

WRITING AN ASSIST

What is an “Assist”?

An **assist** is publicity we do when a shelter or other nonprofit rescue has a Tibbie or possible Tibbie in their care. It is a service we provide to the

- shelter/rescue that has the dog
- people who look to us to help them find a Tibbie to adopt
- Tibbie or Tibbie-like dog who needs a home.

Types of Assists

We do two kinds of assists – a Facebook post and, optionally, a Rescue Alert email to the waiting list in the area of the shelter/rescue.

Why Assist?

The purpose of an assist is to:

- help the rescue/shelter reach people who know about Tibbies and are eager to adopt Tibbies or Tibbie-like dogs, and
- give our “audience” (Facebook followers, wait list) key info about applying for the Tibbie or Tibbie-like dog by linking them to the rescue’s/shelter’s info.

Even 40 years after the Tibetan Spaniel became an AKC-recognized breed in the U.S., most Americans don’t know what a Tibbie is. Even shelter workers and rescuers may not know about Tibbies. Even if they’ve heard of the breed or read about it in books, they have never seen a Tibbie “in real life.” A shelter/rescue may misidentify a Tibbie as another breed or mix, or they may misidentify another breed or mix as a Tibbie.

Policy

Although it’s TSCA Rescue’s policy to do assists as a service, ***it’s not our job to “sell” the dog in the assist*** – that’s the shelter’s/rescue’s job in their write-up. Why? Because we’ve never met the dog, we can’t “vouch” for it. All we can do is relay the other rescue’s information, often by quoting their descriptive words or qualifying our statements with terms such as “described as.”

We also do not state with certainty that a dog ***is*** a Tibbie even if we think so. Instead, we express an opinion about the dog’s Tibbie-ness, using words that make it clear that it’s a probability or possibility, not an absolute.

Look Up All Sources

Assists are generally time-sensitive. However, before you start to draft, look up all the sources you can find about the dog. Please do not rely solely on the single source that brought the dog to your attention.

Be aware that every shelter/rescue operates differently depending in large part on their staff and funding. Some do a good job of outreach – such as excellent write-ups on their website and social media. Others don’t. Some don’t even post a photo. Checking all the potential sources may give you more and/or better info and photos to incorporate into your assist.

Check ALL of these sources:

- rescue/shelter’s own website (Google the name of the shelter/rescue)
- shelter/rescue’s own Facebook page (use the Search box on Facebook)
- Facebook cross-posters like *Japanese Chins, Pekingese and Shih Tzu in Need* or Tibbie groups
- rescue search sites (Petfinder, Adopt-a-Pet, RescueMe)

How to Write an Assist Post for Our Facebook Page

Follow these steps to draft assist posts for our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/tscarecue/> – in this order. Following these steps and using the examples here and other posts on our page as “templates” will make drafting faster and easier.

1. **Briefly describe the dog.** Begin with the dog’s name (if any), in caps, followed by any ID number the rescue/shelter has assigned in parens. Be sure to mention how the rescue/shelter has listed the dog. Sometimes a rescue/shelter does a good write-up on the dog; other times, they don’t give any info at all about the dog. In our draft, include the basic facts (sex, age, weight) and only the strongest positive adjectives they use (“sweet,” “cuddlebug,” “friendly”). Mention only significant negatives (“no other dogs” or “no kids”). It’s okay to comment on a dog’s appearance (“cute”), but don’t waste space stating the obvious from the photos (color).

MAURICE (ID 71875) - Although listed as a Peke mix, 8-year-old Maurice looks a lot like a Tibbie to us. Described as “sweet and cuddly,” the rescue says 13-lb Maurice gets along with other dogs and cats but needs a home without small children.

2. **Identify the shelter/rescue caring for the dog.** State the name and location (city, state) of the shelter/rescue and, if different, the location of the dog. Use boilerplate sentence to get people to click on the links that you’ll be listing.

Maurice is in the care of the Humane Society of North Bay (HSNB) in Vallejo, CA. For more information about him, please read the shelter’s write-ups below.

3. **State anything notable about their adoption policy,** especially any restriction as to their adoption area (the most common question).

Note that HSNB adopts only to California residents.

4. **List write-up links.** Include as many write-up links as you can find. Use the actual URLs, as short as possible, not links embedded in the display text. *Note: Our editor will shorten the link for you if you don’t know how. Since we often find broken links in material copied from others, always test the links to make sure they work.*

Adopt-a-Pet write-up: <https://www.adoptapet.com/pet/40689033-vallejo-california-pekinese-mix>
HSNB website: <https://www.hsnb.org/adoption-application/>

5. **List as many of the following items** as you are able to find in the sources, generally in this order:
 - shelter’s/rescue’s contact info for questions (e.g., email, phone)
 - where to find the adoption application (e.g., link to online app)
 - adoption policy page (especially if there are strict procedures or restrictions)

Shelter contact: info@HSNB.org or (707) 645-7905
Online application: <https://www.hsnb.org/adoption-page/>.

