



How to Organize a Peaceful Pet Store Demonstration

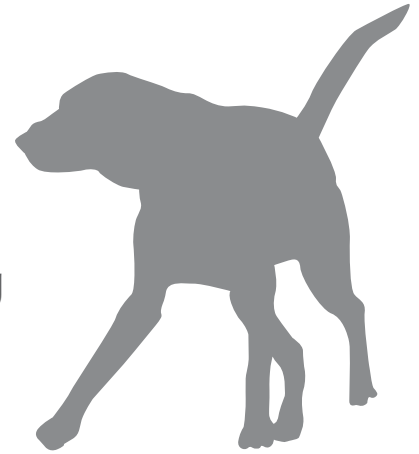
An action kit to educate the public and change pet store policies through peaceful demonstration

www.bestfriends.org



Our Mission: No More Homeless Pets

Best Friends is working with you and with humane groups all across the country to bring about a time of No More Homeless Pets® when every healthy dog and cat in our nation's shelters can find a good life in a caring home.



The Puppies Aren't Products Campaign

Right now, millions of adult dogs are suffering on the "production line" in America's puppy mills. Typically confined to cages for their entire breeding lives, these dogs have little to none of the human contact they desire, and it's all because consumers are creating a demand, in most cases unknowingly, by purchasing puppies at pet stores and over the Internet instead of choosing adoption.

With your help, we can reduce the number of animals who are euthanized in the country's shelters every single day from 11,000 to zero. Together, we can create a world of No More Homeless Pets by fighting against puppy mills and irresponsible breeding. Help us make a difference by educating the public about the connection between puppy mills, pet stores and Internet puppy sales; encouraging people to adopt rather than buy pets; and advocating for better laws to combat puppy mills.

To read more about the Puppies Aren't Products campaign and the other efforts you can help with, visit:

pupmills.bestfriends.org

Questions about our campaigns or this action kit?

Contact us:

e-mail: info@bestfriends.org

website: pupmills.bestfriends.org

phone: (435) 644-2001

Regular mail:

Best Friends Animal Society
Attn: Puppies Aren't Products Campaign
5001 Angel Canyon Rd.
Kanab, UT 84741

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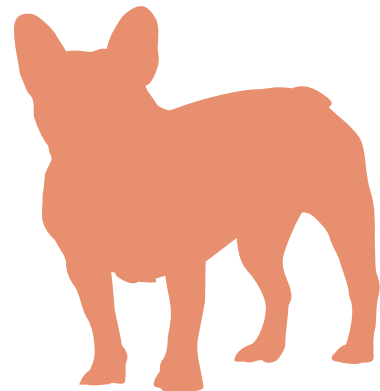
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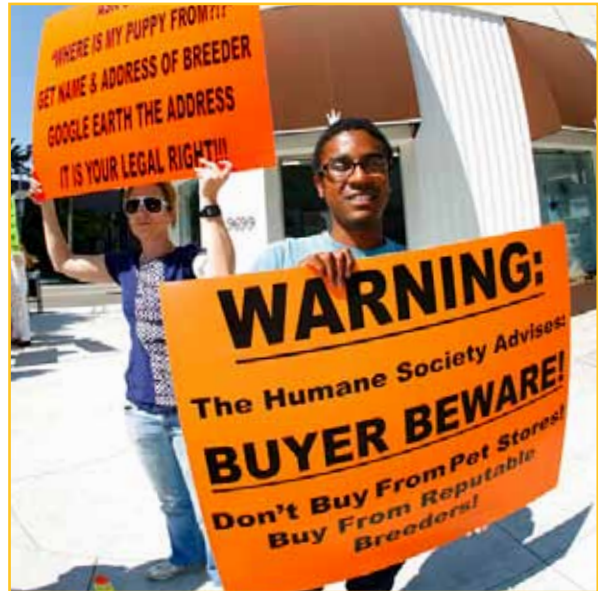
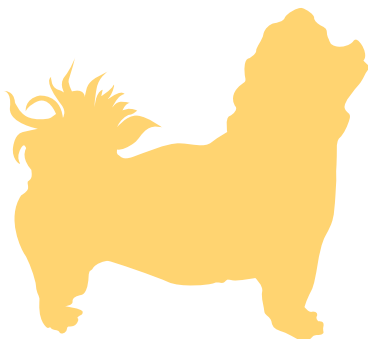


Introduction

Holding a peaceful pet-store demonstration can be an extremely effective way to voice your opinion about pet stores and the breeders who supply them with puppies. Even more important, it gives potential customers a reason to stop, think, and learn the facts so that they can make a more informed decision before they walk in and buy a puppy.

