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Hurricane Maria Puppy Finds His Forever Home
Airlifted Puerto Rico Pup Gets Second Chance in Massachusetts

Amherst, Massachusetts – A Jack Russell Terrier mix, Rufus McScruffyFace, travelled more than 1,700 miles to find his forever home. The adorable pup was at an animal shelter in Puerto Rico when Hurricane Maria hit. In the wake of Maria, he was one of hundreds of adoptable dogs and cats airlifted by The Humane Society of the United States from Puerto Rico to St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center in Madison, New Jersey. When Rufus and the others arrived at the emergency shelter, the RedRover Responders team was ready to help support these animals during the crisis.

This was RedRover's third deployment in five weeks, after responding to Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Hurricane Irma in Florida. At St. Hubert's, RedRover volunteers worked for six days, as more and more evacuated animals arrived by plane. While in the care of the volunteers, all of the animals were triaged, vaccinated, treated and cared for before being transferred to sister adoption facilities across the Northeast.

Rufus, then called Pepe, was just a puppy, estimated to be about a year old. After his time at the St. Hubert's way-station, he ended up at Second Chance Animal Rescue in East Brookfield, Massachusetts – where he met the couple who would become his family.

Jody and Sanford had lost their rescued English Setter last December, and they decided it was time to start looking for another dog – ideally, a “scruffy” dog between 15 and 30 pounds. For weeks, Jody searched different rescues, devoting herself to “online doggy dating” as if it was a second job. But finding the right dog proved to be a challenge.

Finally, they found Rufus online. “He looked just right,” Sanford said. They drove nearly an hour to the shelter...and decided to adopt him on the spot.

When they first brought him home they noticed how he barked at every car driving down the road, as well as every new person who would appear on the TV screen. They realized he had probably never lived life outside of the kennel at the shelter so all of these experiences were likely new and frightening.

Now, three weeks later, Rufus is happily settled into his new home in the country.

“We take him to the dog park, and this tiny little guy can command like 20 other dogs and keep up with the bigger, faster dogs in the pack,” says his “doggy dad,” Sanford.

Rufus loves to run around their backyard like it's a race track, burning off puppy energy, and will even do it on command.

Jody says, "It's a joy to behold how every day Rufus settles in more deeply to being safe and truly home. He charms everyone he meets – his goofy little face and buoyant nature are irresistible. He's such a smart and happy guy!"

The couple reports that Rufus has gained a couple of pounds in the last couple of weeks, and is making progress on "sit," "stay" and "come."



About RedRover

Now in their 30th year, RedRover focuses on bringing animals out of crisis and strengthening the human-animal bond through three programs that provide emergency sheltering, disaster relief services, financial assistance and education. RedRover Responders has worked in cooperation with law enforcement, local agencies and animal organizations to shelter and care for animals displaced by natural disasters and other crises on more than 186 deployments. RedRover Relief grants have helped thousands of animals and their owners with financial aid, including providing thousands of safe nights for domestic violence survivors and their pets. RedRover Readers has reached 67,000 children nationwide and trained more than 1,220 teachers, humane educators and volunteers to implement the program. For the third consecutive year, RedRover's has earned a 4-star rating from [Charity Navigator](https://www.charitynavigator.org/), America's largest independent charity evaluator. To learn more, visit www.RedRover.org or www.RedRover.org/media-kit.

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