

# Saving Mexico's Stray Dogs

There are times in Mexico city when there are more dogs than people. The overpopulation of stray dogs is a universal problem, but in Mexico it is especially catastrophic. Thousands of dogs are rounded up monthly and are exterminated by electrocution. The dogs endure brutal lives in the streets only to meet an equally brutal end.

One of the causes for the high numbers of stray dogs is a lack of spay and neuter programs. There is also a lack of veterinary services, funding for shelters, and education. While the problem may seem insurmountable, there are people and rescue organizations working hard to improve the situation.

Fiona Animal Refuge (FAR) is one such organization. In 2011, three retired, rock climbing women- Ann, Michelle, and Dottie- found a dog chained to a tree. The three women rescued and cared for her and named her Fiona. Unfortunately, Fiona didn't make it, but she inspired the women to start the Fiona Animal Refuge so that they could help other dogs avoid the same fate.

In addition to rescue and adoption, FAR provides free spay and neuter services, flea and tick medication, food, shelter, and education for the community. A lot of the dogs rescued by FAR come from extreme conditions. One little pup was even found in an oil pit.

FAR tries to find homes for the rescued dogs within the Mexican community, but often time adoption comes from the United States. This was the case with one of their toughest rescues, Chuy. A mile from the town of Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon, Chuy was either dumped or wandered up the mountain in search of help. Red mange covered his starving little body- he was four months old. A kind Mexican working at the LaPasada Rock Climbers Campground took him in. FAR was working out of a truck at the time, so Chuy hung out with all the climbers hoping for a permanent home. Enter Leigh and Paul from Oregon and the love affair began. They were committed to giving Chuy a better life with them from the moment they saw him.

The U.S. border is easy to cross with a dog in a car, but not to fly. You need a health certificate, human plane ticket, cage, and transport. All doable, but expensive, plus Chuy was not 100% recovered. He still looked pretty rough. But Leigh and Paul were determined, they wanted only Chuy.

So, "Saving Chuy" began. FAR drove him to San Antonio, got his health certificate (a miracle in itself) a cage and a VERY pricey plane ticket. Chuy arrived in Oregon for Christmas 2011 and his new life with two devoted people began.