More and more concerned citizens are becoming active in the fight against puppy mills in their own communities by holding peaceful rallies in front of stores that sell puppies from mills.

This guide will help you start your own peaceful pet-store rally, but please keep in mind that every situation is different. What works with one store and in one community may not work in another. One thing is certain, though: organizing a peaceful demonstration will be a lot of work, but you will make a difference!



Preparation and planning

Choosing a pet store is the first and most important step in the planning process. Begin by choosing the puppy-mill-supplied store you are most interested in demonstrating against (see “Gather the facts” on page 8), and then do the research to find out if it’s the best store to focus on, considering all local laws and ordinances. Good stores to research first are those that sell a lot of commercially bred puppies and are centrally located, which makes them desirable for media attention and easily accessible to volunteers.



A store demonstration requires compliance with local and state laws and can even involve the U.S. Constitution. Before you begin organizing a demonstration, become familiar with the demonstration, boycott, and unfair competition rules and regulations in your location and state, ideally through consultation with a qualified attorney.

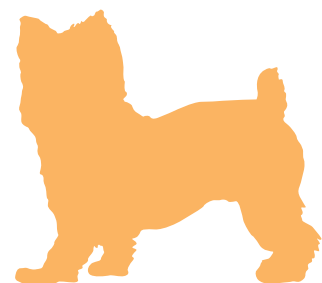
The rules governing peaceful pet-store demonstrations within shopping malls are different from those that apply to outdoor gatherings, so you should factor that into your decision. In California, for example, the Supreme Court has determined that shopping malls cannot prohibit demonstrators from

urging a public boycott of their stores, even if the demonstrators are on mall property (although the mall may determine when and where, specifically, these demonstrations occur). Your state may have a different rule, so it’s important to do your research. (For more about the California ruling, see the article in the Appendix.)

Whether you demonstrate in a mall, out on the street, or in front of a store in a strip mall, be absolutely sure that you do not violate any local ordinances. Here are some of the issues you are likely to encounter and will need to be fully aware of and prepared for:

1. You will need to find out exactly where the public/private property lines begin and end.

You can find out by calling the local police department or the department of public works. Most likely, you will need to hold your peaceful demonstration on public property —

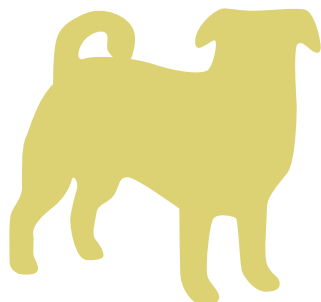


for example, the sidewalk on a city street near the pet store. Malls (strip malls included) are private property. Demonstrators may not be allowed to park in the mall parking lot, or to walk through it. Any information about your exact location's public property status should be in writing from whichever department you obtain it. Print it out and bring it with you to the demonstrations so you can quickly and easily reassure the police, mall personnel or store owners — or anyone else who asks — that you are acting within the law.

2. A permit may be required before you can hold a peaceful demonstration. You may also have to provide advance notice to the local police department. Find out well ahead of time what the rules are.

3. If you are not able to retain counsel to assist you, we suggest that you contact the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU has an affiliate in every state: www.aclu.org/affiliates.

4. All statements made publicly or in relation to the peaceful demonstration must be accurate in all respects and should not infer any intent to drive a store out of business. This means not only avoiding exaggeration, but also doing your homework and verifying facts before stating them as truth.



You don't want to be guilty of slander or misrepresentation. Do not make statements (in print and/or verbally) that are generalizations and/or that sensationalize the issue, such as "Puppy mill owners shove metal pipes down their dogs' throats."

