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'Sparky's Walk' Raises Funds for Shelter That Saved Her Life

By Lacy Moore

Sparky was scheduled to be euthanized in a pound, but fortunately a kennel worker took a liking to the pointer/pit bull mix who is easily excited, often mistaken for a Dalmatian, and loved by children, and hid her until a representative from Adopt-A-Dog came and saved her.

Sparky was later adopted by Rick Arruzza, of Stamford, who wrote a children's book inspired by Sparky.

"Sparky's Walk" is a book about Sparky's journey around the neighborhood and adventures such as meeting her friends and chasing squirrels.

"The book is a thank you to Adopt-A-Dog, a Greenwich animal rescue agency, because they had saved Sparky from a New York City pound," Mr. Arruzza said. "I wanted to do something to thank them and I figured it would be much nicer to write a book than just simply send a check. I figured it would be a good idea if I wrote a children's book and gave them some of the proceeds."

"Sparky's Walk" is a soft-cover bedtime story for beginning readers.

In September, Adopt-A-Dog had its annual dog show, "Puttin' on the Dog," at Roger Sherman Baldwin Park where the book was first sold and raised more than \$300. Since the show, Adopt-A-Dog has received \$1 from the sale of each book, totaling more than \$750 so far.

"I didn't go into this project wanting to make a profit. I wanted to help Adopt-A-Dog because without them Sparky would not be here and I wouldn't have had a chance to adopt her," Mr. Arruzza said. "I just thought she would be a great children's story idea."

"We got Sparky when she was one year old and now she is five. We thought she would grow out of her enthusiastic stage, but she is still very bouncy and loves to meet people," Mr. Arruzza said. "She must just be happy to be alive after all she's been through."

"Sparky's Walk" is also available in a Spanish version and Mr. Arruzza has many other plans for the book.

"We recently signed up with a pet grooming dog salon that has three locations in the area and put 75 books in their stores. Also, Adopt-A-Dog, in conjunction with Thrifty Boutique in Stamford, is putting Sparky's picture on many clothing bins. It works out

well because Thrifty Boutique will get the actual clothes and Adopt-A-Dog and Sparky will get publicity.”

Mr. Arruzza was most recently present at Just Books, Too in Greenwich for a local author’s night on Tuesday Dec. 9.

“This store was one of the first to carry my book,” Mr. Arruzza said. “I was very honored to be invited to the local author’s night. It was a great deal of fun although I’m still not used to being called an ‘author.’”

Mr. Arruzza is scheduled to read the story at Newfield School in Stamford on Thursday Dec. 18. The book is also available at numerous bookstores and on Amazon.com.

“I have gotten a lot of positive feedback about the book from the children I read it to,” Mr. Arruzza said. “I love to see the children enjoy the book. It seems like something good often happens with the book, so it keeps us going.”