

"No room at the inn"

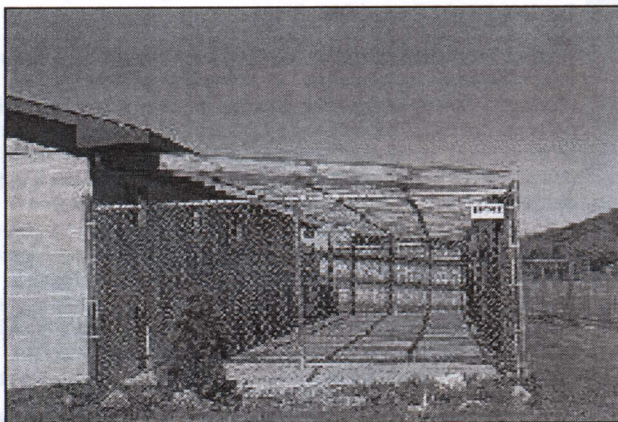
by Cathrine Greer
Adopter and Volunteer



That might be a phrase many of us associate with the Christmas season, but I can tell you that those are not words ever heard by Inga Hotaling, the NY MAGDRL Area Coordinator, when she has to place one of our fosters with Kathy Alter, owner of Country Hound Kennels in Munnsville, NY.

This long-time (23 years) Central New York kennel, a registered member with the American Boarding Kennel Association, has 24 dog runs with a good one-quarter to one-third of those runs being filled with MAGDRL Great Danes a majority of the time. Here's a fact that most people are not aware of - while regular boarding is \$15 per day per dog at Country Hounds, Kathy and Brian (Kathy's supportive and understanding husband), only charge MAGDRL \$8 per day per dog. Now let's do the math on that: with an average of 6 dogs at \$8 day, that's \$1344 per month out of MAGDRL's budget. That's an enormous amount of money to us, but doesn't even begin to cover Kathy's expenses. If these were regular boarders, Kathy would receive over \$2500 for a month for those 6 dogs. Every run filled with a Dane cuts into Kathy's profit margin, though you'll NEVER hear her complain.

Country Hound Kennels is more than a kennel; quite frankly it's so nice, clean and peaceful, I wouldn't mind booking my own vacation there. For any of you who have fostered, you already know most of our fosters arrive in pretty sad shape; underweight, malnourished, parasitic, and most with some emotional baggage.



At Country Hounds, they're taken to Kathy's private vet, fed Diamond and Chicken Soup dog food (very high quality), Old Mother Hubbard biscuits, bathed, sleep on raised platform bedding, and are given new collars, leashes, toys and treats. For many of the Danes this is the first time they've experienced kindness at the hands of humans, the first time they've been bathed, learned what a toy is or what it is to play, the first time they've had a full stomach, adequate shelter, needed medications and an endless supply of clean water. Kathy and Brian evaluate their temperament, test them with cats and other dogs, and very often, even take one of these poor dogs into their own home for some extra TLC.

Kathy and Brian's caring doesn't end there. In the past year they've added a roof to the outside play-yard so the Danes are protected in rain and snow (After all we all know how Great Danes melt in the rain!), a professional vet scale for verifying weight gain which is crucial for monitoring dogs with parasites, bloat and other abdominal issues, and have purchased a front load washer for those Dane sized blankies. Who do you think transports the dogs to the vet? Whose gasoline and truck is used for the transport? Who travels for hours on the NY Thruway to meet us halfway on a Buffalo transport? That's right - Kathy and Brian Alter of Country Hound Kennels.

It goes even further than that, folks...Kathy uses her years of knowledge and experience with canines in carefully helping Inga make a perfect match for the Danes that Country Hound fosters. My family personally experienced this when we adopted Zeke, our first MAGDRL Dane and it was Kathy's example that led us into fostering Liza and helping her find her forever home.

We all know that a kennel, even one that is really a dog-spa, is not an ideal situation for any foster dog, but, where would NY MAGDRL be without Country Hound Kennels? Furthermore, where would all the dogs that Kathy and Brian have cared for be? Some of her boarders have been there for over a YEAR! Please visit their website to tour the kennel. <http://www.countryhoundkennels.com/>

So now the question remains, "Just what can we do to help?" We can help by supporting top-notch kennels such as Country Hound by giving them our business, by donating financially to help the MAGDRL dogs, and by opening our homes to foster dogs to ease the burden.

And finally, a great big thank you and sloppy kiss to Kathy from our Zeke for helping him find a forever home, and from us for finding us our Zeke.