The rules and regulations should not be difficult to follow as long as you are aware of them. It is essential that you and your group conduct yourselves in an organized, professional manner at all times. Know the rules and abide by them, and generally local authorities will be appreciative and won't give you any trouble.

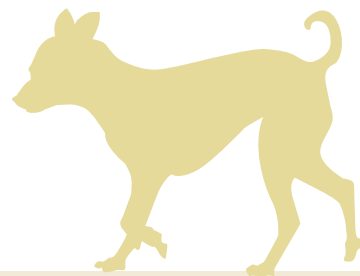


Set your goals



When choosing which store to focus on, it is important to set goals and milestones. Be respectful of your participants' time and commitment by giving them a clear indication of what outcome you are hoping for. The goal of your pet store demonstrations should be to encourage the store to stop selling dogs from puppy mills, not to close the store. In fact, the surest way for you to get into legal trouble is to advocate for a store's closure. A successful demonstration ends with the store choosing to adopt a more humane business model — one that does not support puppy mills. Consider these goals as possibilities for your peaceful demonstrations:

1. Convince the store to stop selling puppies, and to instead focus on the sale of pet supplies and/or grooming or daycare services.
2. Convince the store to stop selling puppies from puppy mills and other irresponsible breeders and to instead host mobile adoptions for shelters or rescue groups.
3. Educate customers before they go into the store, in hopes that they will choose to adopt, rather than buy, a puppy.
4. Promote adoption as a more appealing option for those looking to obtain a pet.



Remember to set realistic goals. Holding a peaceful demonstration at a pet store for one afternoon may draw attention to your cause, but it will not stop the ongoing sale of puppy mill dogs from that store.

Gather the facts

A peaceful demonstration campaign is a big commitment; you wouldn't be doing it if you weren't passionate about the cause and firm in your belief that selling irresponsibly bred puppies and other pets is wrong. But your goal is to convince other people of this, and solid facts and evidence are your best tools. You'll want to cover all angles: puppy mill cruelty, pet overpopulation and, if possible, evidence that the store has sold sick pets.

You will want to gather as much hard information on the breeders and the store as possible, since having good facts enables you to speak with authority and in a meaningful way that is also truthful. Many people make the mistake of confusing beliefs, opinions and hopes with the factual truth, which exposes them to claims of defamation or unfair competition. Making such a mistake could put you at risk of being sued. Be certain that all of your data is completely current and accurate, so that you do not give anyone the ability to challenge your credibility or make you or your group vulnerable to legal action.

Your facts should come together to support your goal, whether it's to convince people not to shop at the store or to convince the store to stop selling animals.

There are two ways to go about holding demonstrations at a pet store:

1. You can demonstrate at a pet store with generic messaging, which does not require investigation of the store's suppliers.
2. After doing in-depth research on the pet store, you can demonstrate at the store with evidence about that specific store and its suppliers.



If you are unable to fully research or investigate a pet store and its suppliers, you can still hold effective peaceful rallies, but you must also be very careful with your messaging. If you want to hold a demonstration at a store, but don't have solid data, keep your messaging generic to avoid the danger of making statements that are not true (see above).

Use signs and slogans that encourage adoption and focus on pet overpopulation or the fact that puppies are a lifelong commitment and therefore should not be purchased on impulse. Some sample slogans include:

- Choose pet adoption
- Please don't support the pet trade: Save a shelter pet
- Five million pets die in U.S. shelters each year: Adopt a pet
- Please adopt your next pet

Research the pet store

If you do decide to research a pet store and its suppliers in order to gather evidence about that particular store, here are the steps to follow.

1. Find out where the store gets their puppies.

Pet store employees generally tell their customers that puppies come from licensed or registered breeders. They are referring to USDA-licensed breeders, which are generally the high-volume commercial breeders that most people recognize as puppy mills. To get hard data on the store's suppliers, your best bet is to contact an organization (see list below) that actively investigates and tracks breeders who supply pet stores. Several organizations have funds and staff dedicated specifically to this work. Contact one or more, let them know what you're doing, and ask if they have collected any information about the store or the breeders who supply the store.

