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Mission Statement

We rescue, rehabilitate and rehome Chihuahuas in need all over South Africa.

Who We Are

Chihuahua Adoptions SA is a Pro-Life animal welfare organisation consisting of a group of animal loving volunteers and foster families servicing South Africa.

Organisation Purpose

Our aim is to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome retired breeder Chihuahuas and any Chihuahuas in need.

Due to the increasing popularity of the Chihuahua breed, there has been an increase in Chihuahua breeders nationally. Unfortunately, this has also increased the amount of unwanted retired breeding dogs and unwanted youngsters that are unable to be sold.

On the other spectrum, we also have an increasing amount of Chihuahua owners relocating to non-pet friendly accommodation due to various reasons. We are the best route to have these Chihuahuas rehomed. We offer these Chihuahuas an opportunity to be part of a family without putting them through the trauma of being placed in the stressful surroundings of kennels.

We strive towards a kinder South Africa by educating communities, breeders and individual pet owners on the proper treatment of animals (focussing mainly on the Chihuahua breed) and providing support to people and their animals.

CASA Policies

Welfare

We concern ourselves with the welfare all Chihuahuas. We discourage the keeping of any animals by those who do not have the facilities, time, financial means or level of interest

necessary to ensure happy and healthy pets. We are convinced that all Chihuahuas deserve to be loved and cared for. They need to be taken to a veterinarian when necessary and must be properly stimulated and exercised. We do not agree that Chihuahuas are owned for any other reason than to be pets and cared for, be it for the protection of the home or for an income through breeding. We believe that the Chihuahuas need to be part of families where they bond with their families and are free to express their natural behaviour.

Rehoming

We have a strict rehoming process which is followed for each and every animal that comes into our care. All animals are sterilized and vaccinated before being re-homed. Depending on whether the pets are received chipped, we will transfer the chip details to the new owner upon adoption. We require interested families to contact CASA directly, after which an adoption form is completed and returned to CASA. A CASA representative is sent to do a home check at the home of the prospective adoptive family.

The following must be in order for a home to be approved to adopt a Chihuahua from CASA.

- The family must provide a safe, clean and caring environment;
- The family must provide food, water, toys, and shelter;
- The family must provide exercise and socialization;
- The family must be able to provide transport to a veterinarian and be able to afford any medical procedures and appointments which the Chihuahua may need in future;
- The family's other pets are also taken into consideration (age, temperaments, size, health and condition);
- Ages of children in the family is taken into consideration (Chihuahuas are small in stature and must always be handled with utmost care);
- Where will the prospective Chihuahua reside when the family travels?
- Has the family ever been reported for any animal abuse/neglect?
- Is the accommodation pet friendly? In the case of a complex, what is the policy regarding animals being kept?
- The family must be willing to commit to the pets' needs for their full lifetime, however long that might be.
- In the case of adopting a puppy from CASA, the adoptive family must agree to and sign the sterilization contract and be able to transport the puppy (when the agreed upon age of 6 months is reached) to CASA's agreed upon veterinarian.

Fostering

CASA is completely dependent on fostering. Fostering is subject to strict records being maintained and with CASA retaining full rights to the fostered animals. The foster families adhere to the same policies necessary to adopt an animal from CASA. In addition, our foster families also have to adhere to the following policies:

- Teach good manners;
- Monitor any medical or behavioural problems and report this to the CASA management team;
- Provide or arrange transport to veterinarian appointments;
- Provide or arrange transport to off-site dog adoption events and meet and greets.

The advantages of fostering are as follows.

1. We increase the dog's chance of being adopted by teaching the dog good house manners and social skills while in the foster home.
2. We gain valuable information regarding the dog's temperament, which will allow us to better match the dog with the perfect adoptive home.
3. Fostering is an excellent way to learn more about the specific dog's/dogs' behaviour.
4. Fostering is fun for children and can teach them about compassion and generosity.
5. As we encourage fostering we increase our network of CASA representatives and also increase the awareness regarding our organization, thus leading to more possible adoptive families.

Our stance on euthanasia

We are a pro-life organisation

A Pro-Life organisation is a welfare organisation that does not euthanize dogs purely because no home has been found for them within a certain time frame.

A Pro-Life organisation will only euthanize under certain conditions, for example, if the dog is too ill or injured for veterinary treatment to be effective. If their quality of life, in terms of their illness or injuries means that the dog will suffer pain, then euthanasia is possibly the alternative.

If a dog has been so badly abused that it is a physical threat to other dogs or humans, again euthanasia is an option if alternative measures like therapy and behaviourists have failed to help.

Education

As a breed specific welfare organisation, we try to attend all of the breed specific events we can. This includes Chihuahua breeder events, Chihuahua shows and charity events to raise funds for animal welfare. We have made it our mission to educate as many people as possible on the detrimental nature of breeding to the animal population situation in South Africa. We educate the public and community on the negative impact overbreeding has on the animals involved as well on the negative situations these breeds end up in if not properly placed through welfare channels.

