

# Rondout Valley Kennels, Inc.

Pet Lodging  Training / Behavior  Adoptions & Education



## *THE ADOPTION HOLODECK... A "REAL LIFE" ROOM FOR DOGS IN SHELTERS*

Imagine spending day after day in a concrete kennel run, with chain link as your only view, loud echoey ceilings, wet, bleached walls, a dog to your right, a dog to your left, uproarious barking throughout each day whenever someone walks in front of you, or feeds the dogs, or walks past with another dog. Imagine the relentless agitation and arousal, the constant excitement with no real relief.

Consider creating an Adoption Holodeck, A "Real Life" Room for the dogs in your shelter, a private and personal respite from the tension in the kennels. A Real Life Room can be inexpensively put together with some imagination, creativity and donated items. The room does not have to be huge—just quiet and comforting and homey.

The Real Life Room is an excellent place for older, more mature dogs, the ones often previously pampered and who are devastated by the kennels. Consider rotating some of the older dogs into the Room to sleep overnight. The Real Life Room is also an ideal place the public to visit with the older dogs, who may not look very appealing in the kennels, next to all the lively young puppies. The benefits of adopting a mature dog are highlighted when these dogs are viewed and bonded with in the Real Life Room—the older dogs are quiet and calm, not destructive, clean, housebroken, they don't bark and can be left alone with the TV on while the owners are at work.

The Real Life Room can be used to help staff assess the familiarity strays have with living in a home, and can help staff assess more accurately how a shelter dog reacts when left home alone. The Real Life Room can familiarize and remind dogs how to live with furniture, a TV, a stereo, a refrigerator, a trash can. Encourage staff and volunteers to rotate dogs in and out of the Real Life Room, get to know them better, to give your dogs a much needed break from the kennels.

### PROGRAM INTO YOUR HOLODECK:

- Comfy furniture (overstuffed chairs that can be covered with a sheet for laundering)
- Common appliances found in a home (a TV, a stereo playing gentle classical music, a refrigerator, a vacuum)
- A dog bed and a small, washable throw rug (dogs miss soft things when kenneled)
- A Dutch door (so the public can view and interact with social, affectionate dogs; so mildly fearful dogs don't have to meet and greet strangers through chain link; so people can reach over and pet or give the dogs a treat; so dogs don't feel as isolated; so the public can see what a caring and clever shelter you are)
- Real, live volunteers and staff to sit with, eat a sandwich with, watch TV with, take a break with, pop open a soda can with, throw out a bit of trash, take a nap with A SHELTER DOG!