



Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project Fact Sheet:

## **Breeders With Pride: Willo Siberians**



### **Lois Leonard Comments on Responsible Breeding**

#### ***There is SO much more to breeding than just putting a male and a female together!***

There is no such thing as a perfect specimen. Never has been, never will be. But reputable breeders spend weeks and months, sometimes YEARS, with pedigrees, the use of DNA (now), and every other factor available to them, striving to improve their particular breed...to eliminate faults.

A reputable breeder tests both the sire and dam before proceeding, for not only brucellosis, but does hips and certifies them, will not breed a dog with less than a GOOD rating from OFA (prefers EXCELLENT), and does a thorough eye exam from a canine ophthalmologist, as well as not breeding any dogs that have relatives which might exhibit epilepsy or other congenital defects.

So many backyard breeders will say that they are "only breeding pets, so what's so important about all that testing?" I think it's important to stress the fact that ***pet puppies from a litter whose parents have had "all that genetic testing" done up front will have a better chance of living long, healthy, disease- and problem-free lives.*** The breeder must ensure that the dogs selected to produce puppies are not only free from genetic faults, but that any relatives of theirs are also clear. If the sire and/or dam has poor hips, why risk producing puppies that might end up requiring surgery to repair the problem, or worse, having to be euthanized because they are so crippled that they will never live a normal life.

All of those breeding without concern for genetics are in it for just one thing – THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR! It's the bottom line way of thinking. The product is just that, a product. It's not a living, breathing creature that will rely on the goodness of the human being for the rest of its life.

For a reputable breeder, it's not about making money, for sure. A reputable breeder spends more on that litter, from the cost of the stud dog, to all the weeks of caring for the bitch, to raising the puppies, etc., to do more than just break even.

When I decided to breed my Champion bitch (who was also an Obedience High In Trial at a National Specialty), it took me eight months to find the right sire. I didn't have one in my kennel that fit, because I wanted to "fix" some of her "faults." She was not as pretty in the head as I liked, and she had a great rear end but a bit straighter in the shoulders than preferred. I used a stud dog from ALASKA to get what I wanted!

We ended up breeding her twice, two years apart (NEVER EVER on consecutive heats, and preferably longer than that is the "rule"). Actually I had her in for a check-up after her first litter and was going to have her spayed, but my VET said he thought I might want to re-think that, seeing what she produced the first time (two Champions out of five pups). So we did, and the second litter was eight, with four eventually finishing their championships, one in Canada and one in ITALY!

A QUALITY Hobby Breeder would definitely not produce more than 35 puppies a year. The average Siberian Husky litter once was perhaps four, but with increased nutrition and all the other aspects of quality vet care, that has risen to six or seven in a litter. The people I know locally probably breed once a year, perhaps not even that often, have only a couple of good bitches, and they are always show quality which are then bred to a sire of equal or better quality. Recently a good friend of mine bred a litter (now seven months old), and four of the six puppies are not only show quality but already winning in the ring!

Recently, I heard I about an interesting program that was given by the Siberian Husky Club of Greater Chicago, which proved without a shadow of a doubt that what we did back then was right. The club presented a forum with an AKC judge and numerous "specimens" of the Siberian Husky. The judge began at the beginning of the standard and went over it point by point, bringing each dog involved and describing that specific point and how the dog either followed or was incorrect as to that point. When it came down to movement, one of the dogs that was evaluated was our Rosie, the child of two of Bill's leaders, Cher (who is still living here at age 17) and Missile. The judge stated that Rosie had the best "front end" of any dog in that room, and that her movement both coming and going was excellent. ROSIE IS 13 YEARS OLD! The judge refused to believe it, kept saying "NO WAY is that dog 13, she might be 7 or 8, but 13?"

I bred and showed four conformation champions, but quite honestly, that statement is more valuable than any Best of Breed we ever earned! The Siberian Husky is a WORKING dog, and to have an AKC conformation judge give one of our "racing kids" that compliment is a thrill I shall never forget.



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Comments from other Breeders With Pride, along with additional photos of some of their dogs, can be found on the Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project Website:

- Breeders With Pride: <http://www.nowisconsinpupmills.com/breeders-with-pride.html>
- Lois Leonard, Willo Siberians: <http://www.nowisconsinpupmills.com/willo-siberians.html>
- Sybil Basombrio, Kirkwall Cairns: <http://www.nowisconsinpupmills.com/kirkwall-cairns.html>
- Barbara Lord, Warwind Farm: <http://www.nowisconsinpupmills.com/warwindfarm.html>