Is this rescue ethical?

Veterinarians play an important role in working with animal rescue organizations, and have many ethical obligations when providing care for animals under the care of these rescues. These ethical responsibilities become especially pertinent when collaborating with animal rescue groups who provide support to Indigenous communities.
Here are five tips to help you determine if a rescue is operating in a Good Way- using a holistic approach that honours tradition and spirit within Indigenous communities.

1 EDUCATION

Has the rescue team provided culturally relevant education and anti-racism training to rescue-affiliated individuals working within the communities? Understanding the history and ongoing trauma faced by Indigenous peoples throughout Canada is essential if working with Indigenous communities, and is a vital step toward truth and reconciliation. Understanding a community's cultural traditions and historical relationships with animals is also an important part of this preparation. An ethical rescue will ensure their team has the appropriate training.

2 PARTNERSHIP

Does this rescue focus on building relationships rather than using the "helicopter-in, helicopter-out" approach? Ask the rescue what they are doing to promote positive partnerships with communities such as knowing the history of the area, getting involved with community events, and collaborating with community members and leadership.

3 POLICY & GOVERNANCE

Reputable rescues have standard written policies by which they abide, as well as strategic plans and visions that they follow. Additionally, an ethical rescue will be registered as a non-profit society with a designated Board of Directors. Asking to see the vision, mission and strategic plans of a rescue will tell you a lot about their approach to working with communities.

4 ASK

Ask the rescue what they consider a stray dog in Indigenous communities. Many dogs roam freely in these areas and are individually, or community, owned and loved. There are instances where well-meaning rescues enter the community and take dogs away from their owners or remove dogs roaming at large without authorization, which is not only **unethical** but also **illegal**.