

Puppy love unleashed

Owners and pets show their bond at special gathering



Mane attraction: Shan and his wife Helen Lim with Simba at the event yesterday.

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PETALING JAYA: Dog owners and their canine companions gathered at a unique event here ahead of Valentine's Day to demonstrate the strong bond between man and his best friend.

From the massive Doberman to the little chihuahua, more than 150 pets were brought to the *Lovers and Leashes Day* event at the Jaya One mall here yesterday.

More than 300 people joined the event, which was initiated by the Selangor chapter of the Society for

the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), to raise funds for its projects, including a campaign to neuter, spay and release stray cats as well as a major project planned for October.

The event featured a street bazaar, photo sessions and an off-leash playpen from noon to 8pm. There was also a doggie disco from 6pm.

Miss World Malaysia 2009 Thanuja Ananthan, the Selangor SPCA's celebrity ambassador, made a grand appearance as Venus, the Goddess of Love, for a photo session and to give away prizes to Teddie, the winner of the Best Dressed Dog contest. The toy poodle is owned by Alicia Yong.

There were also stalls selling dog-

care products and offering adoption programmes and information on memorial services for pets.

Six pet-friendly restaurants in the vicinity – Chili Rush, Alt Space, Frontera Sol of Mexico, Kissaten, Gemini florist and Share Tea – were opened to the public and their four-legged companions.

Richard Gardner, a trainer at the Puppy Training School in Jaya One here, said the event provided a platform to encourage “dog interaction and socialisation” and for owners to learn more on how to handle their furry friends.

“There are no dog parks here, so the idea is for dogs to socialise with

people so they will not become vicious,” he said.

Xcess Communication director Beverly Hon, 36, agreed that puppy training was essential for her year-old golden retriever Comet, as it “allowed him to learn to socialise with other dogs and people”.

“Such training also allows me to learn how to handle Comet when going for off-leash walks,” she said.

Wiring contractor Sam Shan, 55, prefers to self-train his Chow Chow named Simba as he finds the experience more satisfying.

“It takes three hours to groom and brush him but only 30 minutes to give him a bath,” he said.



Colourful pooches: Toy poodles Apachi (middle) and Rebecca (right) caught the attention of many with their colourful coats. Looking on is their owner Miye Chow.