

The Dogs that Changed Our World

A special edition of the New Hampshire SPCA newsletter



A letter from our Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Sitting at my desk just now, I look up to see a sight that has become all too familiar... but today, my heart lifts a little. The anger that has been my reaction, is slowly starting to wane.

Summer, one of the 36 Shepherds from Bristol and Alexandria, is entering the hallway leading to the Accounting Office where she will spend the day. Time out of her kennel, time with someone who will make sure she knows how special she is, loved and cared for is her destination for the day. She will be noticed, spoiled — given treats and toys. She'll get walks, hear laughter and be spoken to kindly throughout the day before she is walked down the hall, head turning looking back, longing to stay but heading to her kennel again.

Dora, Summer, Freddie, Marie, Houdini and Nora have all made the same daily journey. They come upstairs one at a time. "Dog here" is heard down the hallway to ensure there is no interaction between animals. For months, blankets were hung down the hallways covering glass, reducing visual contact and the resulting barking, lunging and reactivity that has been common. Office staff, in addition to Adoption Counselors and Kennel Techs, feel their hearts tighten as each day passes.

And then the call comes... the hearing is postponed again. The dogs will be with us two more months... Again! The first trial was July — months after the dogs arrived. Guilty! A glimmer of hope this would be over but appealed. Bond ordered! Never paid. Contempt of Court we shouted, technical error. Trials continued, again and again. January, February — 14 months passed... Hearing in April, we thought — finally! The dogs would be free... hung jury. A retrial would be held in June... continued. July became August... the email stated September, but no judge was available for the hearing. It would be October — 657 days, 22 months and then finally, Wednesday, October 2, a signed surrender form. It was over, tears flowed.

The Bristol Shepherds, part of the original case when Jennifer Choate was found guilty in District Court, were removed from the appeal process. With a hung jury in Superior Court, the Judge ordered them returned... they went from times out of their kennels, hiking and swimming back to life of a dog in a kennel. Our hearts ache for all of them.

There are staff who have never known the Adoption area for dogs to be open to the public, never known our work without this protective custody case. There are staff who have never known an office without a Shepherd during their time with us. And there have been tears, frustration and anger to deal with. Confusion and heartbreak. There have been emergency surgeries, worry and guilt. There have been individual meetings and group meetings. Staff meetings and meetings with volunteers.

As you know, they have been with us for far too long, but

today as I watch them arrive... my heart still aches for it is not over... for even though these 28 dogs have been surrendered for adoption, which is tremendous news, our hearts still ache for the eight we were required to return.

And, no justice was ever had for the 36 dogs and puppies that perished in the fires — this was never part of the hearings, the arguments, the court ruling... this was another part of the tragedy that we hold in our hearts.

This case, the longest and most costly in our history, has impacted each of us profoundly. Our hearts ache when we reflect on them all but each day, with each successful surgery, with each finalized adoption, we lift our heads a little higher, smile a bit more genuinely and know that when we hear the intercom announce the next adoption of one of our precious pups, the tears will rise knowing that we did our very best for each of them and that they will live in their forever homes more successfully for the tremendous work of our staff and volunteers made possible because of support by you.

Thank you again, for the support of these amazing dogs, the care and concern you have shown to us. It has been a very difficult journey and it will take each of us more time to heal. The support that you have shown will be a part of the experience that we will talk about for years. Thank you again.

On behalf of the Shepherds, the staff and the volunteers,



Lisa Dennison
Executive Director



Epilogue

It's been seven weeks since the Shepherds were released. The days are more joyful, the outcomes brighter and we are shifting our attention.

Twenty-two Shepherds are spending Thanksgiving in their new forever homes. Safe, loved and treasured~

We are working to place the final few that remain — cared for and loved each day but ready for their special someone.

We could not be more grateful — for their brighter futures and for you. Thank you and Happy Holidays~

GERMAN SHEPHERD CASE UNFOLDS...

- Nov. 22, 2017:** Fire kills seven German Shepherds in Bristol, NH. All surviving dogs ordered by police to be removed by owner.
- Dec. 12, 2017:** 29 German Shepherds killed in a 2nd fire at the same Bristol property. The dogs previously ordered removed are killed, only nine survive.
- Dec. 13, 2017:** The New Hampshire SPCA is called upon by Bristol, NH police and takes nine German Shepherds and three rabbits into protective custody from the property of unlicensed breeder, Jennifer Choate. Cruelty Investigator Steve Sprowl removed the animal victims of the fire, respectfully disposing of their remains.
- Dec. 15, 2017:** Paige, who was suffering from frostbite when removed from Bristol, undergoes a toe amputation surgery.

