



Photo courtesy K9 Connection

HOME WANTED: Sasha Tirado, a student volunteer with K9 Connection, a pilot project of OPCC, poses with her best friend Pinky, an 18-month-old pit bull that was found with her ears cut, wondering the streets covered in oil and severely malnourished.

Poor Pinky needs a place to call her own

BY KEVIN HERRERA

DOWNTOWN They help sell out the symphony and the playhouse, but for some reason the folks at CityTV can't seem to find Pinky a home.

For the last few months, Pinky, a bright white pit bull with a pink nose and ears like Mickey Mouse, has had her picture plastered on the cable station's electronic bulletin board, which can be viewed 24 hours a day, seven days a week on Channel 75. There is also a YouTube video showing Pinky affectionately licking everyone and anyone who shows her a little love and affection.

The hope is that someone will see the ads or the YouTube video and want to adopt her, however, no one has come forward, leaving many to wonder what it will take to end poor Pinky's plight.

"We always seem to have a great response to our bulletin board ... but for some reason we can't get Pinky adopted, and I just can't figure out why," said Robin Gee, the station manager at CityTV. "It seems like every year we get one case we just can't crack."

One reason for the lack of interest could be her breed. As a pit bull, Pinky is already at a disadvantage, said Glen Zipper, project coordinator with K9 Connection, a pilot project of OPCC that links local youth with stray animals so that they can train them for adoption, while at the same time learn how to control their own impulsive behavior.

"Being a pit bull comes with its baggage," Zipper said. "Anyone who hears pit bull, they immediately think of the negative things they see in the news."

To make matters worse, her ears are slightly disfigured after someone crudely cut them, along with her tail. When she was found wandering the streets earlier this year, Pinky was covered in oil and extremely emaciated, Zipper said.

"We understand people feel cautious about adopting a pit bull, and [Pinky's] a little funny looking with those ears and her lit-

tle, stubby tail, but we think she's beautiful," Zipper said. "She's just about the most affectionate dog anyone could hope to meet."

Sasha Tirado, a student at the Community Day School, worked with Pinky, bringing her back to health while teaching basic obedience.

Pinky was housed at the Santa Monica Animal Shelter until this week. She is now getting extra attention from expert dog psychologist Linn Boyke at his new center, dubbed ZEN4K9S. Boyke has agreed to take care of Pinky until she finds a loving home.

"Dogs don't need training, they need structure," said Boyke, who has worked with "Dog Whisperer" Cesar Millan. "Dogs crave structure. They want someone to tell them what to do every minute so if someone only does that part of the day or month, they start to get in the mindset that no one will really follow through ... Sitting in a shelter, dogs experience a high level of frustration and anxiety and that creates a lot of negative behaviors."

On Boyke's Web site, www.ZEN4K9S.com, he has a saying from the I Ching that reads, "What has been spoiled through man's fault, can be made good again through man's work."

That is how Boyke approaches all animals that come before him. He realizes that much like Pinky's case, it was the owners who failed to do their duty.

"Humans don't take care of their responsibilities when it comes to having a pet," Boyke said.

Those who believe they are ready to step up to the plate can arrange a visit with Pinky and fill out adoption papers online at K9Connection.org. There they can view photos of Pinky as well as her YouTube video. Those without the Internet can call (310) 264-5424.

"Pinky is a wonderful dog who would make a great addition to anyone's family," Zipper said. "Guaranteed, once you meet her and spend some time with her, you'll want to take her home."