13 dogs to the SQSPCA early next week.

Animals Lebanon is a nonprofit group that improves the welfare of animals through comprehensive national animal protection and welfare legislation. They provide nationwide public assistance for companion animals while rescuing and improving the conditions of captive endangered wildlife.

“We first partnered with Animals Lebanon in the winter of 2019, when LVT Sara Haddad and I traveled overseas – all expenses paid by Animals Lebanon – to bring traumatized dogs home to Otsego County,” Haynes recalled.

Dogs have a zero percent chance of being adopted in Lebanon. Not because of their health or behavior, but because they are not accepted into homes, Haynes explained. Dogs in Lebanon are beaten, shot and poisoned. The advent of COVID-19 and misinformation about transmittal of the virus from dogs and cats to humans have made conditions even worse.

“We still have 15 empty kennels, even after waiving our surrender fees for the past several months. These dogs are suffering horribly, and the circumstances are right for us to take them in and find them loving homes,” Haynes said.

The SQSPCA is receiving inquiries by telephone and e-mail every day for dogs, but cannot meet the growing demand as people search for companions in this difficult time, she added.

Once again, all expenses associated with transporting dogs from Lebanon to Cooperstown have been paid with no cost to the SQSPCA, this time by Linda Nealon, a volunteer that helps animals in crisis.

“I feel tremendous empathy for the dogs arriving from Animals Lebanon. These dogs were rescued after being shot, dragged behind a truck and then hit by another car, and dumped onto the streets by families unable to care for their family pets anymore,” recounted Nealon.

With the Lebanese pound being devalued to almost nothing, people are starving and unable to feed their families let alone their pets, so the circumstances there are dire, Nealon said.

“Animals Lebanon is a safety net, rescuing as many animals as they can and providing veterinary care. Their foster families are full and no adoptions are taking place in Lebanon due to the civil unrest and poverty,” Nealon continued.

“Thankfully Stacie Haynes and the Susquehanna SPCA have stepped up to take in 13 dogs being flown to New York this Monday. They will travel with volunteer John Tarraf by plane for 25 hours in cargo and, upon landing, will be driven straight to the gates of the SQSPCA where they will be welcomed, fed, and watered after their long journey. I am hopeful every one of these pups will find a loving and wonderful forever home,” she said.

The Delaware Valley Humane Society, also experiencing a shortage of dogs in recent months, will partner with the SQSPCA in sheltering and adopting out the Lebanon rescues.

### ***“Our Doors Are Open”***

If your cat or dog must be rehomed, the SQSPCA remains ready to help.

“Because of the financial uncertainty prompted by COVID-19, our surrender fees are temporarily waived,” Haynes reiterated. “We understand that sometimes it’s just not possible to keep a pet. My staff and I are committed to caring for and rehoming all surrendered animals.

“And sometimes – when the need is urgent and conditions are right – we will answer a call for help from beyond the borders of Otsego County, confident that people will open their hearts and their homes to animals in danger or distress.”

To learn more about the Susquehanna SPCA, to view available animals, or to donate, visit [www.sqspca.org](http://www.sqspca.org)

*In operation since 1917, the Susquehanna SPCA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization committed to caring for homeless, surrendered, and seized companion animals and finding them loving, forever homes.*