2018

- Jan. 2:** The NHSPCA is called upon by Alexandria Police to rescue 22 German Shepherds from a dilapidated barn on an -11° day. These dogs were also owned by Jennifer Choate and were living in open crates with frozen water and no ability to maintain their body heat. They joined the first nine in our kennels, making the total 31.
- Jan. 20:** Choate pleads not guilty to five counts of misdemeanor cruelty to animals from Bristol case.
- Feb. 1:** Adult Shepherd bites NHSPCA Vet Tech, requiring 25 stitches.
- Feb. 4:** Five puppies are born to one of the dogs rescued from the freezing Alexandria barn. The total number of Shepherds is now 36.
- Feb. 23:** Choate pleads not guilty to 24 counts of cruelty to animals in Alexandria case.
- Mar. 4:** NHSPCA informed of upcoming events: Arraignment on March 5, Jury Selection on April 2, and Trial on April 3-5. Trial is postponed.
- July 19:** The case was finally heard in court and Choate was found guilty of 22 charges of cruelty to animals. She appealed the decision immediately and the dogs remained in protective custody limbo. Restitution was ordered but was subject to the appeal.
- Sept. 18:** Grafton Superior Court informs us of first appeal hearing on October 23.
- Oct. 10:** The anticipated appeal hearing is postponed.
- Oct. 25:** Superior Court Judge denies Contempt of Court, dismisses appeal bond order.
- Nov. 4:** Contempt of Court hearing, clerical error, rescheduled.
- Dec. 5:** Grandpa Doo suffers bloat, requires emergency surgery.
- Dec. 7:** District Court Contempt hearing, Contempt declined based on Superior Court ruling.

2019

- Feb. 27:** Trial scheduled — postponed.
- Apr. 6:** Case finally heard in court. Jury deliberation results in hung jury. Due to technicality, Bristol case is dropped. Eight Bristol dogs and three rabbits ordered to be returned to Choate on April 11.
- Apr. 18:** Informed of pretrial hearing May 22, jury selection June 4, late June trial.
- May 16:** Adult Shepherd bites experienced dog walker.
- May 21:** Final pretrial hearing rescheduled for July 25, jury selection August 6, August trial.
- July 30:** Frankie suffers bloat, undergoes emergency surgery.
- July 31:** Trial conference scheduled for July 31 rescheduled to Sept. 25. Jury selection Oct. 1.
- Aug. 15:** Frida suffers a fractured tail, undergoes partial tail amputation surgery.
- Sept. 11:** Pretrial, plea and sentencing hearing. Hearing postponed for settlement hearing scheduled Sept. 25.
- Sept. 16:** Settlement hearing postponed to Oct. 11 due to lack of judge availability.
- Oct. 2:** Received surrender form relinquishing ownership of 28 Shepherds, signed by Choate.
- Oct. 10:** First Shepherd, Barney, adopted into his forever home!
- Oct. 11:** Choate pleads No Contest to the only remaining animal cruelty charges. She is ordered a twelve-month suspended sentence. \$600,000 in restitution was waived by the NHSPCA to guarantee the safety of the 28 Shepherds.
- Nov. 25:** Shepherd #22 adopted. We hope the remaining ones all find homes for the holidays!

Finding a New Normal

By Riann Hadley
Senior Adoption Center Manager

For the past 22 months, it has felt like we have been engrossed in nothing but German Shepherds. Of course, there has been plenty of others that have come and gone in that time frame, but the fact that we have been staring at the same black and tan faces that long will stay with us forever.

We have learned so much in that time — how much work and manpower it takes to keep that many dogs mentally and physically stimulated, how important legislation is to the work we do every day and how teamwork amongst staff and volunteers makes all the difference. We have gone through so many highs, like when the first dog went into foster care and learned what a real home felt like. But we have also had our share of lows, like returning eight much loved dogs and three rabbits back to their previous owner after caring for them for a long 16 months.

Being involved with animals for that long was a first for all of us. It challenged us and frustrated us at times but ultimately, we learned to pull together and do whatever was needed for them while they were in our care. We began seeing Shepherds lined up in offices during the day. Volunteers would take them for more rides and walks. Countless staff and volunteers even opened their homes to them at night.

The last two years have felt like an all hands on deck mission to change the lives of these dogs. Finally seeing them find adoptive homes makes us feel like we can finally say "Mission Accomplished!"

Pictures are Worth a Thousand Words

By Paula Parisi
Manager of Humane Ed. Programs

The Humane Education Department staff didn't really have anything directly to do with the German Shepherds. We didn't take care of them, didn't feed or clean up after them and didn't have the responsibility to ensure that there were enough funds to care for their needs.

But what we did do is to educate the public about this heartbreaking case. For almost two years, we heard the same questions over and over again, "Are the German Shepherds still here?" and "Why do you have so many German Shepherds?" and "When are they going to get adopted?" Whether we were visiting a school, hosting a Girl Scout visit to our classroom, or having a birthday party on the weekend, we were constantly explaining how it came to be that the NHSPCA was caring for over 30 German Shepherds. Some people had heard about the case on the news, some had seen social media posts and of course, the fact that our Dog Pavilion was closed for over six months would prompt a lot of the questions that we were asked.

