

Spectrum 3/3/00

Shelter to sell \$10 squares to expand yard

By Susan Tuz
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New Milford's Animal Welfare shelter is bursting at the seams, at least the dog exercise area is, and shelter assistant Tracy Machado has an answer to the question of how to raise money for a needed expansion.

Machado proposes that people make a \$10 donation each to cover one square foot of the new yard. Combined, those small donations would add up to cover the cost of enlarging the area, which has been estimated at \$8,500

The fenced yard is approximately 70 square feet, and Animal Welfare hopes to enlarge it to include an acre of available land.

"That will give the dogs area to really cut loose and get exercise," Machado explains. "Burning off pent-up energy will make them calmer. We have a dog now named Fred who is a cattle dog cross. He loves to play Frisbee, but there's not enough room for him to really run now."

The shelter was built in 1991, and since that time, the number of dogs being taken in has grown. Shelter manager Renee Gardner

and her 19 volunteers and employees provide the care and socialization the abandoned animals need, but when it comes to exercise time, more space is definitely needed.

Last year, the shelter placed 130 dogs and 178 cats. Animal Welfare places all of the animals that come into the shelter. No animals are put down there.

On an average day, there are 16 to 18 large dogs in residence, with the number often going up to 20.

Mornings start early with feeding, assessing the animals' health, and personal interaction time that helps to make the dogs and cats manageable pets when they are placed in homes. The dogs are then released in playgroups into the fenced yard.

The shelter has the fencing to enclose the acre of land. What is lacking is money to pay for installation. Donors are encouraged to make a contribution in memory of a loved one or pet.

Donations should be sent to Animal Welfare, 8 Dodd Road, New Milford 06776. Specify in a letter or on the check that it is for the expansion of the exercise area. Adoption hours at the shelter are Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.



The News-Times/Wendy Carlson
Margaret Giovannone walks Fred outside the New Milford Animal Welfare shelter. The agency is trying to expand its fenced exercise area.