

Examples of Health/Aggression Issues at Various Vermont Rescues
(From personal experience and shared with me by adopters, humane investigators, and non-profit animal welfare professionals)

A Canine Gem—South Burlington VT

See also recent WCAX story <https://www.wcax.com/content/news/Whos-policing-Vermonts-pet-rescue-organizations-507219211.html>

1. Untreated medical conditions – ranging from wounds from dogs fighting, untreated heartworms, untreated leg fracture
2. Dogs reported who were transported from down south at ideal body conditions 5/9 on Purina BCS and adopted out at 2/9. (See Purina BCS chart)
3. Staff at A Canine Gem reporting not enough dog food to feed all dogs.
4. Overcrowding conditions of the dogs and not enough staff to ensure safety and animal care for the dogs.
5. Unsecured pens. Dog aggressive dogs able to jump over their pens and into other dog areas and attack those dogs.
6. Parvo – Has had Parvo at the new facility and will hold play groups with puppies owned by the general public at her facility. History of sick puppies with Parvo and some have died and owner had refused vet care.
7. Smell of ammonia in facility. In 2018 OSHA did an ammonia level test at A Canine Gem when at the Williston location. Levels came back at 6ppm for 15 minutes. OSHA standards for employees is 35ppm for 15 minutes. This did come in below OSHA standards. However, in The Association of Shelter Veterinarians 2010 “Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters” is states the following: ***Good air quality requires good sanitation and cleaning to reduce sources of airborne particles and gaseous contaminants such as ammonia, carbon monoxide, and hydrogen sulfide (FASS Guide 1999). Published guidelines for maximum ammonia exposures reflect hazards to human health or adverse effects on animal production and should not be used as an indicator of proper sanitation. Although some of the regulations for concentrated animal feeding operations cite minimum ammonia levels at or below 10 parts per million (ppm), acceptable levels in a shelter should be less than 2 ppm (G. Patronek 2010, unpublished data). In properly run shelters, ammonia***

should be below this level even before morning cleaning. Dust control is important because microbes may be transmitted by airborne dust (FASS 1999). Airborne dust can contain a variety of bioactive aerosols, particularly endotoxins, which have pro-inflammatory effects and a negative impact on lung function (Donham 2002; Rylander 2006, 2007). <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>

8. Many concerns come in about a dog adopted from A Canine Gem and starts biting people in the home. It appears in these cases owner will take the dog back, place back up for adoption, and not inform new adopters of the dog's bite history and behavior needs.
9. Adopting out intact dogs, there has been at least one case I know of where a dog was adopted out and was pregnant.
10. Dogs at the facility for long periods of time. Over a year.

Chico and Friends, Westford VT (Letter to the Selectboard from an adopter)

To whom it may concern,

I adopted Clifford from Chico and Friends in the end of October, 2015. When I found this "rescue" online, it looked like a wonderful place. I drove two hours north to find a doggy soul mate. When I arrived, I was horrified. There was a shed outside, with at least TWENTY dogs inside. They were in cages, stacked on top of each other. Some of these cages had multiple dogs inside. When I asked to take some of the dogs out (with much protest from my other half due to the terrible conditions), they all had diarrhea and were eating and drinking out of bowls with fecal matter inside. The woman running the place tried to tell me that the dogs were simply "stressed" and that was the cause of the constant diarrhea. Inside this shed were also kittens, all with eye infections.

There was a second shed containing a very hyper pitbull. I asked to see him. His top lip was split in half and he proceeded to chase her domesticated rabbits and chickens all over the yard while the woman laughed. Way to increase a prey drive.... We could not catch him, so she opened a can of cat food and threw it inside the shed. He chased it in and she closed the door. There is no wondering how his lip was split in two. There were also some dogs inside the house, they looked healthy. What a shame that these women had acres and acres, a swimming pool, and an expensive new car in the driveway, but no safe place to

house and take care of all these dogs. It is obvious that she is taking in far more money than she is reporting.

