

Getting your dog fix on vacay

The Kauai Humane Society offers local rescue dogs and tourists a chance to share the aloha through their Shelter Dogs on Field Trip program.

Sept 12, 2019

By: Gedney Barclay

If you're anything like me, the joys of being on vacation are always dampened by the pangs of being away from your pup. On a recent 10-day trip to Kauai though, my partner and I found a terrific anecdote to doggy withdrawal through the Kauai Humane Society's Shelter Dogs on Field Trips program.

Open six days a week, the Kauai Humane Society is located near the airport in the eastern town of Lihue, an easy drive from Kapa'a, Wailua, and many other popular destinations on the island. They run the Shelter Dogs on Field Trips every day they're open, allowing visitors to take dogs for up to five hours on a midday outing. Check-out begins at 11AM on weekdays and 10AM on weekends, with dogs due back at the shelter by 3PM.

The program is incredibly popular. Many people learn about the program after spotting a field trip dog on a hike or at the beach. Easily identifiable by their "Adopt Me!" emblazoned-harnesses, these four-legged day-trippers get a lot of visibility and love on the island.

When we showed up at around 10:30AM on Saturday to pick our pooch, there was already a line of fellow field trippers that wrapped around the lobby. Upon arrival, visitors are sent back to the kennels where they can meet the dogs and choose their friend for the day. We made the process a bit quicker by going online the night before and viewing the dogs' profiles on KHS' website. We headed directly for the kennel of a Mr. Beesley, a seven year-old hound mix who had been in the shelter since June.

After some quick paperwork and a nominal \$25 fee, we met Beesley out front, already outfitted with his "Adopt Me!" harness and day-leash. KHS staff member handed off a list of suggested trails, parks, and beaches, as well as a backpack stocked with a doggie bowl, water, a towel, a toy, and treats (of course!). We took the pack, the leash, and our new friend, and headed for Kalapaki Beach.

While he was a bit nervous riding in the car, the benefits of the program became evident the minute we hit the beach. Beesley eagerly sniffed the sand, plopped through the waves breaking on the shore, and even ran with us along the coastline, his giant ears and jowels flapping in the wind. Many people stopped us to ask about Beesley, about the program, to scratch his ears or chin, or wrastle with him as he gnawed into his favorite plush football. Through all these meet-and-greets with beach-goers, the field trip was great fun, but also great publicity for KHS and, we hope, for Beesley.

This publicity goes a long way in supporting KHS, which is the only animal welfare organization on the island. Offering shelter, rescue, and adoption for "all animals" on Kauai, they also offer a host of low-cost services for animal protection and welfare, like immunization and spay/neutering. Shelter Dogs on Field Trips is but one of these, which makes the fee a steal when you consider all the great services and care that money goes to support. It's a vacation expense that gives back ten-fold in to you in dog snuggles, and gives back to the rescue dogs in amenities, medical care, and TLC as they wait for their forever home.

And if you've already bought your tickets to another Hawaiian island, you still may be in luck: the Humane Societies on both [Maui](#) and the [Big Island](#) have similar programs.