

From the Streets of Guatemala to the Loving Arms of Dr. Amanda Richline and Mayan Families: A Story of Dogs, Cats, and Compassion.

On her last mission trip via the Mayan Families organization, Dr. Amanda Richline spent endless days treating and educating the poverty-stricken people of Guatemala, providing not just healthcare, but knowledge, support, and most importantly, hope.

Especially touched by a young boy stricken with Multiple Sclerosis, Dr. Richline decided to sponsor him—which she still does to this day—paying for his medical care and making sure that his healthcare needs are met.

As successful as her trip was, however, upon returning home, there was something still tugging at her heart. While she was in Guatemala helping the suffering people in need, she couldn't help but notice the dogs and cats that were suffering horribly as well. Haunted by the images of these abused and neglected animals, Dr. Richline realized that while the Mayan people were able to benefit from missions and sponsorships, the dogs and cats were not. No one was providing care for them, something she just couldn't get out of her mind—which is why she became determined to do something about it.

When the Mayan Families affiliate, Hope for Animals, realized the persistence of Dr. Amanda Richline was not going to let up, the owners and operators stepped in to help. Knowing she couldn't sponsor the animals from afar, Dr. Richline wanted to bring them to her, flying them to the United States. This was easier said than done.

In fact, it was a long and arduous process, starting with the capture of the animal, transportation to a veterinarian, and the provisions of medical treatment necessary to meet United States regulations. A series of tests had to be performed, immunizations given, and strict guidelines followed to pass American standards. Documented paperwork then needed to be forwarded to customs and the animals transported to the airport. Not surprisingly, none of this deterred Dr. Richline. With the help of Hope for Animals to make it happen, she paid for it all right down to the airline tickets that would begin the long journey "home."

What started with one dog that had especially touched her heart, became 5 dogs and 2 cats. After going through the difficult process in Guatemala, upon landing in America, the process continued. The animals had to pass customs, the accuracy of the paperwork confirmed, and once all U.S. standards required to enter the country were met, they could only be released to a veterinarian experienced in international rescue. In all it took 6-8 weeks and an unmentionable amount of money. Again, Dr. Richline was not deterred.

To date, 35 dogs and 4 cats have been rescued. When asked, "Why help these animals when there are plenty suffering here?", Dr. Richline shared that she does make efforts to help suffering animals here, but the sheer cruelty, abuse, neglect, and inconceivable treatment the Guatemalan dogs and cats endure is something that cannot be compared to nor ignored. The sad life of animals in American shelters would be like paradise to those found on the streets of Guatemala.

That's why Dr. Richline is covering the expenses of the care and boarding for the rescued dogs and cats she has brought here in cooperation with Wrights Veterinary Medical Center. (This includes all shots and

immunizations, spaying or neutering, surgery if necessary, medical attention, and basic training)—yet, she insists that adoptions are free. She asks only to end the one thing these animals have ever known—immeasurable suffering—by giving them a loving and permanent home.

Remember, when you adopt you are saving two lives—the dog you rescue, and the next dog that can be saved by taking the space you’ve just created.

If you are interested in adopting, follow these simple steps:

Like Dr. Amanda Richline’s Facebook page to follow posts and view dogs currently available for adoption. The posts are updated daily and provide pictures, stories, and information about personalities so you can make sure the dog you choose is the right fit for you. Then, call Dr. Richline’s office at (908) 475-8750 or speak to Janet at (610) 462-9941 to set up an appointment to visit the dogs.

If you are unable to adopt, you can still help by making a donation to Hope for the Animals at mayanfamilies.org.

When asked why she is doing so much to rescue these suffering animals, Dr. Richline responded, "It is in giving that we receive more than we ever imagined and should be our purpose in everything we do. You always get back more than you give."

One look at these precious animals, and you will surely agree.