

Dear Mill Dog Rescue Volunteers,

January 9, 2010

First and foremost, I want to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for your undying efforts on behalf of our mission and most importantly, your care and kindness for our dogs. I am absolutely certain that every dog who comes through our doors is in the most capable and loving hands of any place on this earth. I honestly cannot tell you what that means to me.

When I fly around the kennel with a million and one things to do, I want you all to know that despite my often preoccupied state of mind, little goes unnoticed. I am perpetually amazed by so many things; the exceptional condition of the dogs, the cleanliness of the kennel, the sparkling clean bowls, the veterinary care, the medication administration records, the play groups, the “special needs” signs, the “who’s got bloody diarrhea” today notations, the respect for one another, and the general order in every area of the facility. Your devotion to the care and well-being of every dog is a testimony to who each of you are. You have so much to be proud of. Suffice it to say, one of my greatest prides is to take a new visitor on a tour of the kennel. I cannot tell you enough how thoroughly impressed people are by the entire operation. Thank you so much for your backbreaking work and flawless attention to detail.

What a journey 2009 was for our organization! Here are some of the more notable highlights:

- In just under three years, we have rescued almost 3,000 mill dogs from a life of hell and a most uncertain future - an accomplishment to be very proud of.
- Through the generosity of many, NMDR now owns an 11,000 square foot kennel facility on 160 acres of land - a far cry from the makeshift beginnings in the downstairs den in my home.
- A Denver filmmaker is currently in post-production of a documentary about the pet trade, in which we are the featured rescue organization.
- In September, we attended a five hour long symposium with the “top brass” of the commercial breeding industry, during which each of us had the opportunity to discuss our viewpoints. These were amongst the most interesting, nauseating and stressful five hours of my life. I am very anxious to share excerpts of this most important and unprecedented meeting with you.
- We have added two additional state Departments of Agriculture (Arkansas and Kansas) to our list of government agencies that take our work seriously and will call upon us when in need.
- We have appeared on Animal Planet, soon to be on the National Geographic Channel and had a beautiful photo gallery piece in the Washington Post.
- We have opened our doors to a wide variety of young volunteers – Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Eagle Scouts, Air Force Academy cadets, college students, local school students, students from the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, and the Zebulon Pike Detention Center boys. These young folks are the future consumers of America and there is no question that they understand our message.

- We have two of the most wonderful veterinarians in the state working for us three days a week.
- We have formed relationships with three new rescue partners on the east coast who deeply understand the importance of our mission and eagerly take on the care of our rescued dogs.
- Our volunteer base has grown to over 500 strong! Our accomplishments are truly remarkable.

Most notably, the commercial breeding industry has taken an evident nose dive and just as we predicted, the lowest end breeders are being forced out of business! In part, the poor state of the economy is having its effect but believe me when I tell you, we are too. The higher ups in the industry watch our every move (as I do theirs) and they communicate amongst themselves about the effects of our efforts. Eventually, through the underground rescue grapevine, their commentaries make their way to my inbox. You will be astonished to learn what they have to say about us. Be watching for an invite to our next quarterly meeting which we are currently planning. I would like to share with each of you the fruits of your labor that you don't get to see or hear about on a regular basis. You will be proud.

A bit of history that I will never forget.....

February 17, 2007, I arrived at the auction site in Lamar, Missouri - all new to me, I was completely unaware of what I was about to see and moreover, what I was about to learn. Little did I know that on that very day, I would embark upon the most daunting yet extraordinary experience of my life. I distinctly remember every thought and feeling I had as I witnessed the realities of the commercial dog breeding industry.

At about noon that day, I laid my eyes on Lily for the very first time. As she cowered in the back of her cage, her jawless face staring back at me, I was overwhelmed by a torrent of emotions and suddenly realized that I actually had to tell myself to take a breath. I recall that moment as if it happened this morning. In an effort to remain inconspicuous, I had to pull myself together and find the nearest exit. After a long walk, I found myself leaning up against the backside of an old barn where I slowly sunk to the ground in tears. I called Rich. I had so much to say yet nothing came out, nothing but the tears. At that moment, I knew I would never rest again without taking a stand against the heartless cruelty put upon the animals that I have adored since I was a small child. The animals that throughout my life have never let me down. Man's best friend.

Never could I have imagined that in less than three years, National Mill Dog Rescue would become what it is today. You, our volunteers, **are** this organization. I accept responsibility for seeing the need and getting this organization on its feet, but it's so much bigger than me now. You are the lifeblood of what keeps it going day to day. I am immeasurably proud to know each and every one of you. Your sense of commitment, your enthusiasm, and your unending devotion to the dogs is very special to me and my family. We are eternally grateful for everything you do and look forward to the day when we can rest..... knowing we all had a part in the lasting difference.

Happy New Year!

Much love, Theresa & Rich