We got a lot of different reactions to our explanations. Many adults would ask for more details and we would answer the best we could. Adults would usually shake their heads, look disgusted or enraged as they expressed their anger about mean people and inadequate laws.

Children would usually look at us in disbelief and say, "How could someone do that?" or express sadness about the "poor dogs". We would explain that the dogs here at the NHSPCA were actually the lucky ones; the ones that no longer were afraid, lonely, cold and hungry. The ones that now knew the loving touch from a staff member or volunteer, the proper food that would make their tummies feel better and water that was always fresh.

Even though we talked a lot about the German Shepherds, many adults and



Finally, the photos of the 28 Shepherds we gained custody of can be displayed in the Adoption Center! It has been fun to see the "Adopted!" stickers be placed.

children expressed a desire to meet the dogs. This wasn't possible due to the nature of the case, but it was difficult to explain. A lot of people had trouble understanding the sheer number and couldn't visualize 36 dogs. Then the photographs appeared and changed the game for us.

No longer were they just "36 German Shepherds". Photos of the dogs with their names were posted on the cabinets in the dog kitchen area, and it became real for the adults and children during tours. A hush would come over the group as they all stared in amazement that there were so many and how beautiful and unique each dog was. Their names gave them distinct personalities and after a few moments of quiet, we would hear, "I like Jett best!" or "Nori is so beautiful!" or "My dog is named Smokey, too!"

Pictures really are worth a thousand words and those photos were worth all the time they took to be taken and posted. And now that the pictures are being tagged as "Adopted!", it's come full circle for us in our explanation of the infamous German Shepherd case. Our heartfelt thanks to Salomé Barrot for these amazing and beautiful photographs.

Let Your Light Shine

By Courtney Vavra

Annual Fund & Digital Marketing Manager

I've worked at the shelter for over a decade and I've witnessed many horrific situations involving innocent animals. I've seen sick, abandoned and neglected animals rescued from unspeakable cruelty. I've witnessed heartbreak and loss. I've felt rage and despair. I've choked down tears and sobbed quietly in a bathroom stall. I hear all the time, "Oh, I could never work at a shelter. It's too sad!"

Yes. Seeing animals suffer is awful and hard. But I promise you that our shelter is not a depressing place. Sadness simply cannot flourish in an environment where there is so much love. When you devote your life to helping animals and you get to see that work in action every day — it's uplifting. I feel fortunate to be surrounded by kind people who care about animals as much as I do. Volunteers. Staff. Supporters. We're all working towards the same goal, a safe and loving home for every animal.

But the truth is, over the last two years there have been moments when I have been so disheartened by the German Shepherd case, I've considered quitting. ***It was too sad.***

It was so discouraging to stand by helplessly and watch victims of cruelty and neglect be victimized again by the very system that should be protecting them. Our archaic laws dictate that animals involved in animal cruelty cases be treated as property and be "held as live evidence" for months/years on end. It made me heartsick to see these beautiful animals stuck in a kennel, repeatedly denied the chance to feel the warmth of a loving home. And the day we were ordered by the judge to return animals to the very same owner that had been previously convicted of animal cruelty, sent me into a spiral of despair. It felt hopeless.

It was a dark and devastating time for me, as well as all my coworkers — but thankfully our supporters and volunteers continued to light the way with their love and support.

While the case of the German Shepherds is one of the most emotionally and financially draining cases in our history, it didn't break us. Our resolve to protect animals, to give them the best care while they are with us (no matter how long) has been strength-



Dora loved spending time adventuring with her foster family, who helped her build her confidence and learn to trust. She was recently placed with a forever family that was excited to continue building that trust in a quiet environment.

ened. If people turn away from animals in need when things get tough, that would be the worst tragedy of all.

And while this special edition is filled with stories of the Shepherds — I'd like to point out that from the time we rescued the first Shepherd to the time you are reading this; more than 3600 animals have turned to us for help. For the tiny abandoned mice, discarded rabbits, litters of newborn kittens, geriatric cats, lost dogs, neglected horses and farm animals, our shelter remains a safety net. No matter the size, age or circumstance, they will be loved and cared for. Even under the most challenging conditions, we refuse to turn our backs on animals that need help.

This is only possible because of you, and your support!

Even as we celebrate the resolution of this case, we must remain vigilant. The next cruelty case, the next animal that is desperate for help will land on our doorstep any minute. Your support will ensure that we are fully prepared to help each and every animal.

Please help us face the challenges that are ahead in 2020 by making a year-end gift today. Go to www.nhspca.org and make your year-end tax-deductible gift.

Your unwavering support means everything to the animals, and the people who care for them, especially in our toughest moments.

Thank you for lighting the way.



Make a difference. Give a year-end gift today!

