

Canine Rescue

New children's book puts spotlight on dog adoption

By Alfred Santasiere III

Earlier this season, the Yankees hosted a group of special guests, including a canine and an author with a unique story.

On July 7, Jane Paley celebrated the release of her new book, *Hooper Finds a Family*, in a Yankee Stadium suite while the Yankees took on the Tampa Bay Rays.

Yankees president Randy Levine and his wife, Mindy, are active supporters of Labs4rescue, a not-for-profit organization that rescues and finds new homes for dogs from a variety of unfortunate circumstances.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Levines were instrumental in the rescue of several dogs, including a yellow Lab named Hooper.

"We found homes for seven dogs and kept one," Mindy Levine said. "It was a tough time, but so many beautiful moments came out of those adoptions."

Through Labs4rescue, Paley and her family, who reside in New York and Connecticut, adopted Hooper.

"We had lost a dog to cancer, and we were grieving," Paley said. "I went online and poured my heart out into cyberspace. Mindy, who I didn't know at all, saw what I had written, and she contacted me to say that she had the perfect dog for my family."

"Mindy inspected our house to make sure that it was hospitable for a dog, and everything worked out. We really worked hard to get him back healthy because he was sickly when we first got him."

Earlier this year, Paley, who is an Emmy Award-winning television producer, completed the book about Hooper's journey from Louisiana to his new home.

"I kept diaries of my correspondence with Mindy over the last few years, and I decided to write a book for kids about overcoming adversity," Paley said. "This dog lived through a storm, he lived through shelters, and he had to overcome so many things. I think it sends a great message to kids because it's a relatable story about survival, hope and confidence."

The children's book, which is geared toward readers ages 8 to 12, was published by HarperCollins Publishers.



To date, Labs4rescue, which is run completely by volunteers, has saved 9,500 dogs.

"We rescue dogs from natural disasters, high kill shelters and people that — because of unfortunate times — have to surrender their dogs," said Cathy Mahle, who founded the organization in 2002. "Sometimes people surrender their dog because of illnesses or allergies. With the economy the way it is, so many families' homes have been foreclosed, forcing them to turn in their dogs. And as a lot of soldiers were deployed to Iraq, they surrendered their dogs."

For more information on Labs4rescue, log on to www.labs4rescue.com. ❧