In California, pet stores are required to display a puppy's breeder on the cage, so it is easy to do your research by visiting the store before you begin the demonstrations, and recording the information on each puppy's cage. In other states, this information is more difficult to obtain. No matter where you are, finding out who supplies the puppies is only the first step; you need more than just a name and address to show what the store's suppliers really are. Below is a list of organizations to contact:

Best Friends Animal Society, Puppies Aren't Products: pupmills.bestfriends.org

Companion Animal Protection Society: www.caps-web.org

Humane Society of the United States: www.stoppupmills.com

Last Chance for Animals: www.lcanimal.org

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA): www.helpinganimals.com



Pet Shop Puppies, Inc.: www.petshoppuppies.org

Prisoners of Greed: www.prisonersofgreed.org

2. Collect information from pet store customers.

Create a contact sheet and gather names of people who have purchased sick dogs or have had negative experiences with the pet store you are focusing on. Follow up with them, and get details so that you can educate others with personal experiences. You can also check websites that post complaints (try www.complaints.com, www.ripoffreport.com, and www.consumeraffairs.com) and post a free ad asking for information about customers' experiences with the store.

3. Contact the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) and local animal control.

Find out if people have filed complaints against the store. Animal control can usually be reached by calling the police department or city hall. If that is not the case in your area, ask how to contact animal control and/or who takes complaints about your local pet stores.

4. Look up inspection reports for these breeders.

In 2009, the USDA made licensees' inspection reports available online for instant viewing. Go here: acisearch.aphis.usda.gov/LPASearch/faces/Warning.jspx.

Research shelter statistics and adoptable animals in your area

1. Gather statistics from your local shelters and animal control agencies.

Shelters' intake and euthanasia numbers are indisputable evidence to help you make a case that breeding more dogs doesn't make sense. Check your local shelter's website for their statistics or contact them directly. If you are unable to find the information, you can use the current national euthanasia statistic, which is that approximately 11,000 animals are euthanized in this country each day. Use these statistics in your messaging to the public and the media.

2. Create a list of shelters and rescue groups in the area of the pet store.

Include each organization's location, website and phone number on the list. Make copies to hand out to people who are looking to obtain a pet, and are interested and/or willing to adopt one. You can find a listing, by zip code, of shelters and rescues by visiting www.petfinder.com.

3. Before each demonstration, print out a list (with pictures) of local adoptable animals.

Choose a variety of dogs, cats, puppies and kittens that are listed on local organizations' websites to show people specific examples of animals who are currently waiting at the shelter. By giving people an alternative to buying from the store, you not only discourage



purchase of pets, you help save the lives of shelter pets, particularly when you emphasize the cost of purchasing a pet versus the (usually much lower) cost of adopting.



Build a support base



A lone peaceful demonstrator can be effective in the short term, but if you want to cause lasting change, you're going to need help. Ideally, you'll find allies who will commit to the cause from beginning to end. Consider partnering with rescue groups, nonprofits, friends and like-minded people and asking them to join your demonstrations.

To make an impression on both the store and the general public, we suggest a minimum of 10 people. However, a group as small as five can make a difference if you stay focused, cohesive and professional in your appearance and delivery.

Find people to join your cause

The following are some ways to find people who will make a commitment to your cause.

1. Pet-related events.

Attend adoption events, dog walks, dog shows, pet expos — any event likely to attract pet lovers. Set up a table, talk about puppy mills, and have a sign-up sheet for those interested in supporting your peaceful demonstrations. You can find events in your area posted on the

Best Friends Network (network.bestfriends.org) and through your city's local website.

2. The Best Friends Network.

The Network, which has the tagline "Social networking that saves lives," attracts pet lovers from across the country, so it is an ideal place to find people who share your desire to make a difference for animals in your community. Create your own group, associate it with your geographic area and our Puppies Aren't Products campaign, and start posting. It's fun, easy, and free.

