



Linda Candler at the Gary, Ind., dogfighting raid

Stay Awhile

Linda's Camp K9 provides rest for the weary and romps for the feisty

Linda Candler's three-hour drive from her Mishawaka, Ind., home to Indianapolis last December began with a stop to pick up some shop vacs, crucial tools for de-hair-ifying Linda's Camp K9, her doggie day care. She drove to a pancake house next—but not for breakfast.

In the parking lot, Candler and cohort Kelly Adelsperger handed off a loveable pit bull named Tucker to Casa Del Toro Pit

Bull Education and Rescue, the next way station on his journey to adoption. Then they scooped nine new pooches—from shelters in Indianapolis and Kentucky—into the company van and drove back to the day care, where 22 other adoptable dogs awaited alongside pets of paying clients.

"We don't go anywhere without bringing [back] at least one dog who needs a home," says Candler, who has adopted out nearly

900 dogs in the last five years and donated thousands of dollars in treats, toys, and food for rescued dogs.

Candler took in her first HSUS rescues, 25 dogs from a southern Indiana puppy mill, in 2009, after working with HSUS Indiana state director Anne Sterling to help pass a bill cracking down on the inhumane breeding facilities. In 2010 in Bloomington, she worked alongside a vet, documenting the maladies of 120-plus dogs: terrible teeth, heart murmurs, luxating patellas, infections, and fleas. She brought 18 dogs to the day care for fostering, and the rescue made the local news. Candler was hooked.

Last spring, she worked at an emergency shelter in flooded Missouri, bringing back Henry, a sad little black dog who'd tested heartworm positive. Adopted by Adelsperger's neighbor, Henry's outlook has changed. "When we go for a walk, his tail curls up, his head is up, and he goes prancing down the driveway," says owner Jeff Stuber.

In July 2011, Candler assisted an HSUS dogfighting raid in Gary, Ind., noting every mark, wound, and scar as potential evidence. Images from the raid are still with her, she says: the nervous wait in the car for authorities to secure the area, the filthy doghouses and feces, the flies everywhere. She also won't forget the SWAT team member who asked her to take good care of the dogs. That got to her, she says—knowing that even the toughest care.

— *Ruthanne Johnson*

Linda Candler, Mishawaka, Indiana

► **CHANGE OF SCENERY:** In 2005, Candler's father, knowing her love of animals and dissatisfaction with her job as an apartment manager, suggested she open a doggie day care. She took the leap, but not before leaving her mark on her place of employment: "First I changed the apartment complex's regulations to allow two dogs instead of one," she says with a chuckle.

► **FOR THE LOVE OF DOGS:** Two-acre Camp K9 is all about dogs, with lounging spots in the sun and shade, toys, napping cabins, chewies, and even wildlife to watch outside the fence. A staff of 14 monitors

an average group of 60 paying day-campers and as many as 25 foster dogs. Notes The HSUS's Anne Sterling: "It's the happiest place a dog could possibly be."

► **HOW YA LIKE ME NOW!:** When Anna Marie Clayton mentioned that her Lhasa apso Maya needed a companion, Candler thought of a little shih tzu named Taffy, who'd just arrived from a Bloomfield puppy mill rescue. There was one catch: Taffy had befriended another rescued dog. Named Mantis for the way he cowered in the corner with his paws hiding his face, his badly infected eye had been removed. Clayton and her husband took both dogs and make sure they want for nothing.