

Rescue Ink Fights Animal Abuse on the Streets of New York

Tough-looking volunteers reveal soft spot for animals.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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Members of Rescue Ink, a nonprofit animal-welfare group, are gentle giants when it comes to animals.

Whether it's stopping animal abuse, finding lost cats and dogs, educating the public or raising funds and awareness, the men of Rescue Ink will answer the call. This group of animal lovers might have a tough exterior with their tattoo-covered bodies and "in-your-face" style, however, when it comes to puppies and kittens, they admit they're gentle giants.

The newly formed nonprofit animal-welfare group works out of a no-kill rescue center in Long Island, N.Y. The Rescue Ink hotline, 631-737-2834, has been ringing nonstop in response to recent newspaper and TV coverage of their dog and cat rescues.

Members of the group do not give out their last names for privacy reasons. Instead, they go by names like "Mike Tattoo," "Big Ant," "G" and "Batso."

This week, the group has 20 animal rescue calls to follow up on, says Robert, the group's designated spokesman. Robert expects that number to increase because the group made a guest appearance on The Ellen DeGeneres Show last Friday,

The rescue group seems to be on its way to achieving celebrity status. "That's what it seems like," Robert says.

Operating costs come out of the pockets of its members. Programs developed by the group are companion outreach services, feral cat trap-neuter-return, the school visitation initiative, animal housing workshop, Rescue Ink animal advocates and the Pit Bull Awareness Program.

The Pit Bull program aims to expose dog fighting and alert the authorities of any such activities. Rescue Ink intends to spread the word that "Only a Fool Thinks Dogfighting is Cool" by developing a public service announcement program.

Rescue Ink's reach extends beyond helping cats and dogs. Robert says they are working on saving two pigs from a hoarding situation. They've also handled cases involving ducks, turtles and rabbits.

As part of the group's dedication to community outreach and education, Robert says, Rescue Ink participated in the North Shore Animal League's annual adoption event May 3 to 4, 2008.

For more information, visit the Rescue Ink website.