

IMPS: Rescue on the Internet

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My feelings about puppy mills, backyard breeders, and stores selling puppies are no secret. I believe that the phrases "Don't breed out of greed," "If you don't rescue, don't breed" and "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas" should be taken to heart by everyone. But they aren't. Irresponsible breeders flood the market. Cute little puppies become dogs needing years of care, training and companionship. Situations arise where dogs need to be rehomed or rescued.

Fortunately, a group called the Internet Miniature Pinscher Service (IMPS) can help. This organization does not represent any 'sanctioned breed club or the Miniature Pinscher Club of America (MPCA). It is not 'supported by dues or memberships; its members rely upon themselves to make a difference.

I watched IMPS develop from the ground up as people who joined our chat list to talk about their pet Min Pins formed bonds with show fanciers and responsible breeders. They came to learn, and learn they did. They saw right from the start that dedicated fanciers were adamant about responsible breeding and the spaying and neutering of pets. These people came together as strangers and united behind a common cause.

What is IMPS? It is an organization formed to provide assistance to Miniature Pinschers in need of foster care, transport adoptive homes, veterinary care and other services. It also provides information on the breed, through its Web site and links to other sites, that can be helpful to anyone considering making a Min Pin a member of their family.

What makes IMPS so special? What sets this group apart are it's unusual origin and the reach, diversity and determination of its members. Although the group has serious breeders and seasoned "rescue angels" in its midst, the majority are pet owners with caring hearts. Many first "jumped in" last year to help a homeless Min Pin who came to be known as Lister, and then they stayed to help others. From different walks of life, these are people who might never have never involved themselves in rescue beyond making a yearly donation to a humane society. Many are now contact people for Min Pin rescue, fostering and adoption within their areas, working with local humane 'societies and shelters. Some help with transportation. Others donate funds. Still others share expertise in areas such as Web-site creation, research and record keeping. Most importantly, their efforts extend beyond the reach of local humane and rescue groups. Membership is nationwide and also includes fanciers from other countries.

Since its formation in July, 1998, IMPS has assisted in placing over 35 Min Pins that were rescued from abusive situations, puppy mills or shelters or turned in by owners. Many required medical attention. Thirty-five may seem to be a small number. To that, IMPS says, "thank God." Members sincerely hope that one day no more Min Pins will be in need of their help. Until then, the group is ready, willing and able to help Min Pins in need. IMPS is not necessarily a first contact point for breed rescue.

Many of the groups "little loves" have come by way of shelters. The group monitors several shelters in different areas of the country. They also scan Internet rescue sites and breed boards (such as the one on America Online) daily.

The story of the rescue of Lister will appear in June. If you would like to join, help or know more about IMPS (including the stories of Min Pins the group has assisted and currently has available), please visit its Web site (<http://members.xoom.com/minpinrescue>). IMPS can also be contacted via e-mail at harkon@inexpress.net. If you don't have Internet access, you can call toll-free (877) MINPIN1 or (877) 646-7461