

U.S. firm throws city dogs a bone

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Rescue: Virginia company bolsters fire department's life-saving equipment

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TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

SAINT JOHN - A company in Virginia is sending the Saint John Fire Department enough pet oxygen masks to have one in every fire station.

"They're sending me seven kits," District Chief Gerry Morris said. "I'm really excited about this."

The company - Wag'n Enterprises - contacted the fire department Thursday morning after receiving a Google alert directing them to a Telegraph-Journal story about the pet mask that saved a dog's life Monday night in a Saint John apartment fire.

"Most fire departments purchase them," said Ines de Pablo, who runs the pet safety organization in Herndon, Va. "So for those that can't, why not give them the right tools?"

De Pablo said many municipalities across North America don't budget for non-human life support, so she runs fundraisers to supply fire stations with the pet-saving equipment.

Usually it can take weeks for Wag'n Enterprises to hold dog washes or collect donations to supply a fire department with masks, but this week, she had the cash on hand. The oxygen kits are already in the mail.

Since 2008, the O2 Fur Life Program has provided more than 50 fire stations across North America with the oxygen masks, which are shaped to cover a snout, beak or kitten mouth.

"To me, it's not that crazy to ship to Canada," De Pablo said in a phone interview Thursday. "It's Canada. We're neighbours, come on."

De Pablo would like to see every fire station in the continent equipped with pet-saving equipment.

She said she buys them at cost for about US\$65.

"I'm here for the pets," she said. "Just because their owners don't know about (pet masks) doesn't mean they need to be punished in a fire." Every year, an estimated 40,000 pets die of smoke inhalation in house fires, she said.

On Monday, the Saint John Fire Department used its only pet mask for the first time to save Murphy, a springer spaniel owned by Rob Taylor. No one else was hurt in the blaze.

Morris, the district fire chief, had said it was difficult for the department to justify buying more masks under the city's tightening budget.

Although firefighters take pet rescue seriously, human lives always come first, Morris said.

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Kudos to Wag'n Enterprises.

The people who LOVE their pets on which those masks are used will appreciate it.

39  THUMBS UP 0  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

John S., Saint John on 22/01/10 07:20:32 AM AST

This is the best story I've read all week. Kudos to Wag'n Enterprises and the Saint John Fire Dept.

If I ever had a fire, I would want someone to rescue my 2 dogs!

36 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Tammy C, Saint John on 22/01/10 08:12:53 AM AST

A great story. Thanks Wag'n Enterprises and my dog Bear & cat Stewie thank you too.

31 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Natalie Tapley, Rothesay on 22/01/10 08:34:03 AM AST

Awesome!!

"To me, it's not that crazy to ship to Canada," De Pablo said in a phone interview Thursday. "It's Canada. We're neighbours, come on."

WOW!! This is a great sentiment from our Southern neighbours!

24 THUMBS UP 5 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Ella H., Saint John on 22/01/10 09:32:35 AM AST

Thank you Wag'n Enterprises such generosity should always be appreciated.

21 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

T. Smith, Fredericton on 22/01/10 10:05:16 AM AST

Its great to see someone doing good in the news. We need more good stories like this. Saint John Thanks You very much.

21 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

oh yeah, saint john on 22/01/10 10:31:56 AM AST

Thanks from our bad cat Jack.

17 THUMBS UP 1 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

D Murray, Habland on 22/01/10 10:47:30 AM AST

Bullitt, our little mutt, says thanks so much to our American friend.

Great story to lift our spirits. Goodness only knows, we need it.

10 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Pauline Milner, Saint John on 22/01/10 12:51:20 PM AST

Kudos to Wag'n Enterprises for their generosity. With out them this city would not have been able to afford them.

8 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

McDuff L, Saint John on 22/01/10 01:30:39 PM AST

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