



## **For Immediate Release**

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Longmont, CO – EVERY ANIMAL AS AN INDIVIDUAL: *Longmont Humane Society Discontinues Breed Labeling*

Longmont Humane Society announced last week that it will discontinue the practice of breed labeling for its adoptable dogs. Instead of guessing a dog's breed based on appearance, all dogs will be listed as "mix" as a means to more accurately and honestly present animals to potential adopters.

According to Sarah Clusman, director of operations for Longmont Humane Society, the organization has been working toward this change given the inaccuracy of visual breed identification and the irrelevancy of breed in relation to behavior. According to Clusman, "If we don't have an AKC pedigree or DNA results, we cannot presume to guess the breed by appearance alone."

The organization believes that in addition to facilitating accuracy, removing the breed label is likely to dispel preconceptions about a dog's behavior relative to breed, encouraging adopters to learn about each dog as an individual. "Factors such as history of behavior and observed behavior while at the shelter are far more accurate factors to consider than how adopters think a dog might or should behave based on the breed label" said Clusman. "As an adoption agency, it is our job to help our clients choose dogs who are likely to succeed in their home based on strong behavioral matches, not a breed label; dogs are individuals first, genetics second."

Longmont Humane Society understands that this change will be a culture shift for the communities it serves, and has placed handouts and posters throughout the shelter to further educate visitors. The organization notes that based on physical appearance certain dogs may not be permitted in specific municipalities or housing areas. For dogs that may be impacted by bans or discrimination, additional information will be provided to prepare potential adopters .

The organization believes that treating all dogs as individuals will help to discourage biased thinking and assumptions based on looks or labels. “In doing so” said Clusman, “we set all dogs free of the baggage and consequences caused by assumptions, prejudices, and discrimination.”

Serving Longmont and surrounding communities since 1972, Longmont Humane Society is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of animals. With a mission of caring, serving and educating to improve the lives of companion animals the organization cares for more than 4,000 animals every year, including dogs, cats, small mammals, and domestic birds that are lost, abandoned, or surrendered. Loving attention, nutritious food, meticulous health care and daily exercise are standard parts of the high-quality care provided to each animal.

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