Please help now

More Than Just a Number

By Kelly Marinel
Manager of Animal Care

As I sit here right now reflecting over the last nearly two years, it is hard to know where to begin. Dora is not so sure either. She's pacing back and forth, checking in with me then going back to lie under the desk of her office foster mom — her safety area. I hear her crunching on a bully stick, a favorite treat of the Shepherds.

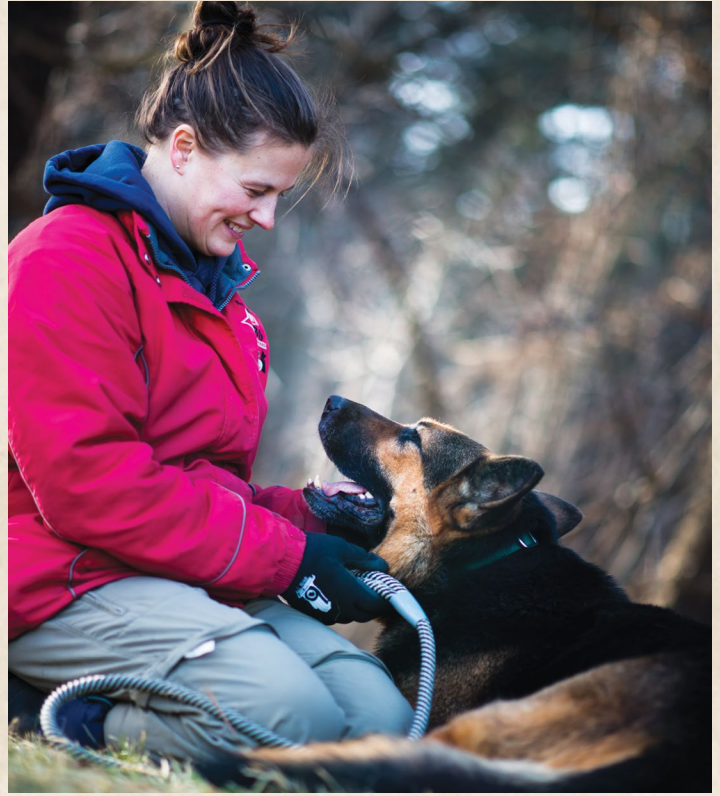
I won't get into the court system and frustrations that went on throughout this time. We have new laws that have been passed (HB 459) and this will hopefully never be a situation that the state of New Hampshire will face again. Instead, I want to focus on the experience of getting to know these wonderful dogs, their individual personalities and what they went through, what we went through, together.

For the past 23 months, my time, my brain and my heart have been spent with 36 German Shepherds. I'll never forget the first few days meeting them. Walking down the aisleway of kennels on either side — kennel after kennel of barking German Shepherds. My co-worker, Salomé, and I would each start on one side with a clicker and click and treat when the dogs would approach the front of the kennels to greet us. We would switch sides and walk back up the aisle. After a few days, the dogs would go from barking and excited to silent — each sitting patiently at the front of their kennels waiting for a treat and some attention. We would talk in happy, high-pitched voices to them and they would wag their tails and whole bodies in return.

The dogs were identified by cage cards with numbers on them. Looking back over my notes from January 6, 2018, it reads: “#7: Anxious spinning. #20: Nervous, click and treat — runs when treats are tossed. Spend extra time gently putting treats in kennel. #12: Sharky with treats, watch your fingers.”

#7 was affectionately named Twisty, as she never stopped spinning in her kennel. She would be the first one we tried in a foster home. Salomé and I were in tears watching her one day, she needed to get out of the kennel. Once in a home, she stopped spinning. She thrived, and she was renamed a more fitting name — Heidi. And on October 10, 2019, she was adopted by her wonderful foster family.

#20 has notes about her improvements “doing better, coming to the front of the kennel” it says on January 24, 2018. She became Fiona. Fiona is a cautious older gal who quickly won over my heart and the hearts of her foster family. The days when she was at the shelter, she was my constant companion, hanging out in the adoption pod, coming with me to meetings. Her big soulful eyes would look right into my heart. Fiona had



