



Southwest Collie and Sheltie Rescue

Serving Arizona, New Mexico and West Texas

Ever Thought of Fostering?

Without a doubt, fostering along with finances are two of the most important components of a successful rescue. **Right now, fostering is our biggest need.** When we hear of a dog in need or are approached about a dog, pretty much the second question (after is the dog a sheltie or collie or sheltie or collie mix?) is do we have a foster. In our history, we have been fortunate, and very proud of the fact, that we have never turned away any purebred collie or sheltie that we were given the opportunity to help. But, we have recently been challenged to bring in purebred collies or shelties due to foster considerations. We simply are running short on available fosters. We certainly will do whatever it takes to bring in the purebreds. It's what we were formed to do. But, we are having to scramble for fosters on incoming purebred shelties and collies. We are also regularly approached about needy sheltie or collie mixes, often great sounding dogs and with sad stories. We have regrettably had to pass on some of these mixes due to foster concerns. We are all dog enthusiasts and not being able to help just heavily weighs on us.

As a foster, you are caring for the dogs in our program. We strive to put compatible dogs in your house and we make immediate changes if there are problems. We provide supplies (if needed) and including dog food, crates, bowls, leashes, collars, etc. and pay for all veterinary care. We try to make the fostering experience positive. After all, keeping you happy improves the odds that you will want to foster again.

Often, we don't know how long a dog will need fostering (until they get adopted). But, there are times when we do know and these can be pretty short-term. This might be when one of our other fosters is on vacation or when we have an adopter but the adoption can't be finalized until medical issues are resolved. These can be good "trial" opportunities to see if fostering works for you.

In any case, as a foster home you will be assisting dogs find their loving, permanent homes. We can say that we have never had one of our foster homes express regret about fostering. If you are curious about fostering and this incredibly rewarding experience contact Bill at bkferrell@cox.net. We look forward to talking to you.

Our Vet Partners

All of our collie and sheltie rescues receive initial veterinary care, and if needed more advanced medical care. We usually spend more on vet costs per dog than we receive from adoption fees. As a result, it is critical that we have vets that we can trust for outstanding quality of care. We have been very fortunate to secure quality veterinary services over many years from three vets and their staff: Dr. Tenney at Oasis Animal Hospital in Chandler, AZ, Dr. Lepardo at Amherst Plaza Animal Clinic in north Phoenix, and Dr. Miller with Ark Animal Hospital in Alamogordo, NM. We can rely on each of them to give us timely, reliable, and reasonable advice. Additionally, each doctor and their staff strive to get us in at the earliest possible opportunity and have gone out of their way to take great care of our rescues. This results in the fastest possible resolution of medical issues as well as facilitating getting our dogs adopted. We thank these vets and their staff for their invaluable ongoing support of our rescue.



Dr Miller and Staff, Ark Animal Hospital and Kathy Wallis



Dr Lepardo and Staff, Amherst Plaza Animal Clinic and Cindy Reel



Oasis Animal Hospital Staff and Bill and Anmarie Ferrell

Mercer County Collie Rescue Update

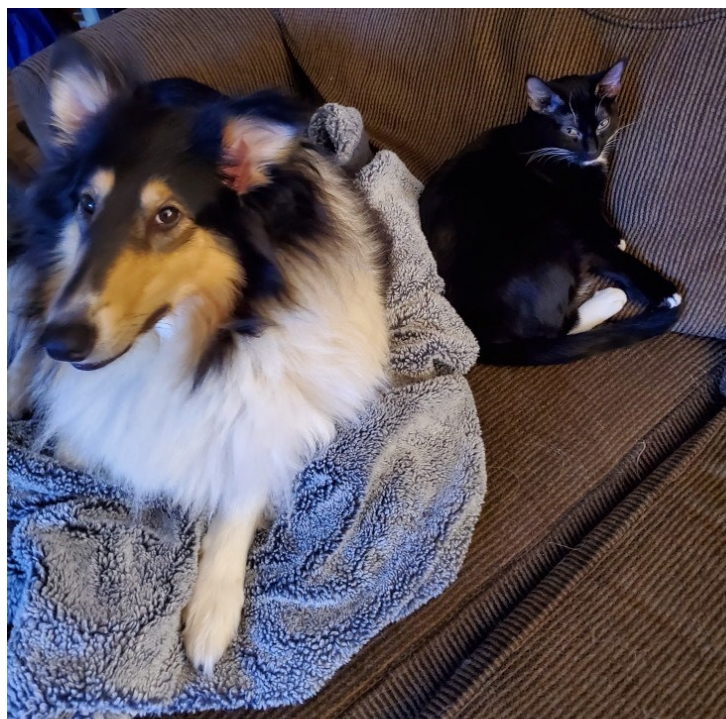
In September of last year, we drove to Mercer County, Illinois to get eleven collies out of about 200 that had been seized due to neglectful conditions. Several of the collies had poor socialization, eye problems, bad teeth, and digestive issues. We are fortunate that our foster homes worked tirelessly to improve their fosters' overall health and social skills. Many of these collies were adopted by their fosters. To date, nine of the eleven collies have been adopted. The following are updates on several of those collies.

Willow

Willow's adopter, Debbie reports that there has been tremendous growth in the past six months. Willow has developed great social skills, such as making sure she gets groomed while Debbie is grooming Paddy, their other collie. Willow gets as many hugs and massages as possible when they are sitting on the couch. Having grown up with no toys, playing tug of war and the Kong don't mean anything to her. However, she loves to play chase and when she is in the backyard she loves to run. When it gets cooler, Debbie will take her to the park with a 30-foot leash so she can really enjoy a bigger space.

