



## Steve Dale's Pet World

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# Puppy Mill Project, "Go Away" to Pet Stores Selling Puppies

By [Steve Dale](#), today at 7:10 pm



Photo credit to Karina Kim

Guest blog by [Andrea Kim](#)

To celebrate [National Puppy Mill Awareness Day](#), there was a puppy mill protest on September 17 at Puppies R Us. The store allegedly sells puppies purchased from puppy mills and also reportedly breeds Pit Bulls. Over 50 people came out to protest on Ashland Avenue. The refrain was, "Go humane or go away."

Cari Meyers, founder of [The Puppy Mill Project](#), stated, "We are here to educate the community about the actual origin of where this pet shop, and any pet shop, buys their dogs. 99.9% come from puppy mills and we want the public to know they are being lied to. Responsible breeders do not sell to pet stores. They are buying sick and sometimes dying dogs, and it's got to stop."

Meyers continued, "We're out here to tell the truth and educate the public. We do it by protesting, going to the schools, we work on legislation and its time everybody knew what was really going on here, and across the country. There are 10,000 puppy mills across this country and it's a multi-

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## Steve Dale

Dog/Cat Behavior Consultant; pet advocate; broadcaster, journalist

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billion dollar industry. 85% of the puppy mills are Amish mills. This particular store (allegedly) buys all their dogs from Amish puppy mills in Indiana and lies about it. That would be consumer fraud. Puppy mill dogs have genetic, emotional and physical problems and when people that have bought these dogs cannot deal with them or afford the vet bills, they give them to the shelters and other dogs die because there is no room."

I asked several people about why they decided to protest with The Puppy Mill Project. Below are some of their responses.

Jill Cahr, co-founder [Trio Animal Foundation](#): "This is one of the rare opportunities where a lot of different animal welfare groups in Chicago are working together to help animals and it makes a big difference when you come out and support each other."

Debbie H. has seven rescue dogs at home. She brought her dog, Cassidy, adopted from Save-A-Pet, to the protest. Cassidy is a four-year old, three-legged Brussels Griffon who was an auction mill rescue. When asked why she only has three legs, she explained that Cassidy's mother bit her leg off at birth and the auction was selling her for breeding purposes because even with three legs she could breed.

Mary S., from the French Bulldog Rescue: "The last ten dogs we've taken in have been pet store dogs given up by their owners because of major medical issues they couldn't afford to take care of. We also go and try to save dogs from puppy mills and I can tell you many, many horror stories from the experience with the puppy mills. Actually we just got a call the other day about a puppy miller going out of business and he said he's going to shoot the dogs as target practice."

Adele T. explained why she came to protest. "Of course, I'm against puppy mills. What people don't realize about puppy mills is they think, well, when they see a puppy in a store they think he's cute, he might even be reasonably healthy. But what they don't realize is that the puppy's mother is stuck in the puppy mill. The mothers are given no human contact, they're given no medical care, they're kept in cages like chickens. They are scared to death of people and they are bred over and over again until if you even see a dog that used to be in a puppy mill as a mother, they can barely walk, their stomachs are hanging because they're kept permanently pregnant.

Bloggers, Amy and Ed, from [Two Pitties In The City](#), brought their adopted dogs, Bruno and Mazzie to protest: "We really believe this is an important cause, especially since there are so many dogs in the shelter and so many amazing dogs that are in rescue that should be adopted."

Diego Leon, owner of [iPet Chicago](#), a dog walking and pet sitting business in Chicago: "We hate puppy mills. We want to see this store close down and we want to educate people about puppy mills. We want to reach out, especially, to the Hispanic communities that are not always well-informed about what goes on with puppy mills. So please, adopt. Don't shop. Educate yourself and do your homework."



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Edwardo D., a twenty-year old from a mostly Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago joined the protest with his dog, an adorable and sweet Golden Retriever: "It's a great organization and they are doing amazing things." He also explained that there is a grooming store which also sells puppies in his area where he would like to organize protests soon. He would like to dissuade neighbors and friends from buying puppies or even using their grooming services, due to the origin of the puppies they sell. He agrees that the people in his community do not understand the implications of supporting stores that sell puppies.

Personally, I come out to protest every chance I get, because the knowledge of the industry moves me to action. What these dogs go through is heartbreaking. If they survive being weaned too early, given no medical care, shipped cross-country without light, food or water, washed and displayed in a cage at a pet store, and be purchased (hopefully by responsible owners, which is not always the case,) the puppies are more fortunate than their parents in the mills. The parents are treated only as a commodity. They are used, neglected, and abused, sometimes kept in total darkness, and almost always covered in urine and feces. They are in confinement and misery their entire lives, producing litter after litter of puppies. When they die or can no longer produce, they are discarded like garbage. They are shot, bludgeoned, drowned, or sold at an auction. The puppy mill owners do not "waste money" on humane euthanasia.

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