

The Puppy Mill Project is making a difference

by Sue Quandahl

Last winter, I became involved with a non-profit group in the Chicagoland area called The Puppy Mill Project (TPMP). It is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to educating the public about the horrors of puppy mills from the puppy mill/pet store connection to the mothers left behind to the need for tougher legislation and enforcement.

The prospect of my involvement as an advocate (a term we like to use as opposed to activist) took much thought and consideration. I have a dear friend who is very passionate about helping the puppy-mill dogs, and through many conversations, I reached a point where I really felt that she needed my help.

Not many people are willing to involve themselves in this type of an activity. At its core, it is simply a matter of devoting time. I have spent many Saturdays at peaceful protests in front of Pawsh Puppies stores in Lincoln Park and Northbrook Court Mall. One day there were five of us, another day we had more than 30 people. TPMP has documented proof that these stores are buying puppies from a known puppy mill.

Last May, we received word that Pawsh Puppies in Lincoln Park was being evicted from that location. Although this is a victory for the mill dogs, the owner is reported to be opening shop elsewhere under a different business name. TPMP has been protesting his new location.

Last April, a small but determined group of us drove to Springfield to lobby for support of HB5772, also known as the Pet Disclosure Bill. We left with only a



The Puppy Mill Project supporters pose with Illinois Governor Pat Quinn after he signed House Bill 5772, also known as the Pet Disclosure Bill, into law.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PUPPY MILL PROJECT.

glimmer of hope that there would be enough sponsorship and support. On May 26, 2010, this bill passed both the House and the Senate and becomes effective January 1, 2011! To view the bill in its entirety, go to www.ilga.gov and type in HB5772 in the box on the left side of the page. It is worth reading.

Basically, the bill requires sellers to post in a conspicuous place on or near the cage of the animal for sale the following information:

- Age, sex and weight of the animal
- Breed of the animal
- Record of vaccinations, veterinary care and treatment
- Record of surgical or lack of sterilization
- Name and address of breeder (critical to the bill), their license number and USDA license number if applicable

- Name and address of any other person who owned or harbored the animal previously.

In addition, a handful of the "team" hosted an educational booth at the Save-A-Pet shelter's annual fundraiser in Grayslake. We are hoping to obtain booth space in at least three more areas.

Educating the public is the key to victory for the mill dogs. The puppies have it the easiest, they leave in five to six weeks if they are not chosen to be retained for breeding stock. The mothers left behind suffer the worst kind of living hell imaginable for an animal.

There are simple ways that we all can make a difference. I witnessed firsthand that phone calls to our elected officials are a very powerful tool. Their assistants are trained, cordial and friendly. It takes less than a minute to make the call and state your business.

Don't support a pet store in any way that sells puppies. Petco and PetSmart only sponsor rescues, they will not sell puppies.

Donate money/time/talent to an organization such as TPMP. Something as simple as running copies or maybe a donation of paper—whatever they need. You don't have to walk in front of the pet store with a smile on your face in all types of weather conditions (the same ones the mill dogs endure) holding a sign, but this activity is very effective.

If anyone would like more information, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at squandahl@wowway.com or visit the TPMP at www.thepupptomillproject.org.

Thanks for taking the time to read.



LOVE DOGS?
Then never buy a puppy from a pet store... chances are this is her mother left behind in the puppy mill.
LEARN THE TRUTH



THE PUPPY MILL PROJECT www.thepupptomillproject.org



Mother left behind in the mill

This poster is carried on Chicago Transit Authority buses.

POSTER COURTESY OF THE PUPPY MILL PROJECT.