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GREYHOUND WELFARE GROUPS FROM THE MAINLAND MOBILIZE TO HELP GREYHOUNDS ON GUAM

The abrupt closure of the Guam Greyhound track in November garnered the instant attention of greyhound advocates worldwide, who rely on the Internet to share information about what's happening in the world of greyhound racing, rescue and adoption. "All that was known initially was that several hundred greyhounds needed help," said Joan Eiding, editor and publisher of Greyhound Network News (GNN). "The greyhounds were thousands of miles away. We felt utterly helpless."

Eiding goes on to explain that concerns escalated when it was learned that the track intended to sell the greyhounds to the Philippines. News that those plans had fallen apart and the greyhounds would be put up for adoption brought an uneasy and, as it turns out, temporary relief. Advocates then learned that hundreds of unaltered greyhounds had simply been given away to unscreened island residents and that several of the "adopted" greyhounds had died and others were injured or running at large.

"We were absolutely stunned," said Louise Coleman who runs the American-European-Greyhound Alliance (AEGA), based in Boston. "Greyhound adoption groups on the mainland and in most of Europe provide full veterinary workups including spay/neuter, shots and teeth cleaning. The greyhounds are temperament-tested and profiled for compatibility with children and small animals. References are checked and home visits are conducted with potential adopters."

By early December, the dimensions of the problem began to come into focus and attempts to contact concerned groups and individuals on the island of Guam began in earnest. "We are very encouraged to find that there are so many people in Guam who care deeply about the plight of these dogs," said Greyhound Protection League (GPL) President, Susan Netboy. The advocates reached out to Guam Animals In Need (GAIN) and to Senator Judith Guthertz and have come up with several ways to help in spite of the great distance:

GNN and AEGA have sent sizable cash donations to GAIN for the care of any greyhounds that come into the shelter. GPL is offering \$12,500 to transport greyhounds to the mainland for adoption and has contacted the owner of Guam Greyhound asking that the company make a donation to match GPL funding. [See attached letter.]

Netboy believes that many other mainland advocates and organizations will join in the effort to help the Guam greyhounds.

The guiding principle for these efforts was summarized by Eiding: "Although the majority of Guam greyhounds were bred in Australia, they became American greyhounds when they were sold and/or transferred to race on the island of Guam, a United States Territory. As such, they should be accorded the same protection afforded to greyhounds retiring from American greyhound tracks. We intend to do everything possible to make that a reality."

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