

Holiday Edition 2014

Rolling Dog Farm



A special place where disabled animals enjoy life.



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I love you.



Steve and Alayne with Wilbur the one-eyed Chihuahua. He became incontinent after recent bladder stone surgery, but is now back to normal — thank heavens!

Dear Friends,

That beautiful girl on the cover, blind Stella, is one of those dogs we are truly blessed to have in our lives. She is so sweet and cute — and despite her age, she’s got lots of energy! Stella is just a delight. The astonishing thing to us is that someone willingly abandoned her at a shelter and simply walked away. As you’ll read, her owners told the shelter staff they wanted to get a puppy instead. How could that be?

Well, in the end it turned out to be a very good thing for Stella. She’s better off, and so are we for having her with us. When we agree to take a dog like her, especially at that age, we generally assume there will be costly medical needs ahead. Our dogs on average tend to be older, because — like people — this is when they are more likely to develop disabilities or other medical issues. This is typically why owners surrender them to shelters.

We limit the number of dogs we take in for two important reasons. One is to make sure we can provide a true in-home environment; we want our dogs to feel they are in a family, not in a shelter. The second reason is so we can always afford to provide whatever veterinary care they may need. It might be issues they arrive with or medical problems they develop later (like Aurora and Sophie).

Of course, everything we do for them is made possible only because of your wonderful, generous donations! We couldn’t do it otherwise. On behalf of Stella, Aurora, Sophie, Darla, Buggy and their many friends here, *thank you for your gifts this holiday season!*

Alayne Marker and Steve Smith, Co-founders

How to help

The best way to help the animals is with a cash donation.

You can mail a check in the enclosed envelope or make a secure online donation at our Web site. Contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your kindness!

Also, if you’d like to leave a legacy of helping disabled animals, **please consider making a bequest** in your will. Bequests are important gifts that secure our long-term mission. *Thank you!*

Medical updates

You may remember cute little Aurora from our spring/summer newsletter earlier this year; she’d thrown a huge blood clot from her heart and it lodged in a rear leg. Thanks to our veterinary internal medicine specialist in Burlington, Vermont, Dr. Marielle Goossens, Aurora had recovered and was on multiple medications that were keeping her stable. The underlying condition is a rare and complicated kidney disease called protein-losing nephropathy.



One weekend not long after that newsletter went out, however, Aurora began bleeding to death internally. We rushed her to a local emergency vet clinic in Littleton, New Hampshire, where her prognosis was considered grim.

Fortunately, Dr. Goossens was able to assist the emergency vets throughout the weekend, directing Aurora’s treatment. After getting plasma infusions and changes in her anti-clotting medications, Aurora made it — and by Monday morning we had brought her home.

The very next weekend, however, she suffered the opposite problem — she was throwing blood clots again! This time we rushed Aurora to Dr. Goossens’s clinic for intensive care. After making yet another medication change — switching to a different type of heparin obtained from a human hospital — Aurora has been remarkably healthy since then. Four months and counting!



We had spent New Year’s Day 2014 at the emergency vet clinic in Littleton (they know us well!) with blind Sophie, who was suddenly drinking water like crazy that morning and immediately throwing it up. It turned out she had become diabetic, and over the next few months she would be on a roller coaster much like Aurora.



Under the direction of Dr. Goossens, we monitored Sophie’s blood glucose levels at home, doing 12- and 24-hour curves, and yet we could never get her within a stable, normal range. It didn’t matter what type of insulin, the dose, or her feeding schedule, Sophie’s glucose levels wandered all over the place. Yet at one particular dose, Sophie appeared just fine, even though the monitor showed her glucose levels still gyrating.

Dr. Goossens finally consulted a veterinary endocrinologist, who said some dogs just don’t respond to insulin the way they should, and we shouldn’t worry about the numbers as long as Sophie was acting normally. Which she is ... six months and counting!

Blind Stella: a comeback story

Stella's owners turned her into a Louisiana animal shelter in April. Under "Reason for Surrender" on the intake form, they wrote: "We want to get a puppy." They didn't even bother to write their dog's name on the form. Then they walked out, leaving her behind — old, blind and suddenly nameless.

A local rescue group knew she would be quickly euthanized and asked if we could take her. We urgently had to get her out and arranged to board her at a nearby vet clinic until our transport could get there. The rescue group — which had named her Stella — pulled her and took her to the clinic.

