

## Pets, people hook up

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### Document Text

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Event makes human-animal love connections

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MUNCIE -- Penn and Teller wrestled on the floor of the Memorial Building at the Delaware County Fairgrounds on Saturday.

A group of three kids and two adults watched the dogs -- not magicians -- playfully bite and claw at each other during Petapalooza, an animal fair that offered a chance to adopt pets, learn about proper animal care, and ruffle the fur of critters.

More than 25 animal shelters and rescue organizations participated, bringing dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets and other pets. And event-goers could sponsor an exotic animal, such as an alligator, by donating money to advocate organizations.

Penn and Teller are two husky mixes that were up for adoption through the Indianapolis Home for Huskies group.

Tina Bassett, a member of the huskies organization, said she enjoys watching the kids meet the dogs.

'Parents have to drag their kids away,' Bassett said, laughing as a group of small children approached Penn and Teller -- and Jake, a husky-malamute-chow mix.

Contrary to popular opinion, huskies are not difficult to keep as pets, said Gretchen Binney, a member of the husky group.

'Jake is a stubborn dog, but he is also one of the friendliest dogs ever,' said Binney, who just adopted the Husky.

Hundreds of people, young and old, crowded into the Memorial building, some of them figuring out which pets they wanted to adopt.

Potential adopters went through a rigorous process, said Rachel Hawke, a member of the Unconditional Love Foundation, the host of the event.

Those who wanted to call an animal their own first had to fill out an application. Then two references are checked, and a home visit is made to determine whether the candidate has what's needed for a specific animal.

For instance, Hawke said, one of the requirements to adopt a pit bull is having a fenced-in yard.

The pit bull terrier Hawke held, Athena, seemed to bask happily in the attention she received from the children and adults who petted her. Athena literally hugged a baby riding in a blue stroller. The baby smiled and giggled while waving his arms at the dog.

Petapalooza's purpose had been served: to make connections between animals and people.

'It gets the word out that there are homeless animals out there and educates people on the different breeds,' she said.

Contact news reporter Tara Clifton at 213-5825.

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### Abstract (Document Summary)

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