

SAMPLE OPINION EDITORIAL FOR RDO DAYS

Responsible Dog Ownership is a Right and a Privilege

Americans have embraced the joys of dog ownership for centuries, from George Washington and his American Foxhounds to Barack Obama and his Portuguese Water Dog. Today, there are approximately 73 million dogs in the U.S. and their roles in society have shifted from hunter and working dog to family companion.

When we hear of unfortunate incidents involving dogs, such as a bite, it's often a result of carelessness on the dog owner's part to take responsibility for the animal they chose to own. There are two ends of every leash and responsible dog ownership begins with the "man" not the "best friend."

This year the American Kennel Club hosts AKC® Responsible Dog Ownership Day on September 26 to educate the dog-loving public about the importance of being a responsible dog owner. AKC® RDO Days is a national initiative with approximately 600 organizations around the country holding community events throughout the month of September. Just some of the topics these events address are safety around dogs, the right breed for your lifestyle, training and competitive events for your dog, tagging/microchipping ID options, canine health and much more.

The AKC®, the nation's largest registry and leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to the welfare of purebred dogs, recognizes that canine companionship is not only a right but also a privilege that must be respected and nurtured. In return for this privilege, dog owners need to respect reasonable, enforceable, non-discriminatory legislation governing the ownership of dogs, such as local leash laws, curbing policies and licensing regulations. The saying "one bad apple can spoil the whole bunch" rings especially true in terms of dog ownership. All dog owners -- or even specific breeds themselves -- can easily be misjudged by the deeds of one thoughtless individual.

We hope you'll take time this month to "bone up" on responsible dog ownership whether you are looking to add a puppy to the family for the first time or are a lifelong dog lover. As a (member/licensed/affiliated) club of the AKC, the (X Kennel Club) invites you to celebrate Responsible Dog Ownership Day with us on September (X) at the (Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.). We'll be offering (a free Canine Good Citizen Test/Meet the Breeds Fair/ host of fun and educational activities for dogs and owners, etc).

Come. Sit. Stay and learn what it takes to be a responsible dog owner. Your best friend is counting on you.