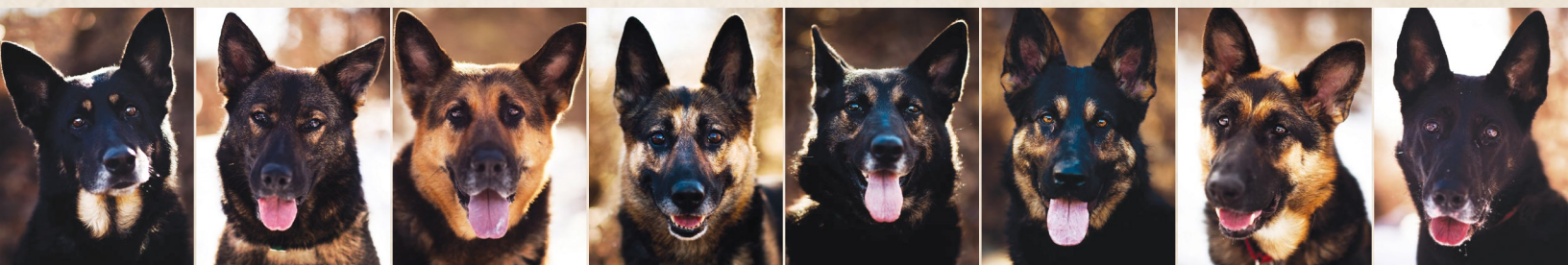
Fiona had a hard time acclimating to life in a home. With time and patience, her foster family was able to help her adjust. Watching these dogs become comfortable in home settings was so incredibly rewarding; however, there was a lingering fear that they would eventually have to return to a kennel.

a hard time acclimating to home life. Her foster parents had all the patience in the world for her and helped her through it. I'll never forget when her foster mom dropped her off for one of her vet visits last week and said, “She can show you how she sits for a treat now!” Fiona came so far and was so happy in a home, I constantly feared her having to go back to living in a kennel.

Also, on January 24, 2018, I have written next to #12: “Sharky — pregnant?” And on February 4, 2018, “Nori (as she became known) gave birth to 5 puppies.” They are still known as “the puppies.” They were in protective custody with us for 1 year and 8 months. They were all adopted by their foster families.

The next step was getting to know all the dogs outside of their kennels. Salomé and I would take them out one at a time into a fenced-in yard. Then we would sit down with our notebooks, observe them and take notes. Again, so many different personalities. It breaks my heart reading through these notes today, as we had to return eight of these dogs back to their former environment.

We made notes how they walked on leash, how they reacted when a person entered the kennel, what they did when they



Dora

Twisty

Fiona

Nori

Daphne

Maxine

Paige

Foxy



Maizy

Nicky

Annie

Freddy

Houdini

Pippy

Sunshine

Harriet

were brought into the yard. Daphne always has a toy in her mouth (an orange Kong jumbler was her favorite — and still is to this day), Maxine loves to rush out of the kennel doors (Barb — she’s looking at you!), Paige immediately flops onto her back and exposes her belly, frequently licking the face of people who squat down to say hi, Foxy is very ball driven and will immediately bring the ball back to be thrown again (or drop it on your lap or in your trash can if she is in your office!). We kept track of which dogs were clean in their kennels and what their favorite toys and chews were.

During cleaning time, Salomé would clean one row and I would handle the other. We had our routines. I had Maizy, who would be in my face the whole time, excited and wanting attention, and Nicky, who would spill her bucket just to roll around in the water. Salomé had the ball dogs — Annie, Maxine and Freddy. She would throw a ball in the kennel for the dog she was with, and the other two would run along beside them as if they were playing, too.

As time went on, Salomé and I were joined by Denise and some of our experienced volunteers to help with the Shepherd care, enrichment and walks. We made lists of which dogs could walk together and we did pack walks outside and play time in fenced-in yards. We kept an enrichment schedule: Monday: Kongs, Tuesday: Frozen bones, Wednesday: New toy, Thursday: Ice cube treat, Friday: Chewie, Saturday: Colette’s yogurt treats, Sunday: New toy. There was a walking list — duos and trios — who can walk with who (Houdini and Pippy)... Who needs to be kept apart (Nori and Sunshine)... Who liked to swim in the kiddie pool (Nicky and Freddy)... Who were the ball players (Foxy, Maxine, Freddy, Annie, Harriet and Tre). We listened to audio books (which included Johnny Cash reading the Bible) and sprayed different scents on their bedding to give them more enrichment. On rainy days, we would sit in their kennels with a timer giving each dog the same amount of one-on-one time.

As more time went on, we were still desperate to find more ways to keep these dogs happy and sane. All the staff and volunteers worked together in their care, enrichment and wellbeing. We brought Nicky and Freddy to the WoofMeow store in Dover so they could go swimming in the pool. One of our volunteers started a pack walk at his property, a nice 2-mile walk along the river. Staff and volunteers would bring the dogs out in groups or bring one or two at a time and let them run, sniff and swim on a long line. We did office fosters with staff upstairs, and good thing because that is how Summer scored her home! The dogs loved getting out of the kennels and up in the offices where they had a nice, cozy bed, company of people, and usually a bully stick or some other type of chew. We have a donor who lives up the road with a big fenced-in yard that allows us to bring dogs over to play — Foxy and Smokey loved it!

These dogs have become such an important part of my life. I feel honored to know them, and the bonds I have with them will stay with me forever. I think about the eight constantly, worrying about them and hoping they are okay. We have started the process of adoptions for the others. Many will be adopted by the foster families that have cared for them and the rest will start new, wonderful lives. One of the first adopted was Paige, and her new dad says everything is excellent and couldn’t be any better. She is such a great dog and she’s getting plenty of love and affection — which is just what she wants.

