

## **Rescuing the Dogs of the Ninth Ward**

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The abandoned pit bull puppy was hairless, starved and bleeding. Tulane law student Kelly Gaus found the suffering animal as she was walking her own dogs around her Ninth Ward neighborhood of New Orleans.



First-year Tulane law student Kelly Gaus cuddles her latest rescues, German Shepherd puppies Breesie, right, and Vilma left, affectionately named after New Orleans Saints players. (Photo by Alicia Duplessis Jasmin)

"I couldn't leave her and decided to save her," says Gaus. And so, Dogs of the Ninth Ward or "D9," Gaus' dog rescue organization, was born.

"I pull stray or abandoned dogs off the streets of the Ninth Ward and nearby downtown neighborhoods," says Gaus, currently in her first year of law school. "The dogs are fully vet-checked, vaccinated, dewormed, microchipped, and spayed or neutered. I then place the dogs or puppies in loving foster homes, where they stay until they are adopted."

Other Tulane students are assisting the rescue efforts as well. First-year law student

Ellen Forrester is among the community volunteers who provide temporary foster homes for newly rescued animals until they are permanently adopted.

Gaus is not new to community service. After earning an undergraduate degree from Tulane she worked for two years as a senior program coordinator at the Tulane Center for Public Service.

"We have a remarkably bad stray population," says Gaus. "People dump dogs from other areas. Most of our dogs are actually abandoned, not stray in the sense that they were born on the street."

Has there been an increase of pet abandonment after Katrina?

"The numbers have definitely increased," Gaus says. "We're up to about the 8th or 9th generation post-K. But there was always a severe problem in the Ninth Ward, as well as certain other areas like Central City and New Orleans East. It's just gotten worse as funding and efforts have shifted to rebuilding."

For more information on Dogs of the Ninth Ward, including photos and descriptions of rescued pets available for adoption, see Gaus' [blog](#).