

Cantigny's Dog Days offers woofs and more

BY KATLYN SMITH

Daily Herald correspondent

Poco Chico is a Chihuahua with a pretty impressive wardrobe.

There's the Elvis costume. A velvet cape and crown for another kind of king. And some gear just for his strides in a Fourth of July parade.

It's all part of his role as an ambassador of sorts for the Hinsdale Humane Society, one of dozens of organizations that will set up booths Saturday at the annual Dog Days at Cantigny Park in Wheaton. The event is free with \$5 parking and runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



COURTESY PAM SALOMONE

Hinsdale Humane Society ambassador Poco Chico will make an appearance Saturday when Cantigny Park celebrates Dog Days.

If you go

What: Dog Days

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 4

Where: Cantigny Park, 1S151 Winfield Road, Wheaton

Cost: Free, but \$5 to park

Info: (630) 668-5161, cantigny.org

The Hinsdale Humane Society will not be conducting on-site adoptions in Wheaton, but Poco Chico, a once-homeless pooch adopted from the nonprofit organization, will demonstrate his

crowd-friendly obedience, organizers say. Plus, Poco Chico is "ridiculously cute," says Pam Salomone, the society's public relations and special events director.

"We have hundreds and thousands of wonderful animals waiting to find a second chance in their forever homes, and they're available right here in your local shelters," Salomone said.

The society, where there are almost 20 dogs and nearly 30 cats up for adoption, recently unveiled a new website with a database of videos and pictures for animals.

The organization partners with other rescue groups to find homes

for strays or those bred in puppy mills — dogs that "don't know what grass feels like on their paws," Salomone said. Others are relinquished by owners who may be allergic or cannot afford care for their pets.

At the society's booth, staff will answer questions by those interested in adopting and will showcase an adoption booklet, with each animal's breed, age, weight, health and other factors.

More than 50 exhibitors, most of which are nonprofit rescue shelters and humane societies, will

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highlight their services at Cantigny.

"This is pretty much the only place in this area where a lot of rescue organizations are all here," said Laura Evans, Cantigny's director of visitors services. "This is a good way to take a look at all the different kinds of dogs from the different rescues."

And there's a tail-wagging perk for dogs with homes and their owners: Hallmarks of Dog Days include a dog Olympics with cheeky events like

the "Peanut Butter Lick" and "Doggie Dash," a fenced-in play area for unleashed dogs and agility demonstrations by the Windy City K-9 Disc Club.

For Salomone, the event — expected to attract up to 4,500 people — is a chance to swap pet-owner tales. And maybe some fashionable dog couture.

"We get to interact and share," Salomone said. "You have animal-loving people all combined together, all for a good cause."

For details, call (630) 668-5161 or visit cantigny.org.