The impact on health and socially on Chihuahuas:

Social negative impacts of Puppy Mill Chihuahuas

- Fear
- Trembling
- Shyness
- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Food aggression
- Difficult to leash train
- Lack of height or depth perception
- Light sensitivity or avoidance
- Surface sensitivity or avoidance
- Hoarding (food or items)
- Erratic sleeping pattern
- Difficulty house breaking

Health Issues of Chihuahuas

- Epilepsy
- Kidney and heart disease
- Joint disorders such as luxation patella's and hip dysplasia
- Endocrine disorders (diabetes and hypothyroidism)
- Blood disorders such as anaemia or von Will brand (blood doesn't clot)

- Deafness
- Blindness
- Eye problems such as glaucoma, retinal atrophy and cataracts
- Shortened or missing limbs
- Respiratory disorders
- Fur matting and mange
- Mites
- Scars
- Periodontal and gum disease
- Nail overgrowth or growth into the paw
- Missing teeth
- Heartworm, ticks and fleas
- Intestinal parasites

Vaccination and Sterilization

All Chihuahuas that are adopted or entering foster care from CASA will be sterilised to prevent them from either having or siring any unwanted litters. They will be vaccinated to safeguard them from contracting diseases such as distemper or parvovirus. They will be dewormed to assist in the elimination of internal parasites.

CASA doesn't host sterilisation drives, but do however assist the public if we are contacted by them directly to assist with affordable sterilisation. In conjunction with a veterinarian assisting CASA in sterilising at welfare rates, we also offer affordable sterilisation rates to breeders who wish to exit the market.

Funding

We have two major sources of funding:

We receive donations from the public and adoption fees paid by adoptive families. We predominantly market our Chihuahuas ready for adoption on our Facebook page as well as issuing pleas for funding.

CASA members

Founder and President:	Lynda Kotze – 082 886 1151
Foster/Adoption coordinator:	Trudy Kotze – 083 442 3964
Marketing and Social Media Coordinator:	Liza Blignaut – 082 785 9425

Director - Marketing and Events planner: Karen Olckers – 063 687 0398
Fundraising Coordinator: Tammy De Oliveira – 082 416 1559
Coastal Foster & Adoption coordinator: Leandry Van Blommestein – 083 626 8008
Director: Sue Delport – 083 941 9265
Director: Elzabe Brink – 082 473 2141

Major Cruelty Cases

We were recently contacted by the public, who informed us of someone selling Chihuahua puppies at 4 weeks as T-cup Chihuahuas. In addition, the other dogs on premises were in bad shape and that the owners themselves were not capable of looking after themselves, let alone caring for four little Chihuahuas. The puppies which they had sold died shortly after their owners purchased them. The same members of public laid a complaint with the SPCA and our Lynda contacted the inspector to whom the case was allocated. They attended the premises and nothing was done. Our Lynda went out to the premises to find the owners living in a shack on someone else's property. She attempted to educate them on breeding with dogs which already suffer from malnutrition and could have internal and external parasites. We provided them with a proper bag of dog food, dewormed and vaccinated the two females and one male. The owners thankfully agreed to surrender the old (10+years) male ("Cheeky") to us. He weighed 2kg and was severely malnourished. He has since picked up 500g. Cheeky has subsequently received a dental procedure, whereby our vet had extracted all his teeth (as they were in such a bad state) and neutered him. The owners were very thankful for what we came to do and we promised that we would visit often to treat the remaining three dogs with internal and external parasite medication and have them vaccinated as well as supply them with proper food. Lynda suggested to them that CASA could assist them to have all three of the dogs sterilised at our expense and they promised that they would think about it. In this specific case, we were uncertain what our legal position was and what we could have done differently, although we are aware that you cannot always remove animals and that sometimes outreach and education is the answer.

In other matters we previously attended a breeder's premises who wanted to surrender older and/or sick dogs. Once again, we were uncertain what we could have done legally (as at some of these premises we found that the dogs were not emotionally cared for, possibly used for commercial breeding and were also suffering from some ailments i.e. one was blind and another's bottom jaw was eaten away by her decayed teeth and was only fed dry pellets, which we thought inappropriate under the circumstances) and should we have had the necessary

rights to act we could have done so immediately or could have issued a warning. We do know that there are relevant authorities such as the SPCA and AACL to deal with these cases, but also understand that they have extremely large workloads, lack of funding and manpower and would like to assist in instances where they cannot immediately intervene or areas where they are not operational. The SPCA Johannesburg for instance has to attend to the whole of Johannesburg, Soweto, Roodepoort and surrounding areas.

Reasons for CASA wanting an inspector

As mentioned above under the heading major cruelty cases, we explained why it would assist our organisation to have an Inspector. Furthermore, because of CASA's involvement in the Chihuahua breed community nationally, we are predominantly the first point of contact for the community when they are made aware of neglect/cruelty cases involving Chihuahuas. The public is also very reluctant and fearful to approach an authority such as the SPCA or AACL due to various misconceptions and old wives' tales about these organisations. These cases never get reported to NSPCA branches or the AACL as the community feels more inclined to handle the situation in-house and thus report it to CASA – the only breed specific rescue for the Chihuahua breed in South Africa.

Without having the proper guidance and education, it becomes very difficult for CASA to know when we are permitted to intervene in cruelty or neglect cases. What the legal repercussions would be? What needs to be documented and what needs to be reported to the authorities? How do we document these cases to have legitimacy if cases need to be prosecuted?

FUTURE PLANS

Our ideal is to work towards eventually building and setting up a proper shelter but at this point in time we do not have the facilities or funding.