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### **18-YEAR OLD GIRL WINS NEW CAR AFTER LIVING 13 DAYS CHAINED TO DOGHOUSE, SURVIVING 4 DAYS OF ELIMINATIONS**

#### **Youngest Contestant in Chain Off 2006 Competition Wins New Chevy Aveo**

Altoona, PA—Dogs Deserve Better, a nonprofit working to bring dogs into the home and family, wrapped up its first-ever Chain Off Contest at Leidy Park in Mundys Corner, Pennsylvania approximately 1 hour east of Pittsburgh. 18-year-old Aija Gillman, the youngest contestant in the competition, went home to Illinois in her new Chevy Aveo for her efforts in beating out 10 other contestants.

11 people began the contest Saturday, July 1. After nine days, 5 people remained chained, and players voted 3-2 to begin eliminations the next day. 1 person went home in elimination rounds each day until the final playoff Thursday, July, 13. Final elimination rounds pitted 52-year-old Don McKendree, the oldest contestant, against 18-year-old Aija Gillman, the youngest contestant. Aija topped Don by a final score of 9-7 to win the contest and the Chevy Aveo.

Contestants from Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, South Carolina, and New York converged on the little town of Mundys Corner, PA to begin a contest like no other. They lived chained to doghouses until only one remained, who won a new Chevy Aveo. They competed to survive the boredom of this life . . . no books, TV, radio, smoking, or even visitors, except for members of the press. For only 1/2 hour each day they saw family members or called home. They were allowed the bare minimum in hygiene, no showers or baths, but only cleanliness routines undertaken within the confines of four tiny port-a-john walls. They were stripped of all the comforts we take so much for granted: in their place, they received only a chain, a collar, water, food, doghouse, sleeping bag, and shade.

Stated Aija, in an acceptance speech Friday, July 14, while crying for the dogs she had stood for, "I feel the issue of chaining dogs needs and deserves so much more attention. It is not right to keep your dog like this, I know; I lived it for 13 days. Dogs Deserve Better is a great organization who needs our help, and we need to bring this issue more to the awareness of this country."

To view photos, and read daily excerpts from all contestant journals, go to <http://www.dogsdeservebetter.com/chainoff2006pa.html>. To interview Miss Gillman or any of the contestants, please contact the organization at the numbers above.

Dogs Deserve Better is a 501c3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Tipton, Pennsylvania, is the 2003 First Place Winner of the ASPCA Pet Protector Award, and currently has 141 area reps in 37 states as well as in Canada and Australia.