Today, I started the day by bringing Nori to spend the night with one of our volunteers to see how she does at home. I got a wonderful photo of her sleeping on a dog bed in the living room. Then, Salomé and I will end our day by bringing Freddy to his new home where he will have 52 acres of land to play in.

It has no doubt been an emotional roller coaster of a journey. There have been lots of tears and heartache, but also smiles, laughter and hope along the way.

Nicky, as Part of the Eight

By **Salomé Barrot**

Enrichment Coordinator, Veterinary Technician Assistant

Nearly two years ago, 36 beautiful German Shepherds entered my life. They changed me forever. My perspective on love, life and dedication was redefined.

These dogs came to the NHSPCA as part of a cruelty case filed in the courts. In the beginning, they were housed in a nearby boarding facility because we didn't have enough space. Day in and day out, staff and volunteers did all they could to care for the mental and physical health of these magnificent animals. Despite all the love, attention, walks and enrichment we provided at this external facility, we began to see some behavioral decline.

The dogs were starving for permanent human contact.

I loved them all, of course, but Nicky in particular won my heart. She has a beautiful long coat, and she was especially affected by being housed in a kennel for 24 hours a day. She barked for attention, spun repeatedly, jumped, and bounced against the walls. Her frustration was palpable, as was my sadness at her condition.

So I took her home.

Nicky flourished in a loving home setting. She enjoyed snuggling on the couch with my cats, my husband and me. She followed me in the shower in the evening and slept with us at night. She loved when we cooked and looked forward to snacks falling from the counter. While we ate dinner, she savored her daily chewy. Turns out, Nicky was a happy dog inside and loved going to swim sessions at the WoofMeow pool in Dover and playing with her favorite red Jolly Ball.

Then our world was crushed. On April 6, 2019, Nicky and seven other shepherds were ordered by the court to be returned to the breeder: Oso, Skyler, Maizy, Bindy, Jack, Jill and Junior. It was the most difficult and emotional day of my life. We had lovingly cared for these eight dogs for 15 months. I fostered some of them. My heart was shattered.

Now I'm left to wonder about their care and their mental and physical well being. Not a day goes by that I don't think of Nicky and the other seven dogs. I worry that Nicky feels abandoned, I worry she is back living in a kennel, declining, I worry that she's anxious, bored and lonely.

My prayer for these eight is the same as for the other Shepherds, whose custody we secured: that they get the chance to live the life they deserve as family dogs in dedicated forever homes.



Nicky was extremely frustrated in the kennels. Once she was taken into foster, she flourished, relaxed, and cuddled on the couch with her family every chance she could!



Nicky snuggles her foster mom, Salomé, on the drive to be dropped back off to the breeder on April 11, 2019.

Marie, the Pup with Megaesophagus

By **Barbara LeBeau**
Volunteer

I got involved with the Shepherds as a part-time staff member, a volunteer and a foster mom. The word I always think of when I think of the Shepherds is bittersweet. So terrible the reason why they came to our shelter, but so wonderful to get to know all these amazing dogs. The frustration of almost two years waiting for justice for the Shepherds and now the sweetness of them finally starting to find their forever homes. So many highs and lows over the almost two years, bittersweet.

I got to know and love all the Shepherds, but my foster puppy Marie completely stole my heart. Marie came into my home when she was about 10 weeks old. She was supposed to be with us for a month or so, but due to court delays, she stayed with us for eight months. It didn't take us long to know something



It was quickly discovered that Marie had Megaesophagus. This meant she had to sit in a chair every time she ate. It took a village to care for her properly.

wasn't quite right with Marie. She was smaller than her siblings and couldn't

seem to keep her food down. Eventually, an x-ray revealed that she has Megaesophagus.

The simple definition of this condition is the esophagus is enlarged making it very difficult for food and water to travel to the stomach.

Marie had to learn to sit upright in a special chair to allow gravity to bring her food slurry to her stomach. It was so hard to see this sweet puppy with this life-threatening condition, but she has grown into a beautiful young dog who loves life. She taught me a lesson about enjoying the life we are given.

They say it takes a village and this was so true with Marie. She had many volunteers and staff who loved her and took care of her. Marie has since been adopted by one of her wonderful foster moms and is putting her past behind her.

Love you, Marie!

Barney: No Longer in Limbo

By **Ali Lynch**
Outreach and Events Coordinator

On February 4, 2018, five German Shepherd puppies were born at the New Hampshire SPCA. Innocently involved in a protective custody case that would ultimately last two years, these puppies and 23 other Shepherds would remain in limbo while the court decided their fate. It was quickly determined that the puppies didn't deserve to grow up in a kennel and were placed into foster homes. Barney was the last puppy to go, waiting alone in a kennel. One staff member stepped up and took Barney home.

