

## Wisconsin Humane Society Agrees to Assume Assets of State's Largest Puppy Breeder

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **Did the Wisconsin Humane Society purchase the assets of a large scale commercial dog breeding operation?**

Yes, the Wisconsin Humane Society has reached an agreement to obtain and close the largest dog breeding facility in Wisconsin. The closing is expected to occur sometime next week. Puppy Haven is a commercial breeding operation specializing in breeding small, mixed breed dogs, sometimes referred to as hybrids or designer dogs.



*Jenna is one of 1,134 dogs who were rescued by WHS to find loving homes.*

#### **Why did WHS purchase the breeding facility?**

The decision to purchase and close the kennel was made by the WHS Board of Directors after a good deal of time considering the best course of action for the dogs and WHS' ability to obtain the funds necessary to make the purchase. The living conditions for dogs in mass breeding facilities do not meet the medical, social or emotional needs of dogs, making the purchase consistent with our mission to create a community that values animals and treats them with respect and kindness.

In addition to saving more than 1,100 dogs, WHS purchased Puppy Haven to alert people to the need for stronger legislation that includes humane conditions and proper oversight of breeding establishments. We hope to educate potential adopters about puppy mills and discourage people from obtaining dogs bred at puppy mills, who are often found in pet stores.

We're committed to find loving homes for all of the dogs. The transfer of dogs will occur over several months so each dog can be provided with the best possible care while WHS continues to serve animals from the community. In addition, the Puppy Haven property will not be used again to breed dogs, none of the dogs at the facility will be sold for further breeding and Mr. Havens will not receive windfall profits from the sale. All of these goals will be accomplished.

#### **Why did the Puppy Haven owner sell the business to WHS?**

Wallace Havens, owner, was willing to substantially discount the sale of the business because the dogs would be retired and placed in good homes by WHS, an organization that had the ability to provide them with the care that they needed. He is retiring and is not interested in pursuing a future breeding business. Havens is supportive of legislation to strengthen the oversight of breeding facilities and consumer protection for people interested in obtaining a dog.

**When will dogs be transferred for adoption?**

Since February, WHS has received about 300 dogs from Puppy Haven in anticipation of the sale and prior to completing the complicated legal arrangements. Those were dogs being culled; slated for auction or euthanasia because of their health, age or inability to breed. Some of those dogs with special needs were accepted by qualified and caring breed placement groups.

WHS will obtain the most vulnerable dogs first. Males and females will be separated to cease the breeding process. Because there are more than a thousand dogs at the facility, they will be transported to WHS over the course of several months. This will enable WHS to provide each dog with the individual and unique care that they deserve, while we continue to serve animals from our community.

**What is the condition of the dogs?**

Because many of the adult dogs have had limited human contact, they are very fearful. In addition to any medical support and testing for disease, they will also require special evaluation, lots of very tender treatment and extreme patience. Many will require foster placement for socialization and specialized care. Although these dogs present unique challenges to us, heartwarming stories have emerged and we are confident that our expert staff will be able to create a safety net for reversing a difficult past. Eliminating their pain and gently sensitizing them to people will open a whole new world to them and help them understand the joy of being a loving companion. Medically, the dogs have a variety of conditions that our veterinarians are treating.

According to Havens, “The dogs live in packs consisting of approximately 3-5 females and one male in in/out runs, except when they have their puppies. Outside runs are on pea gravel measuring 8'X32', the inside is 4'X8'. They are used to being with other dogs and haven't spent time in homes with people. They are used to going in and out as they please. They must learn to lead, be house broken, eat at certain times as they are use to eating from a self feeder. They must learn to drink from a bowl rather than a drinking fountain or 'lixit' waterer.”

**Have the dogs been tested for brucellosis?**

Each dog who the Wisconsin Humane Society has received from Puppy Haven has been brucellosis tested. WHS has also performed confirmatory tests. All tests have been negative.

For those not familiar with brucellosis, it is a bacterial disease that can be transmitted to humans, although the risk is very low, even from an animal who has tested positive. It is an infection that causes reproductive failure in dogs and mostly flu-like symptoms, if contracted by humans.

**Will all of the dogs find homes?**

WHS is hopeful that all of the dogs will be able to be placed in loving and committed homes. Although the majority of the funds for this project remain to be raised, several

individual donors have provided gifts with the condition that WHS place the dogs from Puppy Haven. However, if a special situation arises, we will ask breed placement groups, who have already been very helpful, and humane societies to provide assistance. Many compassionate people are willing to open their homes to these dogs and WHS has a wide variety of services to assist adopters and dogs make a smooth transition.

