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A Little Love: Eleven Year Old Alexa Briggs Has Dedicated Herself to Rescuing Abandoned Dogs

By [Michael DiBiaso](#)

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East Haven - The black Labrador retrievers follow 11 year-old Alexa Briggs around her house step for step. One, Zoey, is Alexa's dog. The other, Annie, has been recently rescued from the wreckage of Hurricane Katrina. They found her trapped in a house flooded by water. She was shipped up to Connecticut to await adoption.

For the past week Alexa has been fostering the dog, cleaning her, housebreaking her, training, loving her, teaching her all the things that will make some one want to give Annie a good home.

Annie is one of more than a dozen dogs that Alexa has fostered in the past year and then passed on to new homes in the area. Many of the dogs, like Annie, have been rescued while others have been abandoned or abused. Many were waiting to be euthanized at pounds.

"We just take them in and clean them up and show them that nobody is going to harm them," says Alexa.

Alexa started rescuing dogs last year when she read online that many pounds put down dogs in as little as eight days after taking custody of them. She got in touch with Labs4Rescue, a rescue group that finds foster homes for dogs and homes for dogs. Since then there has been an extra dog or two in Alexa's home every day.

"When you see a dog in a shelter or a cage they can be really nervous or wild, but usually when you get them home they are really good natured, even mild," says Alexa.

The first thing she does when she gets a dog is give them a bath, clean their ears, clip their nails, and begin training. When she gets home from school each day, she plays with them for an hour, does her homework, and then plays with them for another hour.

"I'll usually stay up with them for an hour or so before I go to bed, just petting them so they can fall asleep, so then I can fall asleep. They just want to be loved," says Alexa.

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"Some of the dogs get so protective of her that they will sleep at the foot of her bed and not even let me in the room," says Arthur, Alexa's father.

Additionally, Alexa and several of her friends donate their time collecting money and food for area animal shelters and rescue foundations. Their efforts have raised more than \$10,000 in the past year.

"We stand in front of stores every weekend from February to June. I think that we have been in front of every store in East Haven and Branford," says Alexa.

Last year she started "Animal Corner" in the East Haven Academy's school newspaper, a column she wrote each week featuring a dog in need of adoption.

It makes perfect sense that Alexa wants to be a veterinarian in the future and open her own shelter for animals in need.

"I noticed that every dog that we get has something wrong with them. They have long nails that are painful or they are really dirty. If I was a vet then I could take care of them. I want to help animals in need. I want to be able to help people who can not afford to get their dogs help, just because it is the right thing to do," says Alexa.

Next week Annie is going to be adopted by a family in New Jersey. It isn't always easy for Alexa to give up the dogs she has saved, but she is content knowing that she has made another animal safe and happy and that soon she will have another dog, running around her home, sleeping beside Alexa's bed, grateful for having been saved.

Anyone interested in fostering a dog can contact Ann Hilchey at Ann@Labs4rescue.com.

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