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Animal Adviser

Group finds foster homes for pets

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By Elizabeth Thompson

A chocolate Labrador puppy lay in a ditch on the side of the highway in LaPlace, whimpering and close to death.

A kind man riding a bicycle down the highway heard the puppy's cries. He picked her up and brought her into the St. John Parish Animal Shelter.

The staff called Vet Adoptions to find out if the group could foster the puppy. When one of Vet Adoption's volunteers, Jennifer Wright, picked her up from the shelter, she noticed the puppy couldn't move her hind leg.

A veterinary check revealed that the puppy, now named Candy, had been shot with a pellet gun. While it didn't hit a bone, the pellet removal would be an expensive surgery.

Melanie Manning, founder of Vet Adoptions, also is the regional contact for the Humane Society of Louisiana, which conducts cruelty investigations throughout the state. HSL (www.humanela.org) paid for the surgery to remove the pellet.

While Candy recuperated, Wright gave her all the attention she needed to be a great companion for a lucky family. A couple from New England spotted Candy on a Web posting and fell in love with her.

Candy left Wright's home, ready for her new life, with only a slight limp. Today, Candy lives in rural Maine with her new family.

Vet Adoptions was founded to assist veterinarians in finding homes for animals left with them by their clients. Since Katrina, however, Vet Adoptions has added local shelters and owner turn-ins to its list. The group works closely with [Labs4Rescue \(www.labs4rescue.com\)](http://www.labs4rescue.com), an organization that transports Labradors to northern states for adoption.

The availability of low-cost spay/neuter operations, along with other factors, means that many New England shelters are almost empty of adoptable dogs. This void creates a lifeline for the fortunate dogs pulled from our state's overcrowded and overburdened animal shelters.

Vet Adoptions is always in need of foster homes. If you'd like to help, contact them at vetadoptions@cox.net.