When I opened Clifford's cage, he clung onto me, not wanting me to put him down. I brought him home. I was never asked for references, landlord's permission, or proof of a vet. He had been neutered earlier that day, but they did not give me any antibiotics for him. His neutering incision became infected, but that was the least of his problems. He was having such bad diarrhea and began vomiting. I could feel all of his bones. I rushed him to the vet. This all occurred before I was even thinking about getting his neutering incision checked. He was immediately hooked up to an IV and we waited for test results. He had giardia, coccidia, heartworm, tape worm, kennel cough, lyme disease, and was extremely malnourished. We sat with an IV in his arm for three and a half hours. Clifford developed stomach ulcers due to all of the medication he was on, but has since, been cleared of all vet appointments as of April. Since we have only been to the vet over a few tick bites and a skin allergy.

The woman running the facility is Diane Forsey. Susan Beval was also involved in adopting Clifford out to me. She was introduced to me as Diane's sister. The Vet on the little paperwork I did receive from Chico and Friends was Shelburne Veterinary Hospital. I was told that his vaccine paperwork would be mailed to me. I never received it. I was given a blank copy of the contract I signed. I have requested a copy of the signed contract, but never received a response from Diane. They have also blocked anyone that has had a bad experience with them from posting a review or even commenting on reviews. If they have nothing to hide, they would respond to our messages and allow us to post honest reviews. This place needs to be shut down or severely monitored. While the contract states that they are not responsible for any illness they were unaware of, this does not cover gross negligence. While I do not need them to pay for Clifford's vet bills, I do feel that they have obviously broken laws and need to be held responsible for his abuse/neglect. It has been extremely difficult to find the appropriate avenue to address these problems since Diane is the Dog Warden and I have been told that she is friends with the Head of Investigations at the Chittenden County Humane Society while this has been countered by the head of the Humane Society of VT, Barry.

She has since "closed," but stated in a post, which she has since deleted, that she will be reopening under another name. She has no remorse, and has so many believing her lies. I fear for the safety of any animals in her care. She has given away animals for free on craigslist, and while "closing" she refused to let another

rescue take some of the dogs simply because they did not agree with the way Diane ran her rescue. She has still not answered anyone as to what has happened to the ten dogs she had left as of “closing.” Many of us fear that the worst has happened to these dogs. Also, with the recent parvo outbreak at her facility, all dogs there for up to two years could be exposed.

Thank you.

Heidi’s Haven Ferrisburgh VT and Williamstown VT

Assorted media coverage <https://www.addisonindependent.com/201803after-years-ferrisburgh-could-act-dog-rescuer-neighbors-complain-about-noise-rats>

When all was said and done, the legal battle the town had to engage in cost them **\$15, 916** and took time and energy from the selectboard, town zoning board, town administrator, board of health and town constable.

<https://www.wcax.com/content/news/Ferrisburgh-woman-to-close-down-controversial-dog-rescue-479321123.html>

Contrary to claim that owner planned to shut down her rescue, she in fact purchased a 35-acre property in Williamstown, VT in the summer of 2018 and moved her organization there. By fall several reports of injured animals had been received-- dog fights resulting in two dogs being euthanized and volunteers going to the ER with dog-bite injuries. Several weeks later, another volunteer ended up getting numerous sutures at the ER. We have dealt with this rescue before; all their dogs we have seen are loaded with internal and external parasites. The rescue had left them untreated or had “treated” them only with home remedies such as pumpkin seeds. The dogs’ bite wounds were never properly treated either. No antibiotics given, just home remedies.

Assorted Rescues (examples received from non-profit director)

Rescue A adopted out an intact dog for \$495. The new owner brought the dog to us for neutering, at which time he tested positive for heartworm. The adopter decided it was all too much and returned the dog to Rescue A. The dog has a bite

history, but the adopter was told by Rescue A that *all dog owners should expect to be bitten*. My fear is this dog will be adopted out again with no behavior assessment, no retraining for his bite history, and no treatment for his heartworm (update- this dog was re-listed on Petfinder for same adoption fee and transport fee and there was no mention of HW+ status).

Rescue B brought kittens to our clinic. The kittens had lesions that tested positive with Wood's lamp test for ringworm. Someone who adopted one of these kittens from Rescue B contacted our clinic to ask what we had written on the kitten's paperwork, since Rescue B had used black permanent ink to redact our clinic's notes. What we had written, and told the adopter who had not heard this from Rescue B, was that the kittens probably had ringworm. Rescue B has not brought us animals for spay/neuter since.