

# Chicago Tribune

## PAWS Beach Party funds programs for homeless dogs and cats

By CANDACE JORDAN  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE



David Goodman of Auction Results®, LLC (Fred Becker photo)

**A live auction, conducted by David Goodman, included an Elton John concert experience at the United Center (sold for \$14,000) and a six-night stay at Julia Child's home, "La Peetch," in Provence,**

**France (sold for \$10,000). The opportunity to have your pet appear on the 2019 Beach Party invite sold for \$4,000 to board members Anne Marie and Murray Peretz, whose PAWS rescue dog, Franzen, will be a cover star soon.**

PAWS Chicago hosted its 16th annual Beach Party on July 19 at Castaways on North Avenue Beach. Under warm, cloudy skies, the sold-out event attracted more than 500 guests and 125 dogs to benefit Chicagoland's largest “no kill” shelter, which since its founding in 1997, has helped reduce the number of homeless pets in the city by 87 percent, according to the organization. Aboard the yacht-inspired venue on the lakefront, partygoers enjoyed beautiful skyline views, dancing on deck to music by DJ Dan Holloway, dinner buffets, "paw-garitas," live and silent auctions, a photo booth and caricatures by Ali Cantarella.



Scott Wernery, from left, Bradley Sadowski holding Lilly, Julie Ecclestone and Andrea Griffin. (James C. Svehla/Chicago Tribune)

Upon arrival, human and four-legged guests were draped in colorful leis before heading up to the main deck, where many pups lounged in beach attire that included sailor hats, Hawaiian T-shirts, a grass skirt and even an oversize straw hat worn by Shari Duffy's Rottweiler, Max.

Lucky pups indulged in a Paradise 4 Paws dog spa, where they could enjoy paw-dicures, brush-outs, playtime with other dogs, splash pools and more. A doggy buffet, provided by Merrick Pet Care, offered natural, grain-free food options for the yappy guests. And for stressed-out pooches, massages were administered by certified animal-rehabilitation therapist, Tod Miner of ARFit Dog Therapy Chicago.

The event was emceed for the ninth year by Lisa Dent, a PAWS board member and radio personality at BIG 95.5 — Dent owns two PAWS rescue dogs, Hank and Finn. She, along with PAWS founder and chair Paula Fasseas, welcomed the crowd and offered up a toast.

Fasseas introduced an Adoptable Animal Showcase that spotlighted dogs that were available for adoption that night. Puppy London (along with seven littermates) came to PAWS from a rural shelter in Oklahoma suffering from the parvo virus. Maribel, a 10-year-old Yorkshire terrier, was rescued during a puppy mill raid in Tennessee, and Betty Sue, a 5-year-old Shih Tzu, was found in Chicago as a stray. All of the dogs were adopted following the event, except Betty Sue, who is still under medical care.

Recently, the organization waived adoption fees in an effort to find homes for 37 dogs and cats that have been at the shelter the longest, a record for long-term animals being adopted. Its "Summer Lovin'" adoption resulted in 109 adoptions total, and more than 250 new foster applications.

Presented by Surgi-Connect, the Beach Party was co-chaired by Erica Kelly, Melissa Todd and Jeff Hall. The event raised \$330,000 to fund PAWS' lifesaving programs for homeless dogs and cats, plus an expansion and renovation of 20,000 square feet of unfinished space at the medical center, which will double its medical capabilities.

"The Beach Party is a reminder that all homeless pets deserve their day in the sun," said Fasseas.

*Freelance writer Candace Jordan is involved in many local organizations, including some whose events she covers.*