Barney, named for her partner's late grandfather's German Shepherd, quickly settled into their home and made

himself part of the family.

It was an emotional journey waiting for the final decision to be made; would Barney be able to become a permanent part of the family or would he be forced to return to a place he's never known? The emotional toll on his family's mind was heavy as well.

They were trying not to let themselves get attached to Barney while waking up with him every day. They were sharing their life with him and naturally, their bond was growing stronger and stronger.

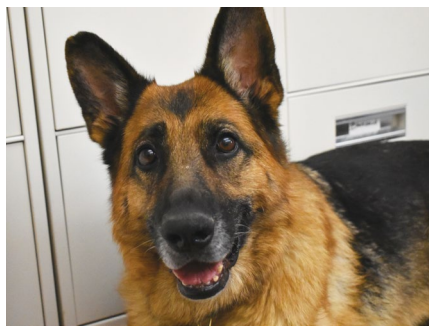
Finally, after 533 days of being in foster care, Barney left the shelter for the last time after watching his family sign the adoption papers. It was official. He'll never be in limbo again, his fate is secured. He is part of a family.



Barney was the first Shepherd to be adopted once we gained custody of the 28 dogs. He fits right in with his two sisters, who also love to play!

Those Still Waiting...

Please click [here](#) to view current availability



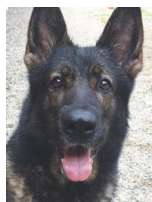
Frankie hopes find the perfect family to spend her golden years with.

Frankie Deserves her Forever Family

By Ali Lynch

Outreach and Events Coordinator

A wise man once said, “to never know the love of a dog is to miss the best thing life has to offer.” That statement holds true the value of one special dog who stole my heart. Frankie was estimated to be between 6-8 years old when she came to us and has never known what it means to have a loving home. That sad fact never changed Frankie’s love of life. Whenever it’s time to go for a walk or when a tennis ball is thrown, she lights up. It’s the best part of my day when I go down to the kennels and am greeted by Frankie and her neighbor



Annie is a sweetheart.

There’s no greater feeling than knowing you’re improving the quality of an animal’s life, but there’s no way to explain the impact they have on ours. Frankie has greatly affected my life in ways I could never have imagined, and I know she’ll change the lives of her forever family for the better.

Annies, another amazing Shepherd still waiting for a home. Their excitement is truly unmatched. Their tails wag faster than it seems possible.

Bebe Brought Us All Together

By Kacie Post

Transport Coordinator

I was fairly new at the shelter when I decided to take Bebe, a solid black German Shepherd, into my home to foster. She walked through the door,



Bebe is as incredible as her goofy ears!

Although I got to claim her as my own for a while, Bebe is loved by many. Through her, I was able to find commonalities with those around me — with all the ‘shelter people’ who I wasn’t yet sure if I fit in with. But Bebe brought

popped down on the couch, and instantly made herself part of the family. She was in my home for nine months, but it felt like no time at all.

Although I got to claim her as my own for a while, Bebe is loved by many. Through her, I was able to find commonalities with those around me — with all the ‘shelter people’ who I wasn’t yet sure if I fit in with. But Bebe brought

us together. I learned that Barb loves her funny backwards ears as much as I do. I laugh with Kelly about how she never fails to roll down the passenger side window with her paw so she can stick her head out for the ride. I know Paul understands her sense of adventure, and puts in the extra time to take her for the long hikes that she’s always so excited to go on. And I can rely on Denise to make sure Bebe gets hand fed on the days she has trouble eating.

Lastly, I know that everyone who is a part of this agency cares so deeply for her — and for all of them. Together, we cried for them when hope seemed lost; and now we cheer for each of them as they are being adopted — finally leaving their kennels for good. We’ve shared so many emotions together, but we’re lucky to have had them. Bebe gave me a new family. Now it’s time we find her one.

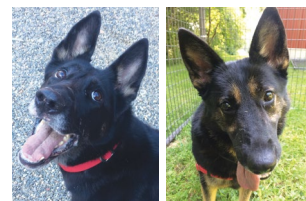
Reflecting on the Love and Memories

By Michaela Gerome

Lead Adoption Counselor

The last two years have been a whirlwind of emotions and experiences that are etched in my memory. When the Shepherds entered our care, I couldn’t help walk them because of an injury. So instead, I got to spend special one-on-one time with them.

Relaxing with Sunshine in her kennel, reading to her or just talking became a highlight of my day. Car rides to Dunkin’ Donuts with Sunshine and Maxine to spoil them with munchkins, always remembering to bring some back for “our friends,” the other Shepherds, became a regular ritual. One of my favorite pastimes was taking Foxy out to the pen to play ball. Watching the joy on her face brought me just as much joy in return, even on



Foxy, left, and Daphne always know how to keep us laughing!

really tough days. Sweet Daphne, who always sat with a toy in her mouth, just wanted to be with people and make us laugh. Each of these amazing dogs have their own personalities, likes and dislikes. And we loved them, quirks and all.

