

## Dogs, humans take a walk at Scope in Norfolk

By Cindy Clayton  
The Virginian-Pilot  
© April 17, 2015

### NORFOLK

A few barks could be heard with the sounds of light-rail bells and downtown traffic Thursday.

With sunny skies above, tails wagged and leashes were clipped in anticipation of the first Hampton Roads Human Walk.

Dixie, an adopted 5-year-old "Scottie-something," let her owner, Pam Painter, translate what the dogs were trying to say: that the event, held at the plaza at Scope, was meant to promote shelter-dog adoptions.

"What we're trying to do is dispel the idea that there's something wrong with these dogs," said Painter, vice president of the Friends of Norfolk Animal Care and Adoption Center.

The three-hour event included dogs of various sizes and breeds from all South Hampton Roads city shelters. It was held around the lunch hour to give people downtown a reason to get out of the office.

There was a whippet-chihuahua mix and a beagle looking to walk with someone who possibly would give them permanent homes. A husky mix sniffed other dogs passing by and wagged her tail for anyone who petted her.

Today, a Human Walk will be held in Virginia Beach, and there will be an event April 28 in Chesapeake.

Adelyn Albritton, 1, was drawn to Kindle, a 4-year-old Australian cattle dog that was available for adoption. She patted Kindle's head and, after spotting several other dogs, took off to meet them.

"She just kind of naturally adores dogs," said her mother, Julie. "We would love for her to have a dog to grow up with."

The family had a poodle that died about five years ago, and they decided to wait to get another dog. When they saw a story about the event, they decided to check it out.

Marie Jensen, who also is with Friends of Norfolk Animal Care and Adoption Center, brought the idea for the Human Walk to the group after reading online about the first one in Australia. The Lost Dogs Home group organized the Human Walking Program last year to get office workers out of their cubicles and "encourage healthy living with a companion animal," according to the group's website.

The idea was for the dogs to walk the humans.

As noon approached in Norfolk and workers left their offices, the crowd at Scope grew. More people grabbed leashes and set off for a turn around the fountain. The dogs, growing more familiar with each other, tried to play or barked at one another.

Dogs adopted from shelters all have a back story, but they aren't castaways or castoffs, Jensen said. Buddy, Jensen's shelter dog, goes to work with her every day. His job at Jensen Apparel in Portsmouth is to greet everyone.

"Shelter pets are the best pets," she said.

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