

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Ninth annual Paws in the Park kicks off with the Mutt Strutt Fun Run

By [Becky Neems](#)

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Terry Showers, left, Les Masters, center, and Robyn Earl wait at the end of the Mutt Strutt Fun Run while their dogs stop for a cold drink of water at ninth annual Paws in the Park in Stephens Lake Park on Saturday. The Mutt Strutt Fun Run replaced a 5K that used to kick off the event. | [Emma Kessinger](#)



Jeff Trotter's foster dog Veronica wraps her leash around his legs at Paws in the Park at Stephens Lake Park on Saturday. Trotter fosters dogs for Columbia Second Chance and found Veronica a couple weeks ago and has since been fostering her. He is not worried about her getting adopted because of her outgoing personality, he said. | [Emma Kessinger](#)



Kensi, left (brown and white), Derby, bottom (light brown), and Jewel, right, (brindle) play in a pen at Paws in the Park at Stephens Lake Park on Saturday. The dogs are all pit bulls and have been in the care of Animal Responsibility for Fayette, Missouri (ARFF MO) for the past week. Many shelters

and other fostering agencies brought some of their dogs out to enjoy event. | [Emma Kessinger](#)

Columbia Second Chance hosted its ninth annual Paws in the Park event Saturday at Stephens Lake Park. : [Emma Kessinger](#)

COLUMBIA — Columbia dog owners and volunteers not only had a day filled with playing and education but an opportunity to give fostered cats and dogs a very important thing: a home.

The Mutt Strutt Fun Run at Columbia Second Chance's Paws in the Park Pet Expo was at 10 a.m. Saturday at Stephens Lake Park.

About 500 people attended the event with many people having two dogs.

Marla Jackson, who has participated in Paws at the Park for six years, said they used to have a timed walk/run 5K. This year, the Mutt Strutt Fun Run was more leisurely and the turnout was better than last, she said.

Although the walk was congested at first, people and their pets spread out, and Jackson said she always has fun. She and her neighbor, Laurie Seigel, adopted each of their dogs through Columbia Second Chance seven years ago, and they come every year to support the adoption center.

Erica Hope, veterinary technician at Rollings Hills Veterinary Hospital, said getting different breeds and backgrounds all in one place is a feat.

On Saturday, Hope walked her Beagle Shepard Lab mix, Trixie, that she teasingly called a "besheplabore." Trixie is cared for by the MU College of Veterinary Medicine and is a cancer survivor. She was found at three months old in a box on railroad tracks and now she is her best friend, Hope said.

There were 45 booths at the park offering food, pet information and opportunities to volunteer or adopt from Columbia Second Chance or nonprofit organizations. The vendors included Smokin' Chicks BBQ, PetSmart, the MU College of Veterinary Medicine and Treats Unleashed Inc.

A new addition to Paws in the Park this year was a selection of educational workshops designed to give owners [hands-on teaching from experts in animal nutrition, medicine and behavior](#). During the workshops, the owners could ask questions to the experts and work with their animals.

One workshop included K-9 basic training with Nick Clark, who is a behavior specialist with in-home complications between aggressive dogs. Clark demonstrated a way to introduce dogs to one another in order to prevent fighting.

Other workshop topics included animals and the law, a veterinarian panel on pet nutrition and an appearance by Truman the Bomb Dog and the Columbia Police Canine Unit.

Some of the sponsors of Paws in the Park and its workshops were PetSmart, Enrich Construction and Remodeling and the group No Kill Columbia.

Shan Rich, the owner of Enrich Construction and Remodeling, presented a prototype for dog beds. He said the bed is made of recycled roofing products, dense fiber and doesn't tear when dogs try to chew on it. Rich said Enrich Construction and Remodeling has a canine friendly office and that employees and Columbia Second Chance foster dogs visit the office regularly.

Valerie Chaffin, executive director of Columbia Second Chance, said overall Paws in the Park was a success, and three cats and four dogs were adopted.

Columbia Second Chance will have an adoption event on Oct. 27 and another at the Columbia Mall at the end of November.

Supervising editor is [Zach Murdock](#).