The time I have shared with these beautiful Shepherds is a little different than everyone else’s. They have become so special to me and I have learned so much from them. I have spent time with each of them. The sadness, the happiness, the laughter and the tears. The love and memories we have created is cherished and will leave a lifelong impact all of us.

Our Deepest Gratitude...

As you have read, the Shepherd Case has impacted the staff and volunteers of the NHSPCA in countless ways. One that we are so grateful for is the generosity shown by our community. We have been buoyed by so many people and organizations in our own neighborhood, from across the state and across the country. You, people who care, have contributed not only financially but by volunteering, fostering, supporting legislative change, sharing information on social media, and so much more. So many of you reached out by phone, email and letter to offer your words of kindness and encouragement. We are beyond grateful; we are in awe of the goodness of people. We will hold that goodness in our hearts as we move forward into the New Year with thanks.

We would like to acknowledge a few organizations for their incredible support throughout the Shepherd case.

ASPCA

Greatergood.org

Halo Dog Food

Great Bay Veterinary Hospital

Tito's Homemade Vodka

Great NH Restaurants Charitable Trust

Southern New Hampshire Veterinary Referral Hospital

Humane Society of Greater Nashua

Pope Memorial SPCA — Concord-Merrimack County

and to our local veterinarians who so graciously spayed and neutered our Shepherds once surrendered.



From Office Foster to Forever Family

By **Mary Baker**

Accounting Coordinator

The Alexandria Shepherds arrived on January 2, 2018. Because of the large number of dogs, other shelters offered to temporarily house some of them. Summer went to the Humane Society of Greater Nashua for six months, returning to us on June 7. Shortly after, I was asked if she could spend time with me in the Accounting Office to see how she would do. Having the dogs as “office fosters” keeps them out of the kennel environment and gives the dogs a chance to spend time with people and other dogs in a more relaxed way. It helps us learn more about each dog’s personality.

Summer was very happy to hang out with me, and I with her. We shared lunch together as she politely waited for a bite of chicken, hot dog or part of a sandwich. She took each bite very sweetly. After about a week, she became



Summer, left, is still learning how to live in a home, but undoubtedly loves having a family! Summer is seen here with her new brother and forever playmate, Max.

reluctant to leave the office without me, even for her walks with the volunteers. I often had to accompany her down the stairs and out the door. She had clearly chosen me as her person and our bond grew. While I had no intention of

adding another dog to our household, Summer had opened her heart to me, and I couldn’t let her down. She has now become part of our family, happily at home with two other German Shepherds and the rest of the farm animals.



New Hampshire Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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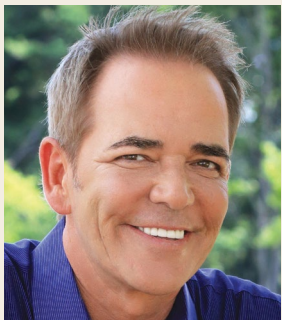
Shepherd Photographer: Salomé Barrot



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For an up-to-date list of New Hampshire SPCA happenings, please visit us [here!](#)



An Afternoon with John Holland

Sunday, February 16, 2019 | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. | New Hampshire SPCA



Author, psychic medium and animal lover John Holland will present insight into the world of mediumship and will deliver messages from your loved ones on the Other Side. John will take the stage at the NHSPCA to talk about how mediumship works and some of the different forms of communication your loved ones may be sending you. 100% of proceeds will benefit the Koda Fund of the NHSPCA, which helps pay for life-saving medical care when needed. Tickets go on sale December 11 and make a great gift! Simply visit www.nhspca.org to reserve your spot!



Doggie Paddle Plunge

Saturday, March 7, 2019 | 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Great Island Common



Winter is here, so get ready for some frosty fun at the NHSPCA's 10th Annual Doggie Paddle Plunge, to be held on March 7 at Great Island Common in Newcastle. All funds raised by the event directly benefit nearly 2,500 homeless and helpless animals that will come to the shelter for a warm bed, wholesome food and loving care as they wait for their forever families.

Each winter, the Doggie Paddle Plunge challenges brave and spirited animal lovers to bare the elements and dive into the icy Atlantic Ocean in support of the New Hampshire SPCA. Participants can register individually or as a group, raising donations from family, friends and anyone who challenges them to 'take the Plunge'. Prefer indoor warmth to the chill of wintry waters? Then register as a Virtual Plunger and commit to ending animal homelessness from the cozy comfort of home.

Whether you're working on your bitter breaststroke or frozen freestyle, the Doggie Paddle Plunge is a day of excitement and fun, with fundraising prizes, warm beverages, hot lunch, and friends cheering you on! To register, visit www.nhspca.org.