

Why Animal Shelters Are the Worst Option for Dogs

According to our newest Game Changer, Essie Dube, dogs aren't disposable - they're not 'things' that can be euthanized. To that end, she works hard to keep dogs out of kennels and in loving homes. Here's what she wants the world to know about dogs and shelters.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Essie Dube, a volunteer with Anchor Paws Rescue in Rhode Island, has dedicated her life to dogs
- Essie belongs to a large group of volunteers who make up Anchor Paws Rescue, a foster-based rescue focused on helping dogs in need
- Foster-based rescues provide an ideal alternative to animal shelters, allowing dogs to stay in a safe home setting while waiting to be adopted
- Essie has also opened up her home and yard, offering cageless boarding for dogs via her Doggie Delight Daycare

Essie Dube, a volunteer with Anchor Paws Rescue in Rhode Island, has dedicated her life to what she believes is God's best gift — dogs. Nominated for a Healthy Pets Game Changer Award, Essie fell in love with the rottweiler breed when she was a night volunteer at North Kingstown Shelter.

"I would unlock the shelter at 10:00 to 11:00 every night and let all the dogs out to pee so they didn't have to hold it until 9:00 the next morning. There was a rottweiler in the shelter at the time. I just absolutely fell in love with him, and he became the impetus for me to rescue rottweilers for 37 years of my life," she said.

Fostering and Boarding Dogs in the Community

After losing her rottweilers in 2019, Essie now shares her home with two mixed-breed rescues — Gizmo and Ladybird. She's also opened up her home and yard, offering cageless boarding for dogs via her Doggie Delight Daycare.¹

"I have a Facebook webpage called Doggie Delight Daycare and Boarding, and people contact me through that. I have them bring their dog for a meet and greet to make sure the chemistry will work between the two dogs. I have a lovely big backyard that is on the other side of woods and a stream and it's all fenced in. We have the dogs go out there. If there's no aggression at all, then I will accept the dog for boarding. That's the way I do it," she says.

Essie also belongs to a large group of volunteers who make up Anchor Paws Rescue, a foster-based rescue focused on helping local dogs in need. They not only rescue dogs and cats from Rhode Island but also from states across the U.S. According to Anchor Paws Rescue:²

"We are a community resource center bringing animals and people together. We provide adoption, education, and fostering services in a professional and compassionate way. We receive no federal or state funding and rely solely on community donations and adoption fees to support our care for the animals."

Essie explained that Anchor Paws Rescue has no physical building for the animals. Instead, "We arrange for fosters," she says. "The minute they get off the transport, they're taken into a home until someone adopts them. It turns out to be a wonderful procedure. They get socialized and they get good food and love ... It's a very big volunteer community for a very small state."

Keeping Dogs Out of a Kennel and in a Loving Home

Animal shelters are stressful environments for dogs. Faced with loud noises, crowded conditions and cold, cement floors, animals are often scared and anxious. Many dogs get passed over by potential new owners, as their true personalities don't shine in the shelter environment.

Foster-based rescues provide an ideal alternative, allowing dogs to stay in a safe home setting while waiting to be adopted. When asked what she loves most about helping to foster dogs, Essie explains:

"I just love dogs. It started so many years ago and I guess the fact that we get them adopted, that they're not considered things that can be euthanized, that can be disposed of. I understand the shelters have a big overcrowding situation these days because people buy them for Christmas gifts and then the novelty wears off and they wind up in a shelter, which is very, very unfair."

Essie wants the world to know that dogs shouldn't be viewed as presents or two-week commitments:

"When you rescue a dog, it's a lifetime commitment. The rotties I had never lived past 9, unfortunately. But if you're going to get a cute little shih tzu or a yorkie, understand that they live 18 to 20 years, and that's the commitment you make."

"It's not that you get them and the minute you find out they need veterinary care and they need good food, you turn them back to a shelter. That's the worst thing in the world for a dog in my experience."

It's true that when you bring an animal into your home, you become their guardian — one they didn't get to choose. So it's our job to nourish them by providing veterinary care, emotional support and more for their lifespan. If you get a different job, move to a new location or have other circumstances change in your life, that animal deserves your commitment — not to be dropped off at a shelter when times get tough.

Essie adds, "We don't give them [dogs] enough credit for the emotion they have. They are closer to us in emotion than we realize. The love you get from a dog that you rescue is worth it all." If you like to learn more the rescue where Essie volunteers, you can find them at AnchorPawsRescue.org.³ They're always in need of foster homes, volunteers and donations, as well as permanent, loving homes for the dogs in their care.

Sources and References

¹ [Facebook, Doggie Delight Daycare](#)

^{2, 3} [Anchor Paws Rescue](#)

