

MOUNTAIN PET RESCUE

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and ran her own Asheville-based foster and grooming organization called Pet Soup.

"I happen to be a stray dog magnet," Warren said. "It was either a grooming client was giving me a dog or I was finding one by the side of the road, so I don't think Animal Compassion Network could keep up with me! I just started my own because I had my own grooming shop at the time, I was doing boarding, a little bit of doggy daycare and I just started allotting a few spots for foster dogs. I got a few foster homes and it just took off from there!"

Upkeeping a grassroots pet rescue organization proves no easy task. As a nonprofit organization, Mountain Pet Rescue relies completely on volunteer efforts and works through different projects to fund their rescue efforts. Thrift Hound, a new thrift store located right off New Leicester Highway, is the latest project.

"We basically wanted to open up a thrift store to help fund the rescue," Warren said. "There are never ending expenses; transportation and feeding and medical and marketing and just buying supplies you know. That's what we want the thrift store for and ultimately, when the thrift store starts covering our day to day kind of stuff

we want to be able to open a shelter."

Since all efforts are run by volunteers, Mountain Pet Rescue's dedicated network of volunteers enjoy donating their time to the many elements it takes to run a successful pet rescue.

"I would absolutely recommend volunteering," said Vanessa King, a volunteer with Mountain Pet Rescue.

"I've always liked rescue and this organization's value and mission just really align with my ideas and resonate with me, I feel like I found my tribe in rescue."

With the thrift store now up and running two days a week, Mountain Pet Rescue begins to truly establish itself as an excellent resource for Blue Ridge area occupants hoping to adopt or foster. Yet, there is still much that can be done to further the business, so Mountain Pet Rescue actively seeks more volunteers.

"It takes all kinds of people to have a successful animal rescue," Paschold said. "I think I'm kind of a more rare person when it comes to animal rescue because there are a lot of people who end up in rescue because they're animal people, maybe they don't like people that much so they go hang out with animals. I love working with both people and animals, so it takes those kind of people too."

Warren again stressed that a wide variety of people is necessary for the organization to truly function. From business minded people who can help run the thrift store to graphic designers who could help create logos, a wide variety of skills will help the organization truly establish itself in the community.

"If you like doing events and public relations we can use you and if you like writing, grant writing is another huge thing we need," Warren said. "If we could get someone on Twitter we'd be rockstars!"

Beyond volunteer help, Mountain Pet Rescue always looks for new temporary and permanent homes for their animals. Warren and Paschold hope that getting more college students involved could save the lives of numerous animals.

"College students are perfect fosters," Warren said. "It's a way to get your animal fix without committing the next 15 years of your life to an animal so we like to recruit college student fosters." Ultimately, Mountain Pet Rescue hopes to make a difference in the lives of both the human and canine members of the Blue Ridge community.

"Mountain Pet Rescue just wants to be a well-known resource for any help people need and a safe environ-

ment where people don't feel judged," Paschold said. "I just think one of the most important things for me is just being really open minded and looking at each individual person as an individual and being compassionate as to what their situation is."

For King, working with Mountain Pet Rescue is an eye-opening experience.

"You see the hard side of things working for a rescue organization like this, but you also get to see the best in people, from donors to volunteers to people coming in to foster animals," King said.

For Warren, Mountain Pet Rescue is an opportunity to not only follow her passions, but to ultimately establish a new narrative surrounding pet rescue in the Blue Ridge area.

"I just think if you find passion in something, whether it be saving dogs and cats, or caring for children, or Meals on Wheels, I just think making a difference and helping is such a big thing," Warren said. "Whatever you do for your career always remember that there's someone or something out there that needs your help and you can help them!"

To volunteer for Mountain Pet Rescue, visit their website at www.mountainpetrescueavl.com or find them on Facebook at Mountain Pet Rescue Asheville.