



## Special Edition - Summer 2016

### Sad Beginnings - Happy Endings

When ten ivory labs arrived at the shelter in April, no one could have imagined the stories that these dogs would generate. We decided that the best way to share their journeys was to put it all in one special edition of our newsletter. These stories show why BENCHS exists.

### Too Close to Home



When most of us think of puppy mills, we imagine huge facilities in the country that breed hundreds of puppies and sell them to pet stores in cities across the United States. Unfortunately, there are puppy mills everywhere, including right near Mankato. A short time ago, the staff at BENCHS were contacted about some dogs at a "farm" in the area that needed to be rehomed. When they arrived, the first thing they saw was a "Private Property- No Trespassing Sign." The farm was run down and the dogs were tied to little dog houses with their collars semi-embedded in their fur. The females were not fixed and none of the dogs had ever received vaccinations. Ten dogs were brought to the shelter and were given complete exams by **Dr. Gala Beckendorf and Kelly Hulke, Veterinary Technician, from Nicollet Veterinary Clinic.** All of the dogs tested positive for heartworm. The dogs that could be treated were given heartworm medication, but the disease was so far advanced and complicated by tumors in the other dogs that they could only be treated for symptoms. Dr. Beckendorf also performed eye surgery on Quinn, one of the male dog, finally relieving him from years of pain and discomfort. This was the first time any of these beautiful dogs had ever received vet care and without the help of Dr. Beckendorf and Kelly, many of these dogs would not have survived. It is estimated that the deceased owner of this puppy mill sold over 400 puppies at a price of \$1000 each and shipped them all over the country. His website was immaculate.



## How BENCHS Made a Difference

These beautiful ivory labs with treatable heartworm have been adopted into loving homes. The dogs who were untreatable have now been placed in hospice homes. Here is a follow-up on four of these dogs

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### Shu - Hospice



"Adopting a senior dog is like fast forwarding to the best part," stated Shu's owner. "Some would say she is lucky, but we feel like the lucky ones. She's changed our lives in the most positive way possible." Shu's favorite food is a big juicy cheeseburger and she can fit three tennis balls in her mouth. Although Shu's owners know that she doesn't have lots of time left on this earth, she has taught them more about compassion, kindness, and love than any other experience in their lives.

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### Sister - Hospice



Sister was one of the mill moms. During her life, she gave birth to so many puppies that her back is sunken and her belly hangs low. She also suffers from arthritis and has incurable heartworm. When Robb Murray and his family first met Sister at the shelter, they wanted to help. Instead of living in a filthy doghouse, Sister now sleeps on a pillow, eats ice cream cones, and rides in wagons in small town parades. Murray knows that getting attached to a pet who won't be here long is a risk, but he is so glad they took it. Sister is nothing short of amazing.

For the complete story of Sister, see [Robb Murray's article in The Free Press](#):

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### Baby Sis - Adopted



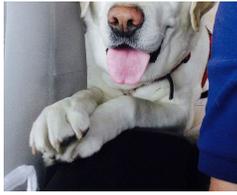
Baby Sis is now a happy girl. Her human mom tells me that when she watches TV, she is right in her lap and follows her everywhere she goes. She is also an amazing companion to her 2-year-old son.

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### King - Adopted



King's owner wasn't looking for another dog, but when he looked at him with those big brown eyes, that was it. "I was a little worried about getting another dog because I have a senior dog at home, but they have become great friends and keep each



other company when we are out. It is so funny to watch King walk through the house wagging his giant tail and knocking down everything in his path. "King brings joy into our lives every day. He is loved – long live the King."



## Puppy Mills

Every year in this country, over 2 million puppies are born in puppy mills. It used to be that these puppies were primarily sold for profit in pet stores, but the internet has now replaced pet stores as the major outlet for sales. These puppies are shipped all over the United States and the shipping conditions are often inhumane. Although most of these facilities are inspected and licensed by the USDA, they are filthy; the dogs are housed in wire or wooden crates and many suffer from malnutrition and illness. Because these puppy mill owners are in the business for profit alone, puppies receive minimal if any vet care, poor quality food, and inadequate shelter. The most obvious question is how do these places continue to operate? Puppy mills exist because people continue to buy their puppies from pet stores, instead of rescues, shelters or reputable breeders. They take their new pet home, and still have no idea that the pups were most likely born in a place like this. A reputable breeder will never sell their pups to be resold at a pet store.



## Looking for a Purebred Puppy?

For anyone interested in a purebred puppy, the message is clear: stay away from puppy mills, and if you come across one on your search for a puppy, report it to the police and local authorities. BENCHS sometimes has purebred puppies for adoption and by checking online at <https://www.petfinder.com/>, you can locate purebred puppies and dogs at shelters in the area. Reputable dog breeders will encourage you to visit them so you can meet the puppies' mom and dad and the breeder. I have three purebred Llewelin Setters and before I purchased my pups, I went to visit the breeder at his home several times. I met my boys' parents, viewed the facilities, and learned more about the breed. Do not ever agree to meet a breeder someplace to pick up the puppy. Ask questions about what vaccinations the puppy has already received, learn more about the breed, and ask what kind of dog food they have been eating. It is also a good idea to get references from the breeder and to call people who have purchased pups to make sure they are healthy dogs.





Finally, a message about heartworm. Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal condition in dogs. It is caused by worms that live in the heart and blood vessels that connect the heart to the lungs. When a mosquito bites and takes blood from an infected dog, it picks up baby worms that develop into infective larvae in a few days. Then when the infected mosquito bites another dog, the disease is passed on. It is an endless cycle. Left untreated, heartworms can live for years in an infected dog. There is only one way to prevent heartworm disease and that is by giving your dog heartworm preventative medication every month and have your dog tested annually.



### How You Can Help

If you have read this special issue to the very end, you are a true animal lover. To continue our work of saving animals like these, BENCHS relies on the generosity of people just like you. Please consider helping us in this important work by becoming a [member of BENCHS](#), a [donor](#), or a [volunteer](#). Thank you!

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Writer for this edition: Mary Susan Johnston

## Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society

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BENCHS is happily at home at Riverside Regional Pet Shelter

1250 N. River Drive

Mankato, MN 56001

507.625.6373

[www.benchs.org](http://www.benchs.org)

[rrps@hickorytech.net](mailto:rrps@hickorytech.net)