

# Why Adopt Rather Than Buy?

By Francis Battista

There are lots of good reasons to adopt rather than buy a pet. Here are a few of them:

- **Buying a pet can easily cost \$500 to \$1,000 or more.** Adoption costs range from \$50 to \$200, depending on whether the pet comes from the city shelter or a rescue group that has spent money on boarding, vets and grooming.
- **You're getting more for your money if you get a mixed breed.** Based on the well-established principle of "hybrid vigor," a mixed-breed animal is likely to live longer and cost less in vet bills than a pure breed. Many purebred dogs are prone to developing health problems ranging from breathing difficulties to hip dysplasia to an enlarged heart.
- **A pet purchased from a pet store is a complete unknown.** And, once you walk out of the store, you are on your own – most pet stores don't provide any support if you have questions or problems with your new pet. When you adopt, especially from a rescue group, you know what you are getting because the group has a history on the animal. The rescue group will also help you through the familiarization period because they are invested in providing a good home for that animal.
- **When you adopt a pet, you are saving a life.** When you buy a pet, you not only deny a homeless pet a home, you are supporting an industry that thrives on short-changing the welfare of animals. Puppy and kitten mills (which sell to pet stores) are in business to make a profit, so they churn out puppies and kittens as fast as they can. These animals are often in ill health and have problems like poor socialization skills due to lack of human companionship and genetic defects due to inbreeding.
- **If you adopt, you get your choice of any age.** Though puppies and kittens are cute and cuddly, they can also be a handful. An adult or older pet may be a better "fit" for you. For example, adopting an adult dog who's already house-trained and knows basic commands is often much easier than adopting a puppy, who must be taught these things.
- **You get just as much love (if not more).** An adopted pet is every bit as loving, intelligent and loyal as a purchased pet, even if you get an adult or older animal.



For all of these reasons, adopting rather than buying is pretty much a no-brainer. As Homer Simpson would say, "Doh! I'll take the adoption ... and a donut, please."

*Francis Battista, one of the founders of Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, directs Best Friends programs in Southern California, helps to oversee animal care at the sanctuary and contributes regularly to Best Friends magazine.*