



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Press Release

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JACKSONVILLE, FL RESIDENTS NAMED AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

New York, NY – The American Kennel Club announced today that two Jacksonville residents, Ron and Jennifer Fone have been honored with an AKC Community Achievement Award for their involvement in the Akita Club of America Inc.

The American Kennel Club, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of purebred dogs, instituted the Community Achievement Awards in 1993 to support and encourage the efforts of its local clubs to bring the message of responsible dog ownership to the general public. Each honoree receives a certificate and a \$1,000 check payable to their club or federation to further their organization's public education or canine legislation efforts.

Ron and Jennifer Fone, Akita Club of America members and AKC Canine Ambassadors have worked as a team to encourage responsible dog ownership and safety around dogs in Jacksonville, FL.

“Chances are, if you live anywhere near Jacksonville, you’ve probably met up with Ron and Jennifer Fone with their two Akitas, Rocky and Hanji,” said Akita Club of America member Dorie Sparkman. “Ron and Jennifer have been involved with community programs and dogs ever since they adopted Rocky from Akita Rescue seven years ago.”

The Fones participate in the Jacksonville Humane Society's Annual Paws in the Park and Pet Expo, the Museum of Science and History's Dog Days of Summer, Dog Days at Disney, the Jacksonville Agricultural Fair's Dog Breed Exhibit, and the Clay County Humane Society's Annual Bark in the Park.

The Fones also work with the Akita Rescue Society of Florida as transporters, dog walkers, shelter contacts, trainers, and foster parents. They maintain a Web site www.arsf.org that helps individuals place spayed or neutered Akitas.

“We found out about the AKC Canine Ambassador program in 1999 while talking to AKC Canine Legislation staff and got involved,” said Jennifer Fone. “When you have AKC paperwork, it makes schools feel better about you coming in to visit the kids.”

One of the Fone's favorite programs is their dog safety training for children. Each month

they present this program to church groups, schools, businesses and scout troops. Using their Akitas and AKC materials like the “Safety Around Dogs, Your Safety Begins With You!” teaching kit, they demonstrate important safety tips such as how to safely approach and pet a dog.

“Younger kids are sometimes afraid of big dogs like Rocky so we use puppets to introduce them to dogs while Rocky stays in the corner with an assistant,” said Jennifer Fone. “Most kids will eventually break down and go visit with Rocky.”

As a special treat for the kids, the Fones hand out a “Rocky – Akita Ambassador” trading card that they created with the safety tips printed on the back.

“Kids want something to take home,” said Ron Fone. “It makes the program more exciting for them.”

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The American Kennel Club (AKC), founded in 1884, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of purebred dogs. The AKC maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world, oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States, and along with its 4,500 licensed and member clubs, educates the general public about responsible dog ownership. More than 15,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules each year including conformation, agility, obedience, tracking, herding, lure coursing, hunt tests, and field and earthdog trials. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.