3. Other online meet-up groups.

You can also reach people by posting on other sites. Recruit peaceful demonstrators online by setting up an account on sites made just for bringing people into a cause. Some good sites to try:

www.meetup.com

www.care2.com

www.volunteermatch.org

(only for nonprofits seeking volunteers)

4. Other social networking sites.

Use free, popular sites to get people involved. Be sure to include the pertinent details (what, when, where, who to contact) as well as compelling information that will make people want to join you. Once you have launched your peaceful demonstration campaign, you can post photos to share with your participants and give potential recruits an idea of what the demonstrations look like. Some sites to try:

www.facebook.com

www.myspace.com

www.blogger.com

network.bestfriends.org

5. Word of mouth.

It's highly effective and free! Encourage the peaceful demonstration team to spread the word to their friends, family, co-workers, fellow animal lovers and concerned citizens.

6. Petition sites.

Set up a petition that outlines your goal, and get as many people as possible to sign it. Include a web link or contact information for people who come across the petition and want to get involved with your demonstrations. A good petition website is www.care2.com.

Bring it all together

If you've reached out far and wide to gather fellow demonstrators, you'll want to give everyone a sense of solidarity. Create a schedule so that you can determine the frequency of demonstrations that works best for you and your participants. Give your group a name, a brand, and then get out and promote yourselves!

1. Frequency of demonstrations.

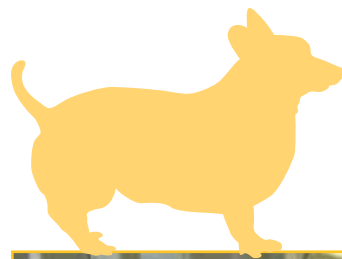
If you are trying to get a pet store to stop selling puppy mill dogs, organizing a demonstration for a single day most likely will not succeed in achieving that goal. Rather, you will need to commit to weekly demonstrations. You can avoid burnout by scheduling shifts of one to three hours, depending on the number of participants.

If you are unable to commit to holding a demonstration once a week and can only get the volunteers to organize one demonstration, try to gather as many participants as possible, and make sure you have coordinated a press release in order to get media to your event to

cover it. This way, your efforts will draw more attention and reach more people.

2. Online alerts, e-mails and petitions.

Keep in touch with your fellow peaceful demonstrators. Whoever is in charge of notifying the group will benefit from signing up for a mass e-mail or e-newsletter delivery service such as www.constantcontact.com or www.convio.com.



Print and media materials to have at every peaceful demonstration

Your point is to educate, and to best do this, you need to have handouts to give passersby, and well-designed, professional-looking signs. You will also want to be prepared to gather information if people who have bought animals at the store approach you. Here is a list of print materials to prepare before you arrive at the pet store:

1. Customer contact sheet.

Collect contact information from anyone who tells you they have bought a pet from the store. This information will help you confirm the suppliers to the store, as well as give you good leads for customer descriptions of their experiences with the store. (When you collect information from customers, ask to see the paperwork they got from the store with their puppy. That paperwork has the breeder's name and often includes the breeder's address and USDA number.)

2. Sign-in sheet for your volunteers/ demonstrators.

Keep track of who is there with you, and make sure you have current contact information for everyone.

3. List of shelters and rescue groups in your area.

Have a master list with each organization's location, website, and phone number. Make copies to hand out to people who want to get a pet, and are interested and/or willing to adopt one.

4. Photos, bios and information about adoptable animals currently available at local shelters/rescues.

Make a new, updated list for every demonstration. Include all the pertinent information about each animal (name, shelter ID number, etc.) so that potential adopters have the information they need to track down

that animal. Searching Petfinder or local shelters' websites is an easy way to collect this information. Look for dogs and puppies who are similar to the dogs for sale in the pet store, as you want to offer a comparable alternative for people who might be willing to adopt rather than buy.

5. One-sheet handouts.

Create a one page (double-sided) document that on the front explains why you are demonstrating against the pet store (e.g., there is proof that the store sells dogs from irresponsible breeders, there are thousands of animals in shelters who are awaiting homes) and on the back lists adoption options, local shelter information, and alternative pet stores that sell supplies only. This handout is the "takeaway" for anyone who walks by.