6. **Add photos.** Use the best (i.e., cutest, highest resolution) photos you can find from all sources.
 - Crop out background clutter and wasted space but show as much of the dog as you can, especially the “Tibbie-like” features
 - Crop out any people’s faces.
 - If you like, cute caption the photos.

Example at right:



Isn't that the cutest smile?

How to Write Rescue Alert Email to Wait List

The Rescue Alert email is optional. Generally, the more Tibbie-like the dog and/or the more pressing the need (e.g., special needs, urgency), the more likely a Rescue Alert is warranted.

Most of the elements of the Facebook post described above are the same for the body of a Rescue Alert email. However, you will need to identify the addressees (i.e., which states to send the Alert to) and add an appropriate subject line, a standard lead-in, and a signature block as follows.

1. **Identify addressees.** These are the states to which we will send the email. We will add the wait list distribution lists for these states on the BCC line of the Rescue Alert email. Generally, we send the email only to the state in which the rescue/shelter is located. However, we will send it to other states if the:
 - rescue/shelter's website or other resource states that it adopts to other specific states
 - shelter/rescue is located near the border with another state(s) and its adoption policy does not preclude adoptions to the contiguous states. (If you don't know where it is, Google the location of the rescue/shelter.)

Example 1: A rescue in Delaware states, in its adoption policy, that it adopts to Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. We include those states' wait lists in the distribution.

Example 2: The website for a rescue in Delaware says nothing about the area it adopts to, but it is located within a few miles of the Maryland and Pennsylvania borders. We include the adjoining states' wait lists in the distribution.

Example 3: The Petfinder post for a rescue in Texas says that it adopts only to the Houston area. We include only the Texas wait list in the distribution. Note that we do not have the ability to "parse" a state's wait list to limit it to only specific cities, counties or geographic areas of the state.

2. **Write subject line.** The subject line of a Rescue Alert follows this pattern:

TSCA Rescue/Re-Home Alert – [name of dog] in [name of state]

3. **Write lead-in sentences.** The first paragraph of every TSCA Rescue Alert email to the wait list, including these assists, starts with a boilerplate sentence patterned as below, in italics. Note that a live link is embedded in the words “TSCA Rescue”:

You are receiving this email because you are on [TSCA Rescue](#) prospective adopters waiting list and you live in [list of states to which you are sending the Alert].

To make clear that the Alert is an assist to another shelter/rescue, not a dog available from us, the second sentence is standard:

This Alert is an assist to another rescue organization that has a Tibbie (or possible Tibbie) available for adoption.

Here’s an example of an assist lead-in:

You are receiving this email because you are on [TSCA Rescue](#) prospective adopters waiting list and you live in Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island or Connecticut. This Alert is an assist to another rescue organization that has a Tibbie (or possible Tibbie) available for adoption.

4. **Compose the body of the email** in the same manner as described in the **How to Write an Assist Post for Our Facebook Page** section above.
5. **Add photos.** When adding the photos to the body of the email following the write-ups, size them down to an appropriate size for the email. (If you attach the photos to your draft, the editor will resize them appropriately for you.)
6. **Add this standard sentence** after the photos:

If you no longer wish to receive Rescue Alert emails from TSCA Rescue, please drop us an email at info@tstrust.org.

7. **Add your signature block** for TSCA Rescue. Your block at a minimum should include:
 - your full name
 - position (e.g., Northeast Regional Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator), Tibetan Spaniel Club of America
 - our website: <https://tstrust.org>
 - our email: info@tstrust.org

A photo of you and/or your Tibbie is a nice touch but not necessary.

See the next page for an example of an assist sent by Rescue Alert email.

Subject Line: TSCA Rescue/Re-Home Alert – Kitty in Georgia

You are receiving this email because you are on the [TSCA Rescue](#) prospective adopters waiting list and you live in Georgia or South Carolina. This is an assist to another rescue that has a possible Tibbie available for adoption.

KITTY – Although listed as a Peke mix, Kitty has many Tibbie traits. Described as playful, curious and spunky, the petite 8-year-old has a “BIG personality.” According to the rescue, Kitty would love another dog(s) for a playmate, and she's good with kids and kitties, too. Kitty is available from Forgotten Paws Rescue, Acworth (near Atlanta) Georgia. For more about Kitty, please see the links below. Note that this rescue adopts only to Georgia and South Carolina and requires a fenced yard (no apartments).

Rescue website: <https://www.forgottenpaws.com/dogs%20under%2030.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100064780386659/search/?q=Kitty>

Rescue contact: info@forgottenpaws.com

Adoption policy (including adoptions outside of Georgia):

<https://www.forgottenpaws.com/Adoption%20Process.htm>

Online application: <https://www.forgottenpaws.com/adoptionForm.html>



If you no longer wish to receive Alerts from TSCA Rescue, please drop us an email at info@tstrust.org.

Best,
Susan

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