

For Immediate Release:

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Rescued Mutt Wins Purina's "Cutest Dog" at DogShowUSA.com and appears on the NBC TODAY Show.

In July, 2006 an Indiana family, who had just lost their beloved Beagle of 14 years, started searching for a new family member on Petfinder.com. After weeks of looking and discussion, they decided maybe they should wait a bit longer - then a little male mutt by the name of Rufus was found on PetFinder.com in their area. "He was a goofy looking guy - only 8 weeks old with a huge head, small body and many odd looking facial wrinkles. We fell in love with him after their first visit to the Clinton Co. Humane Society in Indiana, USA." said his family. They learned after arriving to the shelter that he was there because he "Chewed too much"!

When Rufus arrived to his new home and was taken for walks, almost everyone stopped and said, "That's the cutest pup I've ever seen!" His family of course thought so too, so they built him a web page at Dogster.com to share his photos with family and friends. Every family thinks their pet is the cutest, greatest and best so the kind comments from strangers were not taken very seriously until Rufus's Dad was contacted by Dogster.com - asking permission to use a photo or two of Rufus for their advertising. Rufus's family thought more seriously about his "cuteness factor" after learning that Dogster.com had over 250,000 dog's personal Web pages listed on their Web site. "Why would they want to use his photos unless they thought he was special?" - asked Rufus's father, Michael Partington of Indianapolis.

Michael decided to enter Rufus in Purina's Dog Show USA online at <http://www.dogshowusa.com> in the Cutest Dog Category just after Thanksgiving of 2006 to see what would happen. No one in Rufus's family had never shown a dog before or entered any other kind of pet contest. Michael, being a Web developer & E-Marketer, built a personal web site was built for him, tracked his growth online at www.Chickus.com, built a Rufus E-Newsletter permission list and contacted some local area businesses for mascot-type relationships. After 3 rounds of online voting, between November and Feb, 2007, Rufus won the Cutest Dog Category in Dog Show USA. He will receive a year's supply of Purina® Pro Plan® brand Dog Food.

Michael was asked to take Rufus to the NBC TODAY Show for a live appearance with anchors Lester Holt and Campbell Brown on Sat. Feb. 24th, 2007. The video clip of his appearance can be seen online here: <http://www.chickus.com>.

Rufus and his family want to share their special story with others - how a rescued mutt could be so special to them and to others that meet him. Rufus represents all dogs that need rescued across the United States. Mr. Partington attributes Rufus's rescue to the Clinton Co. Humane Society for posting Rufus for free online at PetFinders.com. Many other shelters do the same and they attribute over 50% of their adoptions to Petfinder.com. Animal shelters and rescue groups across the USA and Canada can join online and enter pets the very same day.

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