



## Survivors of the Mill-Designer dogs in pet stores

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This silky terrier has been rescued after years of breeding in a puppy mill. She is now being fostered and prepared for adoption by the National Mill Dog Rescue in Colorado.

#### Credits:

Janie Jenkins - The Puppy Mill Project

Americans love a popular trend and what's hot in Hollywood often becomes the next trend for the rest of America as people try to keep up with what is in style. That has been bad news for pure breed dogs around the country as celebrities have fueled the desire for small dogs you can carry with you where you go. Just think of Paris Hilton and her dog Tinkerbell in the designer bag and you are looking at the tip of the iceberg.

Her popularity a few years back triggered an increase in the breeding and sales of Chihuahuas. In the meantime, consumer demand has grown for a greater variety of smaller, portable dogs to be mass-produced by breeders. Some of the trendy pets – like teacups and mini versions of certain breeds – don't exist naturally and tend to be runts that have been crossbred by un reputable breeders. These dogs are sold in pet stores and on the Internet and often have a myriad of health problems due to poor breeding standards.

While some of these fashionable pups go on to a life of doggie spas and doggie day care, the parents left behind in the puppy mills spend their lives in cages, living in filth with little human interaction. Organizations like the *National Mill Dog Rescue* step up and rescue these dogs and work at rehabilitating them so they may eventually be adopted. A recent group of survivors included a little Silky Terrier who was in horrible shape. Cari Meyers, the founder of Chicago's Puppy Mill Project, was volunteering at the rescue when this dog arrived.

"This poor little dog was in such bad shape and my last day there I decided I wanted to help work with her and provide the pampering that she deserved," says Meyers. "She was missing teeth, her jaw was out of line and she'd probably never been bathed. I wrapped her tightly in a blanket and waited for volunteers to come for the bathing and grooming that she needed."

The Mill Dog Rescue has a team of dedicated volunteers that will bathe, groom, work on socialization and training. Although the organization has a kennel in Peyton, Colorado, many of the dogs live in foster homes while waiting for adoption so they may finally learn what it's like to be a regular dog.

"Who knows how many puppies this girl had produced and many of them are probably living a pampered life. These amazing volunteers came in to bathe and shampoo her, put conditioner on her and groom her," adds Meyers. "They were so gentle and soothing and it was pampering that this poor girl had never, ever had, but desperately needed. She kept looking back at me for reassurance. In the end, they brushed her out and she eventually stopped shaking and this beautiful girl – a true star – emerged. I wrapped her in a towel and talked to her and slowly she started to not be so afraid, to trust. In the end, she rewarded me with a lick on the nose – a big step for this little dog that shook for half an hour in my arms earlier."

Since opening its doors near Colorado Springs in early 2007, the National Mill Dog Rescue has saved more than 5,500 survivors from puppy mills. In the past year, the organization has been part of several rescues when some puppy mills closed down. Founded by Theresa Strader, the organization has a network of around 1,000 volunteers.

The Puppy Mill Project is a Chicago-based advocacy organization that works on educating the public about puppy mills through peaceful protests and educational events. Since its inception two years ago, the organization has been instrumental in the closing of four pet stores, prevented the opening of four other stores and have worked with three small independent pet stores to go humane. Those stores now adopt out dogs and cats instead of selling them.

Learn more about the National Mill Dog Rescue *online*, on *Facebook* or on their *blog*. You may *donate online* to help the organization. Learn about the Puppy Mill Project *online* or follow them on *Facebook*.

*This is part three of a three part series. Part one focused on the rescue of German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois and part two focused story of a group of Cocker Spaniels.*

*Do you volunteer or work for a shelter or rescue that has programs you'd like to promote? Do you work in a pet-related business that has an interesting story to tell? If so, contact me at [kathypetexam@gmail.com](mailto:kathypetexam@gmail.com). Enjoy this article? Receive email alerts when new articles become available. Just click on the **subscribe** button above. You may also follow me on *Twitter*, *Facebook* or *read my blog*.*

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