

## 90 Chow Rescue Questions and Answers

1. When did the HLLC suspect there was a problem?
  - a. The HLLC, along with numerous other shelters and rescues throughout Central PA and Philadelphia area, worked with Pendrawgn Chow Rescue to help place dogs who had trouble finding homes in the traditional shelter environment. Teri Palmer Roper, the rescue operator, was active with the Chow Chow clubs on the national level, showing, judging and breeding champion chows.
  - b. In December of 2008, the HLLC began to get reports from her neighbors that there was excessive barking and large numbers of dogs in her residence. At that point, the HLLC stopped sending Chows to Teri, and attempted to visit her home to assess the situation. Teri would not allow the Humane Society Police Officers into her home, and without a warrant and with no grounds to obtain one, the League had no other options. The HLLC continued to provide her with free donated food, and with spay/neuter surgeries for her dogs, but no longer placed animals with her.
  - c. The HLLC has no power to limit the number of dogs in a residence, which is a zoning and a kennel licensing issue. We advised neighbors to contact PA Dog Law with their concerns, as only PA Dog Law can license and enforce the state's kennel laws. The HLLC Humane Society Police officers can only enforce the state's anti-cruelty laws, and there were no reports of cruelty and thus no way for the HLLC to obtain a warrant. In addition, we worked with Dog Law to determine if she exceeded the 25 dog limit for an unlicensed kennel. After finding more than 25 dogs posted on her website, the HLLC and Dog Law obtained a search warrant, and with the help of the East Lampeter Police Department were able to enter her home. While HLLC staff strongly suspected that Teri had exceeded the 25 dogs per year, no one imagined that she had over 90 dogs in her home, nor did anyone envision the level of unsanitary conditions that she and the dogs were living in.

2. Why did the HLLC take all the dogs, including Teri's personal dogs?
  - a. Initially, the plan was to help Teri get back to a reasonable number of dogs for the amount of space in the home. However in addition to the presence of dead and dying dogs, the house was in such unsanitary condition that it was considered unsafe for any dogs to be left in her care.
3. Why were four of the dogs euthanized?
  - a. Two of the dogs were long deceased upon our arrival. Of the 90 remaining dogs, four were so ill, malnourished, and injured, that we determined that euthanasia was the only humane option to end their suffering.
4. Where are the rest of the dogs?
  - a. Of the 86 remaining dogs, 16 were co-owned show dogs, or owned dogs staying at her home for breeding purposes. These dogs were all returned to their owners. All but 32 of the remaining dogs have been either adopted or placed with other shelters and rescue organizations, where their chances of being adopted are very good. Eight of the 32 are currently available for adoption at the Humane League of Lancaster County. The remaining dogs have some level of behavioral or health problems which make them unadoptable at this time. The HLLC is currently working with the National Chow Rescue organization to find placement for those remaining dogs.
5. What is "animal hoarding?"
  - a. According to the Humane Society of the United States, an animal hoarder is someone who amasses more animals than they can care for, and generally fails to recognize, or refuses to acknowledge when the animals in their custody become victims of gross neglect.  
[http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource\\_library/policies\\_and\\_guidelines/animal\\_hoarders\\_fact\\_sheet.html](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/policies_and_guidelines/animal_hoarders_fact_sheet.html) is an excellent explanation of what is currently known about animal hoarders.
6. What will happen to Teri?
  - a. The ten charges against Teri are animal cruelty charges, which are summary offenses. The HLLC will express to the District Justice who

hears the case our preference that Teri receive counseling instead of fines, as there is a very high rate of recidivism with animal hoarders. We hope that these unfortunate circumstances allow her to get the help she needs to prevent another such incident from occurring.

7. Will the HLLC continue to work with rescue organizations?
  - a. Yes, there are many, many rescue organizations who save thousands of animals. While there is always a chance that someone operating a rescue could fall victim to animal hoarding, good rescues legitimately help many animals find homes who would otherwise be unadoptable through traditional shelter programs because of their need for additional behavioral assistance.