

York SPCA teams with PetSmart for dog training

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SPCA volunteer Mike List of Shiloh massages Samantha, a shelter dog, during a training session..

Local PetSmart customers now have the chance to see SPCA shelter dogs being trained -- and those who adopt the animals will receive free training classes from the pet store.

Melissa Smith, executive director of the York County SPCA, said four pets were chosen for the new program, which runs from 3 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays for eight weeks. The first session was held this week.

Although the Dog Training Club of York already trains dogs at the SPCA's Emigsville shelter, members primarily focus on dogs with issues that would make them less adoptable, Smith said.

The SPCA already partners with PetSmart on Loucks Road in York, she said; the store serves as a satellite shelter, where customers get to see adoptable pets.

The new program is the brainchild of the Merrick Fund Foundation, a local group dedicated to helping shelter pets, Smith said.

"We've chosen very highly adoptable dogs," she said. "A PetSmart trainer will work with the dogs on basic commands and general obedience, to prepare the dogs for their new adoptive homes. The goal is for the dogs to be adopted within the eight-week period, so the new adopter can continue with the training."

A person who adopts one of the dogs in, say, the second week of training would then receive the remaining six training sessions free, Smith said.

"It's a great opportunity to showcase the quality of pets we have available for adoption," she said.

The shelter currently has 103 dogs, she said.

For more information about SPCA programs, visit www.ycspca.org.

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