

Lollypop Farm gears up for its 12th annual telethon fundraiser



Photo by Carrie Ann Grippio

Gates resident Tara Gamby, founder of the Rochester Canine Playgroups, kisses LuLu, a 4-month-old mini Daschund owned by Elizabeth Smith of East Rochester Saturday. They were there for the Small Dog Playgroup Valentine's Day Party which raises money for Lollypop Farm's March 1 telethon.

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Perinton, N.Y. -

They're the members of the elite CID unit, and you can find out about the important job they do.

Members of the Cruelty Investigations Department of the Humane Society of Greater Rochester investigate the inhumane treatment of animals. Their work will be highlighted in special video showings Saturday, March 1, during Lollypop Farm's Telethon 2008 in the Main Court at Eastview Mall in Victor.

"A Day in the Life of Law Enforcement" is a new feature of the event, which will be broadcast live from 3 to 9 p.m. on 13 WHAM-TV, its CW affiliate and 100.5 The Drive radio station.

Adrienne McHargue, Lollypop's director of communications, said the three-officer unit responds to animal cruelty hotline and 911 calls and works closely with local police agencies and the office of Monroe County District Attorney Michael Green.

"They investigate 1,200 to 1,800 cases a year," she said. "Each case may take up to three to four visits."

Often the officers remove the animals from their cruel situations and take them to Lollypop Farm in Perinton where they can be treated by veterinarians and eventually adopted when they're healthy again.

All of that costs money, which is why the telethon, Lollypop's major fundraiser, is so important to support the animals and the many programs the organization offers, McHargue said.

Lollypop Farm annually cares for about 14,000 animals, including their shelter, food, medical care and

neutering, she said. The farm serves Monroe and its surrounding counties, but will accept animals from anywhere.

Adoptable dogs will visit the telethon throughout the day. About 30 vendors will offer educational information and free samples. Films of cats and farm animals ready for adoption will also be shown.

Emcees include 13 WHAM news anchors Doug Emblidge, Ginny Ryan, Norma Holland and Evan Dawson. Joining them will be radio personalities Gately and Julie from 100.5 The Drive and Beth Adams from 1180 WHAM.

“We’re just hoping people will tune in and come down to see us,” McHargue said. “We love to talk to people in person.”

Donations may also be pledged online at www.lollypop.org. Many incentives are available for larger donations, which may be spread into monthly payments. The goal this year is \$190,000, or \$4,000 more than what was raised in 2007. Helping with that is Jonah Temple, a student at Holy Trinity School in Webster, whose second-grade class is trying to raise \$500 for the telethon through the Web site: www.firstgiving.com/jonahtemple.

Employees at The Sutherland Group of Pittsford also have fundraising events for Lollypop Farm. Employees will make a contribution for the privilege of wearing jeans to work on Jeans Day, Friday, Feb. 29.

In addition, the Rochester Canine Playgroup is contributing money it raised during its annual Valentine’s Day party for pooches that included lots of canines and people in costumes and gourmet biscuits, themed cookies and a kissing booth.

“Lollypop does wonderful work as far as rescuing dogs and taking care of them,” said Tara Gamby, Playgroup founder/organizer, who will also answer phones during the Lollypop telethon.

“We are grateful to all of the local pet lovers who have different kinds of fundraisers to benefit Lollypop Farm,” McHargue said. “When they involve pets, it’s great fun for all the people involved.”