

Community Animal Welfare Consortium
c/o Companion Animal Resource and Education (CARE) Center
PO Box 161
Urbana, IL 61803-0161

May 23, 2007

Ms. Kari Prior
Lucky Puppy Boutique & Barkery
c/o Market Place Shopping Center
2000 North Neil Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Management
Market Place Shopping Center
2000 North Neil Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Dear Ms. Prior and Market Place Shopping Center Management:

We are writing on behalf of the Community Animal Welfare Consortium, a group recently formed by animal welfare leaders in East-Central Illinois to collectively address the needs of its homeless pet population, primarily cats and dogs. This consortium includes representatives from humane societies and rescue groups of all sizes, animal care and control facilities, and humane education organizations. Veterinarians and other leaders in the companion animal field, such as individuals from the University of Illinois and Parkland College, are also critical contributors to the consortium. Currently, the consortium is comprised of approximately 50 members representing more than 25 organizations.

We recently learned of Ms. Prior's plans to open the Lucky Puppy Boutique & Barkery at Market Place Shopping Center through an article in *The News-Gazette* (April 29, 2007). Congratulations on opening a business that helps to reinforce and celebrate the special bond that many people have with their canine companions.

As much as we applaud Ms. Prior's efforts to open a dog-related business, we feel compelled to express our grave concern about the business' plan to sell puppies. Selling puppies in a retail environment has the potential to add to our already-inflated homeless pet population, presents many challenges that may negatively affect the puppies and their future development, and supports less-than-ideal breeding facilities and practices.

Selling puppies in a retail environment has the potential to add to our already-inflated homeless dog population:

- Some of the leading causes of dog relinquishments are related to poor planning and unrealistic expectations about dog ownership. Selling puppies in a retail environment can lead to impulse purchases--which often lead to broken relationships--when the challenges of raising a puppy into a well-behaved adult dog are realized.
- Puppies left intact (i.e. not spayed or neutered) may later be bred purposefully or accidentally and add generations of offspring to our community's homeless pet population.
- There is less opportunity to learn about the health and temperament needs of each breed and each breeder's particular line of dogs and no opportunity to meet adult relatives of the puppies, contributing to uninformed decisions.
- A long-term relationship between the new owner and the breeder is lacking, which is an important support system should any problems arise.

Selling puppies in a retail environment presents many challenges that may negatively affect the puppies and their future development:

- Puppies sold in stores often miss out on quality socialization time with the dam and littermates in order to travel to the store and be available for purchase at a young age.
- Intestinal parasites, such as roundworms, and infectious diseases, such as parvovirus, can be exacerbated by the stress of traveling and living in a new environment and can easily spread amongst puppies.
- Illinois House Bill 0203, the Retail Sale of Dogs and Cats Act, acknowledges these challenges and would impose various requirements on pet dealers who sell dogs or cats including: veterinarian examinations, providing and maintaining records, and providing certain standards of care for animals. The act provides remedies for a purchaser if an animal becomes ill or dies as a result of an illness that existed in the animal at the time of purchase and would impose penalties for pet dealers who sell diseased or ill animals.

Selling puppies in a retail environment supports less-than-ideal breeding facilities and practices:

- Without the opportunity to visit the breeding facility, consumers will not be fully informed about the puppies' origins. What are the living conditions for the breeding animals and the puppies? What is the socialization regimen? What are the breeder's goals and what genetic tests are conducted to produce the healthiest animals? All of the nationally known animal-welfare organizations and respected authors in the field of dog care and training advise consumers to glean the answers to these questions and meet a puppy's parents before making a purchase.
- Investigations have found that retail store owners who believed their puppies were coming from reputable breeders were not. It is impossible to confirm the living conditions and practices of a breeding facility unless one visits it regularly.

We believe there are other options available to Ms. Prior that would attract customers, educate consumers, and benefit the community's dog population. For example:

- 1) Working with responsible breeders, post each puppy's picture along with the breeder's name and phone number so people can make a non-impulsive decision, meet the dam and other relatives, and see the living conditions and socialization routine for themselves.
- 2) Work with local adoption agencies to place homeless, spayed/neutered puppies and dogs via adoption events, pictures, or scrolling computer images.
- 3) Work with local agencies to offer educational classes on selecting and caring for dogs at the store.

Finally, you may not be aware that in the early 1990s the animal welfare community in Champaign-Urbana staged numerous protest events in an effort to stop the retail sale of dogs in our community. Those events were successful. The issues and concerns that drove those protests still exist today and many individuals in our community remain passionately committed to addressing those issues. We have enclosed some newspaper clippings documenting the 1990's controversy.

We would like to meet with you to discuss this matter further. The CARE Center facilitates the consortium and may be reached at (217) 417-3160 or info@carecentercu.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Helmink
President, CARE Center

On behalf of participants in the community animal welfare consortium:

Akita Rescue of Champaign-Urbana
ASPCA Midwest Office
Birds On A Budget Bird Club
Canine Connection
Caring Hands Animal Hospital
CATsNAP (Champaign Area Trap Spay Neuter & Adoption Program)
Central Illinois Small Animal Rescue (CISAR)
Champaign County Animal Control
Champaign County Humane Society
Companion Animal Resource and Education (CARE) Center
Douglas County Animal Control
Feathered Friends Avian Rescue
Four Counties Mobile Veterinary Services
Robin Hadley, DVM
Sarah Hurley, CVT
Keeshond Rescue of the Central States
Last Resort Animal Rescue, Inc.
E. Barbara Meyer
Okaw Veterinary Clinic
Piatt County Animal Welfare Association
Pocket Pets Animal Rescue
Society for Hooved Animals' Rescue and Emergency (S.H.A.R.E.)
VCA Heritage Animal Hospital