

TO THE RESCUE

MICHELE ARMSTRONG OF LULU'S RESCUE INTERVENES AT THE "ZERO HOUR" TO GIVE SHELTER DOGS A SECOND CHANCE.

Anyone who has ever had a hard time sitting through those ASPCA commercials would not want to be in the position of Michele Armstrong when she opens her email in the morning. Each day, Lulu's Rescue in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, which Armstrong founded, receives a "last chance" list of photos and bios of dogs in shelters across the country. There are only so many dogs she can save from that list. If a dog is selected, it will be transferred to a foster home and adopted to a loving family. If not, at 4:30 that afternoon, the dog will likely become one of the 14,000 dogs in America that are killed in a shelter every day — and inhumanely, by being suffocated to death or struck in the heart. The next day, the scenario will repeat itself.

The task is even too tough for Armstrong herself — instead, she passes the list along to her co-founder, Jane Zeolla, who selects



dogs that she knows will be adopted quickly (for example, labs, golden retrievers, boxers). "We only have so many foster homes, and the number of foster homes we have open and available is directly proportionate to how many dogs we can [rescue] on a given day," says Armstrong. Today, she's a bit frazzled — only several hours before our interview, she had been working to prevent an owner from surrendering an older dog to a shelter and is doubtful she succeeded. "I know once it goes in, it's not coming out,"

she says. (Armstrong later updated us — the dog was placed in a foster home.)

Armstrong started Lulu's Rescue in 2009 and since then has adopted out more than 400 dogs that she rescued from high-kill shelters located mainly in the South. Her primary goal, however, is to take a proactive approach to pet overpopulation by providing low-cost spay/neuter surgeries for pets of owners who cannot otherwise afford it. "One unspayed female and her offspring together can produce 67,000 dogs," Armstrong says. She plans to set up one-day spay/neuter clinics at various locations with volunteer veterinarians and hopes that other

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Foster or adopt a shelter dog.

Donate time or money to a shelter.

Educate your friends.

Visit lulusrescue.com for details.

organizations nationwide will follow suit.

"I'm here to help abused and abandoned dogs, she says. "It is something that I will be doing for the rest of my life." *

Visit lulusrescue.com for more information or to learn about how to become involved.

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EAT, BARK, BID

Animal lovers came together for a silent auction to benefit Lulu's Rescue. Funds will help the rescue launch a spay/neuter initiative for low-income pet owners.

1. Guests Greg Kerwin of Stockton and Ann McNaron of Lambertville. 2. Lulu's Rescue co-founder Michele Armstrong educates attendees about the problem of pet overpopulation. 3. Max Hansen catered the meal for the event, and centerpieces were designed by Peach Girl Flowers in Lambertville. 4. Guests Joanne Young and Michael Deak, both of Lambertville. 5. Lulu's Rescue co-founder, Jane Zeolla (right), with volunteer Cara Laveman. 6. Rago Arts and Auction Center in Lambertville provided the space for the evening, and more than 275 local artists and businesses donated to the auction. 7. Cast members of the National Geographic Channel's *Rescue Ink Unleashed* were among the evening's supporters. 8. Browny, the mascot for the evening, was recently adopted through Lulu's Rescue.

SHOCKING SHELTER STATS

Number of dogs entering U.S. shelters every year: **5 million**
 Percentage of dogs in shelters that are killed before adopted: **60%**
 Percentage of dogs in shelters that have been spayed or neutered: **10%**

[Source: ASPCA]