

TO THE RESCUE

Greyhounds find a happy home after their racing career is over.

BY KERRI FIVECOAT-CAMPBELL



Carerra Lamoureux with rescued greyhounds.



Eric Kowalyk tends to the dogs rescued by Hi-Speed Hounds.

For a lot of people, traveling with their dogs is pure pleasure; many dogs enjoy some of the same recreational activities as their humans. For Michaela Lamoureux, founder and president of Hi-Speed Hounds Greyhound and Adoption, Inc., taking a van full of greyhounds from racing tracks that have shut down, or other rescues in the United States, to her home in Winnipeg, Canada, is born out of necessity rather than pleasure.

The pleasure part of it comes later, when she's able to place a greyhound in a good home.

Lamoureux has driven as far as Kansas through snowstorms—and once even had to drive with one very nervous greyhound planted on her head. During that trip, she was part of a caravan of volunteers and missed her exit. Lamoureux says she had to go "four wheeling" in order to catch up with the other volunteers.

"We've had some scary trips," says Lamoureux. "In November '06, we were going to Grand Forks and hit a really bad snowstorm; we had nine dogs with us and almost rolled."

Lamoureux discovered her love for greyhounds when she first purchased a coyote hound from a pet store. "Someone asked me if he was a rescue from a track," says Lamoureux. "I knew very little about racing then."

Lamoureux's love for her dog grew, and as she researched the breed more, she learned that in the United

States, paramutual betting drives the greyhound racing industry. "We have a track in Canada, but pool betting drives it and it is a small, family-run organization that is also non-profit," says Lamoureux. "It's the law that they cannot make money from it."

This is different from the U.S. system, which continually produces dogs to drive the profits. In Kansas, where many greyhound farms produce the dogs, the greyhound is the only canine breed in the state regarded as "livestock." If dogs are not fast enough, or are retired, some owners have the dogs euthanized, as there are too many dogs for the homes that are available.

"I've never heard of the track in Canada not finding homes for all of their retired dogs," says Lamoureux.

When she decided to adopt a dog, she found a rescue organization in Canada, but says, "Something told me not to trust it," she says. Instead, she contacted rescues in America, which were reluctant to adopt a recently retired racing dog to a first-time owner so far away.

While searching the Internet one day, Lamoureux found a dog. "I just felt an immediate connection," she says. Lamoureux contacted the rescue, which was located in Illinois, and says, "The woman didn't even flinch when I told her where I was." She picked up her dog, and remained in contact with the rescue's owner. In 2004, the founder of that rescue could no longer run the organization and



Lamoureux's goal is to be able to get the vehicles necessary to pick up dogs as far away as Florida and Arizona. To learn more about Hi-Speed Hounds, go to www.highspeedhounds.com.

Lamoureux took it over.

Lamoureux and one of her first volunteers drove and retrieved three greyhounds that became the first success stories for Hi-Speed Hounds. Lamoureux says that was also her best trip. "It was very exciting and a new time in my life," says Lamoureux. "When I picked up those dogs, it made me feel like it was the beginning of something really big."

She says one of the worst trips was a drive to Fargo, N.D. in 2005 where they retrieved one dozen dogs from Geneva Lakes. "The dogs were very freaked out; we had to be very careful with them," says Lamoureux.

Since she has spearheaded the organization, Lamoureux has attracted a dedicated team of volunteers and a good core of foster homes. She has learned to assess homes and families quickly to make sure they are a good match for her rescues. "I know the dogs well and when people come, I have a pretty good idea of which dogs would be good."

says Lamoureux. That doesn't mean every applicant gets a dog, though. Lamoureux is careful to place dogs in homes that will not only be safe for the entire family and other pets, but for the dogs.

"I said no to a family with a small child that left the gate open all of the time," says Lamoureux. "The mother's response was 'She'll have to learn.' I didn't want her to learn on one of my dogs."

Lamoureux says she would like to educate people and help dispel the myths about retired racers. Lamoureux says most people believe greyhounds are high maintenance: that they need lots and lots of exercise, and that they're not smart and they're difficult to train.

"None of that is true," says Lamoureux. "Because they've lived their lives in kennels, they are mostly just grateful to be getting a second chance to live in a home."

One thing that is true is that greyhounds have a very high metabolism and they do eat quite a bit, although they are often very thin.

All of the dogs available for adoption at Hi-Speed Hounds are spayed and neutered and have all of their immunizations. For Americans who would like to adopt a greyhound from Hi-Speed and bring them back to the states, Lamoureux says there aren't any quarantine restrictions and she provides the proof of immunizations. **ff**

ALL OF THE DOGS AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION
AT HI-SPEED HOUNDS ARE SPAYED AND NEUTERED
AND HAVE ALL OF THEIR IMMUNIZATIONS.