

Hi! My name is Elena Ault and today I am here to talk to you about making a difference. You can make a difference by helping thousands of animals find a loving a home.

I have adopted a dog named Tess, a 4 year old Maltese-Poodle mix, and a bird named Bill. My family adopted Tess in 2011 from a shelter in Tennessee. (hold up picture).With training and giving her proper care, she turned out to be an awesome dog. Just like any puppy you would buy from a puppy store. Tess knows all her commands and waits for me at the door when I come home from school and follows me around the house. A few months later, we adopted Bill, a cockatiel which is a type of bird, from a shelter in Rhode Island. Since then, I have taught Bill how to whistle Broadway songs and sit on my finger. Both Tess and Bill are both very smart and are very healthy. They are also an important part of my family.

Tess and Bill turned out to be great pets. The experience of looking for pets from animal shelters, pounds and rescue organizations made me realize how many more animals are waiting to be adopted into loving homes. I also saw how hard the people who work and volunteer at the shelters work. The shelters supply training, food, medical care and love to these animals.

This is when I decided to start Pennies 4 Pounds. I came up with a name and logo (HOLD UP SIGN). I designed my own website over the summer. By the end of August, I had finished my website, set up a Facebook page and I was ready to launch Pennies 4 Pounds. I sent emails out to friends and told them all about Pennies 4 Pounds. I have run lemonade stands and stood outside Stop & Shop collecting donations. On October 26th, I am running a scarecrow building contest fundraiser at the Pequot Library. In December I will be on News 12 to talk about Pennies 4 Pounds and encouraging people to adopt from animal shelters. I received kind emails and donations from strangers who read the article in the newspaper. Since August, I have raised over \$1500 for animal shelters.

I am helping and making a small difference but you can make a huge difference by helping passing a law. Most shelter pets make exceptionally affectionate, attentive and extremely loyal companions. We- meaning YOU and me-are their last chance, their saving grace. And these animals know that. The love, companionship and joy they give are a reflection of that. For anyone who's ever had a shelter animal as a pet, you know this.

I read on the American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that over 90% puppies sold in Pet stores come from substandard puppy mills. Why would we as citizens of Connecticut support these puppy mills by allowing them to sell their animals in Connecticut? Why allow them to profit by treating animals poorly?

I strongly encourage you to support a bill that would support the sale and adoption of dogs and cats from local breeders or local shelters and rescues where there is accountability. Thank you very much for you time.