6. Your petition.

If you have a petition going, bring it. During the peaceful demonstrations, you can collect petition signatures in support of your efforts to present to mall owners, the media or local government officials. Since most people will not want to reveal their home address or phone number, you may want to request only a name, city of residence, and optional e-mail address. Consider including a comment section on your petition. This is not an official legislative petition, but merely a compilation of public support for your campaign.

Signs

The first thing people will see are the signs you hold. It is extremely important to have attractive, professional-looking signs, even if it means having them professionally designed and printed. If design isn't a strength of yours or anyone in your group, consult friends and family who might help, or pay a professional. If you don't have funds to pay for signs, hold a fundraiser.

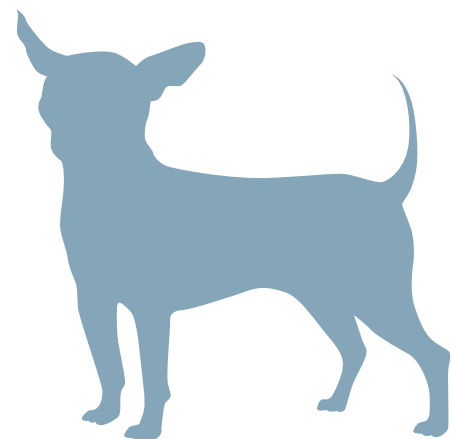
To make a good impression, signs should be:

- **Professional-looking:** Make sure signs are standardized, accurate, spelled correctly and branded with the name of your group and/or campaign.
- **Respectful, cohesive and easy to understand:** Avoid anything that appears homemade, mean-spirited or graphic.
- **Clear and concise:** Your visual messaging should be relevant to the store at which you are holding peaceful demonstrations, and should focus on consumer fraud and puppy mills (provided you have proof that the store is selling dogs supplied by mills) and support for adoption versus purchase.



Video

If possible, set up a laptop computer, television or projector with investigative video and/or news footage of the store. This can be a very powerful tool, as visual images offer a credible (and often independent) source of proof to support your claims. You should also have a cell phone with you in case of an emergency.



Showtime: Peaceful demonstration tips and follow-up

1. Create roles and responsibilities.

No matter how many people you have at a demonstration, it's a good idea to designate on-site roles and responsibilities that fit everyone's comfort level, so that each person involved has a specific job and feels confident and valuable and, most important, so that your demonstration is orderly and respectful. Most volunteers prefer to be directed; they don't want to feel insecure or confused about their role. In the event that police or media arrive, make sure everyone knows whom they should talk to.

If you only have a few people, then more than one role should be assigned to each person, until all roles are filled. As new people join you, roles can be redistributed.

Suggested roles to fill:

- **Leader:** Demonstrations are a concerted effort, and entrusting someone to be in charge is extremely important.
- **Media point person:** This person should be comfortable in front of a camera, and should be able to stay on message while being interviewed. He/she must be able to clearly

communicate your goals for demonstrating, as well as any supporting facts you've gathered.

- **Law enforcement liaison:** This person should remain calm and respectful at all times. Remember to have all applicable ordinances and permits printed out to show that you're aware of and abiding by them.
- **Volunteer coordinator or greeter:** If new demonstrators show up, have a designated person to welcome them and familiarize them with everyone's roles and, most important, the applicable laws and rules. This person should get to know demonstrators on a first-name basis and should collect contact information from each participant.

2. Conduct yourself appropriately.

It is critical that all participants conduct themselves responsibly and respectfully. After all, you do not want to alienate either surrounding business owners or the public, nor do you want to give the pet store valid cause to lodge complaints — or worse, lawsuits. One of your goals should be to engage the community and rally support for your cause, and that means keeping the spirit of your demonstrations positive and refraining from communication that is overly emotional or personal.

You will find that you have more effective interaction with the public if your group presents itself as concerned, responsible citizens who belong in the environment in which you are demonstrating, rather than animal activists. To avoid intimidating people and putting them on the defensive, dress neatly and conduct yourselves appropriately, and avoid confrontation at all times. This can be challenging, particularly if store employees,





customers or members of the public try to antagonize or intimidate you, but any negative communication or behavior on your part will only reflect poorly on your group. Always take the high road and focus on your mission.

