

New Mobile-area animal rescue groups include SouthBARK, Angels' Arms, Labs4Rescue

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By **Press-Register Correspondent**

MOBILE, Ala. — In Mobile County, several active, enthusiastic and caring animal rescue groups are working to find loving homes for as many pets as possible.

One organization, SouthBARK, is relatively new, but in just four months has found a way to save more than 200 dogs by transporting them to an area where pet overpopulation is not a problem.

Kitty Tripp of the organization said SouthBARK works primarily with other groups in Connecticut and Illinois, and, since the local group's inception, and in partnership with the Humane Society of Escambia County, has made five transports averaging 40 animals each. Groups from all over the country are relocating pets from overcrowded shelters to other parts of the country where pet proliferation is not an issue.

Each transport, Tripp said, costs \$750-\$900, including gasoline and basic vetting — defined as age-appropriate shots — and whatever other treatment is needed to get a health certificate from a veterinarian.

Funding for transportation comes mainly from fundraisers; a recent bake sale on the Eastern Shore brought close to \$1,000, she said.

SouthBARK also gets some food and volunteer help from such groups as the St. Francis Guild at Episcopal Church of the Redeemer; from individuals who serve as "fosters" and keep the pets until they are ready for transport; and from its dozen or so core volunteers.

Tripp also pointed out that SouthBARK has worked with some dogs needing medical treatment and not just the "perfect, pretty, healthy ones."

"We have sent (up North) toothless cattle dogs, friendly pit bulls and heartworm positive dogs. They are all treated by rescue groups that have funding available to help with these critters," she said.

Emily Reynolds Thompson of Loxley is president of SouthBARK. To contact SouthBARK and learn how you can help, e-mail Foster@saveasoutherndog.com.

Angels' Arms

Another successful group is Angels' Arms Animal Rescue and Transportation Services, which was incorporated in January 2010 and received 501©(3)

nonprofit status in May 2010.

President Mary Ann Friedlander said Angels' Arms is an all-volunteer group whose focus is to remove adoptable pets from Mobile County Animal Shelter.

"We often choose those with special needs that require veterinary treatment or surgery before they are suitable for adoption," she said.

Friedlander and fellow volunteer Barbara Work have re-homed and/or transported to adoption centers 120 pets from the shelter so far.

She said Angels' Arms also helps other rescue organizations move pets to reputable, adoption-guaranteed shelters and to permanent, responsible homes. "In 2010, Barbara and I logged in 13,350 miles in transporting or assisting in transporting pets," she said.

"Angels' Arms requires an adoption application and contract, and all pets are fully vetted and spayed or neutered prior to adoption," she said. "We check references and do a home visit for each placement."

Funding comes from donations, fundraising events and volunteers. Reach Friedlander at 251-709-6435 for details.

Labs4Rescue

Labs4Rescue has saved 43 Labradors from the county shelter, and according to the group's spokeswoman, Wendy McArthur, the dogs "are now living in fabulous homes in New England." This national rescue organization has placed some 4,500 Labs over the years, she said.

McArthur said finding homes for the animals requires "lots of effort from volunteers up North, foster families in Mobile and volunteers/vets locally who make it all work." But it's been very heartwarming to receive Christmas photos from New England that show "our guys, in the snow, on the beach, with families who just love them."

More animals could be saved, she said, "if the public becomes aware of the need for local foster families." Several Labs are at the shelter now awaiting a foster home, she said, adding that "Labs4Rescue (www.Labs4Rescue.com.) will pay for the vetting; the only thing the foster (family) has to do is pay for food and give them lots of TLC."

To reach the local arm of Labs4Rescue, contact adoption coordinator Jennifer Williamson at **jwx3@bellsouth.net** , cell 251-554-1426 or Shana LaPointe, **shana2576@gmail.com** .

(This story was written by Jo Anne McKnight, Press-Register correspondent.)