

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(11/19/09)

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Boston Terrier Lost Since May, Transferred Between Counties, and Adopted is Reunited with Family: A Cautionary Tale

The Humane Society of Berks County (HSBC), the leader in animal welfare, announced that reunited a dog named “Puggie” with his family last week. While such reunions are not unheard of, Puggie’s story is unusual. Puggie, a ten year old Boston Terrier, had been lost since May when he escaped from his home on the border of Lebanon and Dauphin County. He was found, his dog tags having been lost or removed, and taken to the Humane League of Lancaster County where he was held for the State mandated stray holding period and then placed up for adoption. He was then transferred to the Humane Society of Berks County, where he was quickly adopted by an Exeter Family. “That would usually be considered the end of the story, and a happy end at that,” said Karel Minor, Executive Director of the Humane Society of Berks County.

However, the day after Puggie’s adoption, his original owner, Erik Conley, was telling a client who works at Albright College about losing his beloved family pet and all of his efforts to find Puggie. The client said the dog sounded like a dog he had just seen at the Humane Society of Berks County. Erik quickly went to berkshumane.org, saw the YouTube adoption video still online, and quickly contacted the Humane Society of Berks County. He spoke to HSBC Kennel Coordinator, Tammy Carannate. “Usually, the dog turns out not to be the same dog but it seemed extremely likely that the adopted dog was actually Puggie,” said Carannate. “We verified that the dog was a match and that Mr. Conley had filed all the appropriate lost reports in his surrounding county’s animal shelters.”

Unfortunately, by the time Puggie entered an animal shelter, enough time and distance had elapsed that the reports were not matched up with the right dog and it was only by chance that the connection was made. Here is where the story often turns emotional and confrontational. Pennsylvania law provides for only a 48 hour stray period for stray dogs, and none for cats and other animals. After that public display period is over, dogs may be adopted into new families or

worse, face euthanasia. If adopted, the original owner has only limited rights to reclaim the pet, especially if there was no identification on the animal and if all State and local laws were followed. The only recourse is to file a law suit and attempt to reclaim the dog from the new adopter, who has often already fallen in love with their new pet.

It is for this reason the **Humane Society of Berks County strongly encourages every pet owner to microchip his or her pets.** Microchips provide permanent and immediate identification and proof of ownership of a pet. Had Puggie been microchipped, he would almost certainly have been identified as belonging to the Conley family when he entered the first animal shelter. The Humane Society of Berks County has reunited pets with owners from around the country because of the discovery of implanted microchips.

Puggie is very fortunate to have been identified quickly after adoption and to have been adopted by Sue Perrotty and her family. Sue was willing to confirm Puggie's identity and agreed to return him to his original family. "It was heartwarming to see the Conley's 4 year old daughter squeal, 'It's my Puggie!' as he ran to greet her and it helped my son feel better about giving up his new found friend." Such reunions after long periods of time and great distances are not common. A microchip would have ensured the swift return of Puggie, as well as helping to avoid the heart ache felt by the Perrotty family when giving up their new pet. Perrotty continued, "I have both of my dogs chipped, just in case they ever get lost, because I know I would be devastated." Fortunately, Puggie is now microchipped since every cat and dog adopted out by the Humane Society of Berks County is microchipped prior to adoption.

The Humane Society of Berks County serves all of Berks County and surrounding communities. It is a private, non-profit organization funded through donations and service fees. In addition to enforcing Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws for all of Berks County, the Humane Society provides adoption services, spay and neuter services, humane education, pet behavioral counseling, veterinary services to the general public, and helps stray, injured and mistreated animals. The Humane Society is located at 1801 N. 11th Street, Reading, and 1201 Ben Franklin Highway E., Douglassville.

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Puggie, third from left, held by Mrs. Conley and her daughter, with the Perrotty family and their dogs.