Try to keep all interaction with the public on a one-on-one basis. In order to keep the communication controlled and respectful, if one of your participants is conversing with a person outside of your group, try not to interject unless truly necessary. Do not insist that members of the public engage in conversation or accept your handout materials if they are not willing.

Let them continue on their way so that you can focus on the next person.

Finally, be respectful of the community: Make sure that your group leaves no trash or personal belongings at the peaceful rally site.

3. Follow up with your group and show them gratitude.

Always thank participants for their time and commitment in person, and send a follow-up e-mail. For a more personal touch, send individual e-mails rather than a bulk e-mail.

4. Do ongoing training and orientations.

Keep people prepared, informed and involved with your peaceful rallies by holding regular volunteer trainings. Discuss your goals and guidelines, and role-play situations that may occur while on-site at a demonstration. Ideally, demonstrators will have attended an orientation before participating so they are completely prepared to help you carry out your mission.

5. Create a private discussion forum on the Internet.

This is a good place for your group to post their questions, concerns or ideas each week.

Now that you have the tools, you're ready to go out and change the world! There are still millions of well-intentioned animal lovers buying puppies from pet stores each year. The simple act of providing people with more information about pet stores, puppy mills and adoption options has a big impact and helps save lives. Even if you reach just one person with a peaceful demonstration, that's one more person who will never again unknowingly support the puppy mill industry. And that brings us all one step closer to a time when there will be No More Homeless Pets.

Appendix

State high court backs mall protest

Source: *Los Angeles Times*, [articles.latimes.com/2007/dec/25/local/me-boycotts25](https://www.latimes.com/2007/dec/25/local/me-boycotts25)

By Tami Abdollah, December 25, 2007

The California Supreme Court ruled Monday that shopping malls cannot stop protesters from urging a public boycott of the stores, even if the demonstrators are on mall property.

The 4-3 decision upholds a 27-year precedent protecting free speech rights at shopping centers, even if the malls are privately owned.

The case started in 1998, when the pressroom union was embroiled in a contract dispute with the San Diego Union-Tribune newspaper. Thirty to 40 union members stood in front of a Robinsons-May store, one of the newspaper's biggest advertisers, cataloging their grievances and urging customers to contact the chief executive of the newspaper.

Officials at the Fashion Valley Mall in San Diego told the protesters to leave, saying that if they wanted to resume their demonstration, they would have to sign a pledge not to urge a boycott of any store because it would hurt business.

Justice Carlos R. Moreno, writing for the majority, agreed that the mall could regulate protests but said the state's Constitution barred mall rules for protesters based on the content of their message.

"They may not prohibit certain types of speech based upon its content, such as prohibiting speech that urges a boycott of one or more of the stores in the mall," Moreno said in the ruling. Chief Justice Ronald M. George and Justices Joyce L. Kennard and Kathryn Mickle Werdegard joined in the decision.

In dissent, Justice Ming W. Chin protested that the court was treating private property as a "public free speech zone."

"A shopping center exists for the individual businesses on the premises to do business," he wrote. "Urging a boycott of those businesses contradicts the very purpose of the shopping center's existence." Chin's opinion was joined by Justices Marvin R. Baxter and Carol A. Corrigan.

"The only tradition that is relevant to this case is the tradition followed in most of the country, of finding no free speech rights on private property," Chin wrote. "The majority is trampling on tradition, not following it," he added.

Eugene Volokh, a constitutional law professor at UCLA, said California and a few other states back free speech at large malls on the theory that they function as modern-day town squares. "That's where people congregate these days, and that's where it's important that free speech be protected," he said.

Thomas Leanse, a lawyer who argued the case on behalf of the International Council of Shopping Centers and the California Business Properties Assn., called the ruling "incremental," saying it affects only boycott campaigns and otherwise affirms the mall's right to enforce its rules.

Volokh said the case raises a question whether the state high court intends to protect all mall demonstrations, even those infused with religious or racial bias.