

Northern dogs headed south to find homes amid fire evacuations



As fire rages near the Northern community of Pikangikum First Nation, the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society and its partners are working together to transport dogs south to find new homes in order to make room to house evacuated animals.

Heading from Thunder Bay, 20 dogs and puppies aboard the North Bay and District Humane Society's Pet Valu Animal Rescue Express are making their way south where there is a greater demand for adoptable pets. The dogs are set to arrive in North Bay tonight before continuing on to Ontario SPCA animal centres in Barrie, Muskoka, Midland, Orillia and Orangeville tomorrow.

The dogs were being cared for by Northern Reach Rescue Network, a rescue group based in Thunder Bay that transports dogs in need of homes from Northern communities to be adopted. As Pikangikum First Nation began evacuating due to a forest fire, Northern Reach needed to make room in its program to provide foster care for displaced dogs from the fire-stricken community, located about 300 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg.

The rehoming mission is part of the Ontario SPCA's Support the North campaign, which is aimed at bringing awareness, attention and action to the lack of animal wellness resources in Northern communities. The Ontario SPCA and its partners have developed a network of individuals, organizations and communities united in creating healthy communities for animals and people. This new network is called the Animal North Network. In 2018, the Ontario SPCA and its animal wellness partners transported over 550 animals from the North to be adopted.

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society is a registered charity, established in 1873. The Society and its network of animal welfare communities facilitate and provide for province-wide leadership on matters relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals and the promotion of animal well-being. Offering a variety of mission-based programs, including community-based sheltering, animal wellness services, provincial animal transfers, shelter health & wellness, high-volume spay/neuter services, animal rescue, animal advocacy, Indigenous partnership programs and humane education, the Ontario SPCA is Ontario's animal welfare charity.