She arrived there emaciated, full of worms, and heartworm positive. When Steve called the clinic to review the things we wanted done for Stella, the veterinarian came on the line. He said, "Mr. Smith, I don't understand something and I hope you don't mind me asking. Why are you going to all this trouble and expense for an old, blind dog? Our local shelter has many adoptable dogs you could take instead. I'm mystified why you would do this."

Steve explained we were a nonprofit and our mission is to rescue dogs like Stella precisely *because* they are disabled and elderly and considered "unadoptable." The vet was gracious if still somewhat baffled by our decision to rescue Stella, but he and his staff took good care of her.



Once here, we took Stella to see our veterinary team in Burlington. First was an eye exam by our ophthalmologist, Dr. Sarah Hoy. She found Stella is blind from progressive retinal atrophy and is developing cataracts, too, so she will need regular monitoring. For now her eyes are very comfortable.

Then came a heart exam, an abdominal ultrasound, and blood work. At the end of her day with the doctors, we were relieved to learn that aside from heartworms, Stella turned out to be in good health. She's also now completed her heartworm treatment.

Back at the farm, we immediately came to adore this girl. She is so loving and affectionate and, as we discovered, quite energetic! In fact, she likes nothing more than to roughhouse. That's right, this gray old lady likes to wrestle and climb all over us. It will start with us loving her up, and soon she's getting mouthy and pushing at us with her face, pawing at us, then trying to climb on top of us. Stella has a big, happy smile the entire time.

When we let her outside, she often does a spontaneous 360° twirl out of pure joy, then sets off to explore the yard.

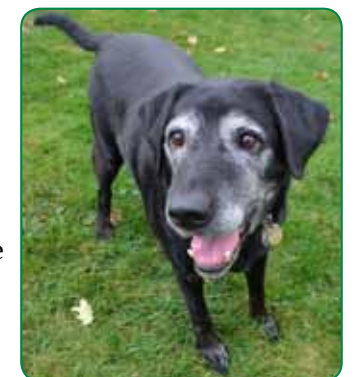
We also learned she likes a good game of tug-of-war. Steve was folding laundry in the laundry room when she came in. He had a towel hanging down from his hands, and Stella walked into it with her face. She instantly grabbed the towel with her mouth and the tug-of-war was on. When Steve finally pulled the towel away, Stella decided she wasn't quite finished with the game — she proceeded to gently grab his pant leg and began tugging on him instead!

Given that Stella was neglected her entire life, it's sadly ironic that the best thing her owners could have done for her was to turn her in. Now she gets another chance at a new life — and she's loving every minute of it!

Put your foot down

Darla was on the cover of our holiday newsletter last year; she'd come to us blind from a Michigan shelter, and our ophthalmologist had restored her vision with cataract surgery. Since then she's had two separate surgeries to remove mast cell tumors, followed by knee surgery in September.

Her knee has healed up, and she's not in any pain, but she won't use that leg. Well, except she *can* use that leg — to scratch her chin, for example — but she won't walk on it. After her knee injury she quickly became adept at walking on three legs, and now refuses to use that fourth leg. Our surgeon ruled out any medical explanation, so we started working with a canine physical therapist to get Darla to — yes — put her foot down!



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www.RollingDogFarm.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

For updates, visit our blog at www.rollingdogfarm.org



That's the pond below the farm house in a photo we took in late September. We had a long and particularly glorious fall foliage season this year, though by the time you get this newsletter it will look much more like winter here!

About the farm

Rolling Dog Farm has been home to many types of disabled animals over the years -- our residents have included blind dogs, blind horses, deaf dogs, blind cats, three-legged dogs and cats, and others with neurological and orthopedic issues. While we focus primarily now on disabled dogs, we still have a few blind horses.

Although these animals may have disabilities, they do not consider themselves handicapped. They just want to get on with life and enjoy themselves. Thanks to your support, that's what they get to do here.

Yet these are the animals who are among the least likely to be adopted and among the most likely to be euthanized in traditional shelters. That's why we work with the disabled.

Steve Smith and Alayne Marker founded the farm in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization known as a private operating foundation. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The Rolling Dog Farm is located in the beautiful White Mountains of northern New Hampshire. This special place for disabled animals is supported 100% by your donations.

Thank you for your gifts!

I love you



Bugsy was a huge challenge when he arrived. He attacked us during his first week, and when he finally stopped going after us, he settled for avoiding us. The behavior was from the trauma he had suffered (having his eyes literally knocked out of his head), followed by too much change. Bugsy finally turned the corner with us, though the first few times he met new people he'd get nervous and look to us for reassurance. That was then, this is now. These days he is Mr. Personality, and he enjoyed all the love at our visitor day this summer. He returned it in kind:

