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## Naperville's Dog Patch Pet and Feed to stop selling puppies—opts to adopt

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Kathy Mordini, Chicago Pets Examiner

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Naperville's oldest pet store will stop selling puppies at the end of January as the company works to increase adoptions of dogs and cats, kittens and puppies from their location. Dog Patch Pet and Feed announced this past week that it was making the change.

### The move to rescue

"For over 40 years, we've offered cats and kittens for adoption in the store," says owner Greg Gordon. "I've felt more strongly the past few years that we need to do more to help the dogs that don't have a chance. At that time, none of the rescues wanted to work with me. One customer of mine was doing rescue out of northern Indiana. Earlier this year, I was able to convince her to bring me the death row dogs – the dogs due to be put down in a matter of days. We've placed 24 dogs this year."

The dog with the biggest impact was Daisy, a Beagle rescued off death row earlier in the year. Gordon brought the dog into the store for adoption and fell for the dog and brought her home. Daisy had heartworm, ringworm and several other health issues. At one point, Daisy had a blood clot and almost didn't pull through, but she's in the clear now and is now part of Gordon's family.

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"One of the things that has been truly amazing this week is that the people that I thought were my adversaries – those protesting the sale of dogs (the Puppy Mill Project) have helped me connect with more people to make this happen. The outpouring from that organization and their rescue network has been incredible," says Gordon.



Slideshow: Dog Patch Pet and Feed

#### Matching pets with families

"In the over 40 years we've been in business, we have refined the ability to get the right dog in the hands of the right people," says Gordon. "I am passionate about this. I have not had a problem over the years telling people they can't have a dog if the situation isn't right. The animals are my responsibility and it's important whether adopting or selling to get them in the hands of people I trust. If we have a funny feeling, we says no."

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Location: 1108 East Ogden,  
Naperville, Illinois

By the end of January, his store will have transitioned from all the dogs he had committed to take and sell before the holiday season. He has room for 30 animals presently and is working on expansion to help out the larger dogs looking for a home. Unlike other stores that sell dogs, Gordon adds that Dog Patch has always had an outside area for socialization and play.

"I know with the skills we have, within a year we'll be moving more shelter dogs from my store than the number of puppies we sold," says Gordon. "Rescued animals are getting a second chance and so many animals are happy to be settling into a new home. I see the gratitude every day with the dog we rescued, Daisy. I've been trying to find a way to do this for a long time and until I connected recently with many of the rescuers who are so vocal against puppy sales, I didn't know I could make it happen this quickly."

Gordon currently has around 20 kittens in the store ready for adoption as well. He said earlier this year they rescued an adult cat that was about run out of time after sitting in a shelter for four months. They found a good home within a day. Gordon, who worked at the store 15 years before taking over as owner, said that he and the store's founder Craig Allen wrestled for years about making the transition to adoption and how and when to make it happen.

#### Support from the public

"I've been overwhelmed by the support I've received since I made the announcement," says Gordon. "The outpouring on social media has been amazing. There have been about 15-20 people in the store within the first day that had never come in before that said they were supportive of my new policy. I currently work with about 14 veterinarians to help me care for the animals we have in house. One of the vets called and said for each new pet package they sell, they are donating \$25 to our rescue fund."

#### His own plan

Unlike other stores that are fostering for shelters and rescues, Dog Patch will be rescuing and adopting out the animals on its own. Gordon says that is so that he can continue to follow the same protocol for caring for and placing animals that the team at the store has used for forty years.

"We've never done things like everyone else," says Gordon. "Back in the seventies when the store opened, pet stores were prohibited by law from getting veterinary care for sick animals. At one point, the store had taken delivery of sick dogs and Craig Allen, the founder, loaded the dogs in a van and drove them to the department of agriculture to explain why this was a problem. He worked with the USDA to change the policy."

"The change has been scary and exciting at the same time," says Gordon. "I'm learning there is a massive rescue network and now I've stepped into this big time. The support for this change just continues to grow and I hope to help save more

and more pets from high kill shelters to give them a chance at a family.\*

Learn more about Dog Patch Pet and Feed online or follow them on Facebook.

*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. 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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By Kathy Mordini  
Chicago Pets Examiner

Kathy Mordini is a public relations specialist and former journalist. She is passionate about educating the public on pet adoption, pet rescue and.

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