**How many animals will be impacted by this sale?**

At it's peak, Puppy Haven housed approximately 1,600 dogs and produced about 3,000 puppies annually, primarily sold to pet stores throughout the Midwest and nationally. There are currently more than 1,100 dogs on the property. The dogs include 28 different breeds, from American Eskimo to Yorkshire Terriers. Many of the dogs were Pugs and Beagles that were used to produce Puggles, a popular type of mixed breed dog that Havens created. There are also large numbers of Poodles, Miniature Schnauzers and Shih Tzus on site.

**How much did it cost to purchase Puppy Haven?**

Our agreement expressly states that the purchase price would not be disclosed, but Havens agreed to substantially discount the operation in order for the Wisconsin Humane Society to obtain the business; otherwise the transaction would not have been possible.

**How was the purchase funded?**

WHS is asking animal lovers to invest in this project by making a tax-deductible charitable donation to close the breeding operation and pay for the considerable cost to care for and adopt the dogs into good homes. You may make a contribution online at <http://www.wihumane.org/donate>. You can also mail a gift to WHS at 4500 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53208. Make sure that you let us know that the gift is to help the dogs from Puppy Haven.

PetsMart Charities has provided a generous gift of equipment to care for the animals, including leashes, collars, toys, food bowls and grooming supplies. There are many needs that still remain, which will be posted on the WHS Wishlist.

**How can I help?**

Please consider adopting a dog from a humane society or breed placement group.

Please consider making a donation at <http://www.wihumane.org/donate>.

Help to pass legislation to protect dogs from exploitation as well as consumers who purchase them. Visit the WHS website at [www.wihumane.org/advocacy/pupmymill](http://www.wihumane.org/advocacy/pupmymill). It includes information on how to contact your legislators to let them know that you want their support for stronger legislation to regulate dog breeders.

Contact newspapers, radio and television stations to speak out about how demand for designer dogs has fueled the mass breeding industry that includes many unscrupulous breeders, motivated solely by profit, with no consideration for the needs of the dogs or consumers.

You can also help by becoming a foster parent to a dog or litter, if you are interested in providing a short term home safety net for dogs with treatable conditions. Contact the WHS volunteer department at [www.wihumane.org/volunteer](http://www.wihumane.org/volunteer).

### **How many breeding facilities are there in Wisconsin?**

There is no way of knowing how many breeding facilities there are in Wisconsin because of the lack of regulation, but compassionate people interested in obtaining a dog need to do their homework. Demand for specific types of dogs and lack of knowledge or indifference about the exploitation of the puppy's parents will continue to fuel cruelty until concerned people insist upon humane treatment of breeding dogs. Some breeding facilities, like Puppy Haven, are inspected by the USDA, but most are not. Additional legislation to strengthen humane treatment for all facilities is necessary. Learn more about selecting a breeder at <http://www.wihumane.org/services/SelectDogBreeder>.

### **What special programming is being launched at WHS to help these dogs?**

In addition to expanding our veterinary staff to provide more medical intervention, as well as spay neuter surgery for all of the dogs, the WHS behavior team has created specific workshops on the specialized care and behavior that adopters can expect. Breed placement groups are welcome to provide information and workshops on the specialized care and behavior adopters can expect, as well; contact our Training Manager at [krinzel@wihumane.org](mailto:krinzel@wihumane.org).

### **What will happen to the Puppy Haven kennel?**

The business is closed and the operation will be shut down after the dogs are transferred to WHS. The kennels will be dismantled and much of the equipment will be salvaged by WHS. The use of the property will be restricted so that it can never be used to breed companion animals.

### **Won't more breeders just fill the vacuum left by breeding facilities like Puppy Haven?**

It is our hope that all breeders follow humane guidelines. New legislation is being developed to ensure licensing and inspection of breeding facilities. Puppy Haven was regularly inspected by the USDA, but the current laws do not address all of the medical, physical, social or emotional needs of the dogs.

WHS will continue to educate people about the need to follow humane guidelines for breeding. However, we recognize that this is also a consumer issue. People interested in obtaining a companion for their family can make a big impact by demanding that humane breeding practices are in place for the parents of the dog they are adding to their family.

Your voice needs to be heard. You can contact your legislator through our website and the media to let them know how much you care about humane breeding practices and urge them to support humane legislation.

**Is the Wisconsin Humane Society opposed to dog breeding?**

No. WHS recognizes that there are responsible individuals breeding dogs who provide compassionate care. However, legislation and consumer diligence is required to safeguard animals. Visit <http://www.wihumane.org/services/SelectDogBreeder> to learn more.