

Stray street dogs find hope at Mexican shelter: *A bath and a little care improve their adoption chances*

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If you have ever been to Mexico, you will know that there is a problem with a breed of dog not normally seen here, the Mexican street dog.

It is sad to think that there are so many stray animals on the streets of every town in Mexico, without a home and someone to care for them.

My Mexico -- or where I love to go -- includes a very special place in Playa del Carmen, the Peanut Animal Shelter and Kennel.

In January, on one of my days in Playa, instead of basking in the sun, I was privileged to be a visitor at the shelter. It is run by a British couple, Andy and Jen, and they have a number of supporters worldwide.

It takes a special person to be able to open their heart and home to a full house of dogs and puppies. The kittens and cats are housed elsewhere as no self-respecting cat would be able to tolerate that many dogs.

Saturday is bath day at the shelter which is a way to help the animals socialize with lots of volunteers, and a clean dog is more adoptable.

There are many success stories on their website (www.playadelcarmenpets.com) and there seems to be a never-ending supply of puppies and dogs needing help. And, while I understand that a dog just isn't treated the same in Mexico as our pampered pooches here in Canada, the reality is that they are often "just another mouth to feed" and are left to fend for themselves.

While we were there, two young Chihuahua-cross pups were brought in, one with an injured leg and both covered in fleas. We gave them each a flea bath while discussing what they should be named.

I took down half a dozen collars and leashes to donate to the shelter and there is always a need for food, medicine and dollars to purchase more. They work very closely with a local veterinarian who is very happy to be helping someone making a difference on the streets of Playa del Carmen.

There is nowhere quite like the Mayan Riviera -- the scenery, the sea, the people, the great restaurants and the wonderful little boutique hotels along Quinta Avenida.

We stayed at one, the Posada Mariposa, a small 26-room hotel overlooking the northern end of Fifth.

And now, my favourite vacation spot holds something more for me -- a chance to give something back to the area. Have a look at the shelter website, maybe you will want to help too.

-- Bev Allen, Langley