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# **Rover rescue**

## Group saves pooches from alleged abuse

**BY ERIC FAYNBERG**

They say cats have nine lives, but nine puppies in Gravesend could have lost the only lives they have if not for some generous animal rescuers from the neighborhood.

Members of Rescue City, a recently organized animal rescue organization, paid \$1,800 out of pocket to buy the dogs from an Avenue X resident they allege was neglecting and abusing the animals. They then spent thousands more for veterinary care for the pups, which were extremely malnourished, suffering from parasites and ringworm. At least one had been burned with a cigarette.

One of Rescue City's co-founders said he paid the hefty price because he couldn't stand to see the dogs mistreated.

"I was very concerned for the dogs," said Dmitriy Perelshtein, a veterinary technician at Oceanside Animal Clinic. "I just wanted to get them out of those conditions."

When Perelshtein took the puppies to the Kings Highway clinic where he works, some were so skinny that their rib cages were visible. Two of the pups are still in critical condition, but all nine are improving every day thanks to the clinic's care.

"None of them are 100 percent, but they're coming along," Perelshtein said. "Hopefully, we'll be able to find them good homes once they're healthy."

The clinic gave Perelshtein a discount on the care the nine recovered puppies received, but it will still cost him approximately \$7,000.

Rescue City first learned of the puppies' plight thanks to Facebook posts and phone calls from other local animal activists. A group had gathered at the home of the dogs' owner, with one woman allegedly having a physical altercation with the owner's wife.

Perelshtein asked the owner if he could see the dogs, and when the owner let him in, the vet tech was so shocked by the puppies' condition that he immediately negotiated a price to take the puppies away.

The initial asking price was \$1,000 a dog, Perelshtein said, but he managed to bargain the owner down to just \$200 per pup.



**HAPPY AND HEALTHY:** This puppy and its littermates were rescued from an alleged puppy mill, and are improving by the day at Oceanside Animal Clinics thanks to caretakers like Searhi, a veterinary technician.

Photo by Steve Solomonson

"I think he's running a puppy mill, an illegal pet store, out of his house," said Perelshtein. "He's just trying to make a quick buck on these poor dogs."

The alleged puppy-mill operator had several other dogs on the premises that were also in poor condition, and Perelshtein implored him to bring them to Oceanside, promising that the clinic would give him a discount just to help the other dogs.

The remaining dogs were brought for an examination, but even with a discount the owner allegedly balked at the price of care and left without allowing the dogs to receive treatment.

Perelshtein said he has notified the NYPD's animal cruelty unit and it is investigating with the help of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The dogs' owner could not be reached for comment.

*Anyone interested in adopting the rescued pups can contact Rescue City through its website: [rescuecity.nyc](http://rescuecity.nyc).*

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