Debbie is working with an animal behaviorist in hopes of helping Willow overcome her fear of going for a walk. Noises like cars, trucks, hammering, and kids playing all cause her tail to almost disappear under her and then it is time to head home.

This young lady has endured God knows what, especially trauma to a tooth, and yet she is beautifully evolving into a more trusting and a beloved member of her family.



Summer

Summer's owner Brittany reports that Summer has been doing amazing! She has come out of her comfort zone in the crate, explores all the rooms, and is now sleeping in one of the rooms far from her crate! She has bonded extremely well with her sisters, especially the little kitty Salem. Upon her arrival to Brittany's home, Summer was very shy, but now she is smiling and running around all over the house and backyard. For reasons unknown, she loves to go around the backyard with charcoal bags! It's quite a sight!

Mercer County Collie Rescue Update

Dodger

When Dodger came to his foster (and ultimate adopters) Carol and Elliott, he would not come inside the house on his own, and when he was in the house he froze in one spot. At that time, his body would shake when Carol or Elliott approached to pet him. Additionally, Dodger would not engage in any kind of play with their three dogs.

Dodger now loves the other dogs. He chases the younger ones or gets chased when he has the toy. Dodger loves playing fetch with a tennis ball and is usually the one to catch it. He's not great at returning the ball, but he drops it for one of the other dogs to return.

Dodger is still nervous around people. He will not come to his owners when called. However, they have started using an e-collar, and when it vibrates, it encourages him to come inside the house, but only when a person is at the door. It has been a game changer.

All of Dodger's initial stomach issues have resolved. He is not destructive in the house and can be left to freely roam the house. Dodger has become a good alert dog. Whenever he sees someone walking by or coming to the door, he lets out a loud howling bark. Dodger is a happy guy with a lot of potential.



Reggie

After spending quality time with his initial foster and gaining confidence in the home environment, Reggie was adopted by Celeste and David in January and is now named Ben. Ben is glowingly described as simply **magnificent!** Every day is a new day for him, and he continues to make baby steps in his adjustment to household living. He has an older sheltie brother named Luke who he occasionally follows around. He has not bonded with Luke, but he is bonded with Celeste and David. In quiet times, he will snuggle up with them. He gracefully trots in the yard and will go and touch a tossed ball but won't return with it. Like some of the other collies from this rescue, Ben suffered from some gastrointestinal issues but is now on prescription food and is doing well. Overall, Ben is doing quite well and has found the patient owners that he needs to be the dog that he was destined to become.

Mercer County Collie Rescue Update

Bandit

Bandit is one of our more challenging collies from this rescue, and with a number of behavioral quirks. Still, he is a collie with not a mean bone in his body and he wants to be by his human. He is very sensitive to his foster's mood and surroundings. He is still skittish with loud noises but calms quickly. Occasionally, he will play with his collie buddy, Nina but normally when the fosters are not around.



Bandit is still very shy about being approached and touched, but he will approach his fosters, Kevin and Wendy, and allow petting. He flinches when a hand is put over his head, but this is possibly due to his poor eyesight. He will hesitantly greet Kevin or Wendy at the door but wants to sniff before any physical touching. Strangely, he initially did not want to move around unleashed in the backyard. He is now going out in the backyard with a two-foot lead around his neck, no human attached to the other end, and walk with his fosters sometimes getting as far away as 15 feet! We call these baby steps. He will stay up until the last human goes to bed, then he will put himself in the crate and wait for the door to be closed. Bandit is looking for a patient adopter to continue his training.

Mercer County Collie Rescue Update

Windsor

Windsor is one of our two remaining un-adopted collies. However, his current foster, Dawn is working with him and may adopt him. Windsor is a sweet boy, but after months in Dawn's care, he is still struggling with extreme stress and daytime accidents. He is eating well and has put on some weight and is making small steps in the right direction. He has three safe zones: Dawn's bed upstairs, the couch, and the bed under the dining room table, which is next to his kennel and is typically kept closed to "force" him to interact more. Dawn normally leashes him to get him to move from these spots or take him outside. In a big step, for him, he recently started to move from the dog bed to the couch or upstairs on his own when Dawn is in the kitchen or sitting on the couch. His favorite place now is Dawn's bed. She blocks the stairs during the day to keep him downstairs to be social. A few months ago, he started hanging out outside for half the night and destroyed anything he could find in the yard. He is not destructive in the house at all. He struggles with going outside on his own during the day for potty time. After he spends a few hours outside in the dark, sometimes even sleeping out there, he comes up to bed. Dawn is unsure why he is comfortable out there at night but not during the day. If Dawn does not take him out on the leash every few hours during daylight hours, he will have an accident in the house. He is not curious, does not play with toys, and is not treat driven. The closest he gets to snuggling is lying against Dawn in bed.



Our Training Challenge Jax

We were approached about taking in a two year old handsome sable rough coat collie named Jax. The current owner had Jax for several months and he had displayed very troubling aggressive behavior with other dogs and cats. The current owner was at her wits end and while she wanted to keep Jax, she did not feel that she could handle him in her current household. Among other things, she regularly watched additional small dogs. As it turns out, the owner had gotten Jax from a couple in Oklahoma who had not trained or worked with him, and he was kept outside much of the time.

Jax was obviously a purebred rough coat collie and given our policy of accepting all purebred collies and shelties, we felt that Jax should be brought into the program. But, given the aggressive feedback, we did not feel we had a suitable foster for him. So, what do we do? We sent out an email to adjoining collie rescues for their input on solutions. Unfortunately, all we got back were “good luck” messages and general words of support. We also put out a fostering plea for Jax but had no takers. We were struggling to identify an option for Jax. Luckily, we found out about the Specialty K-9’s Training Program at the Cottonwood Pet Resort in Alamogordo, New Mexico. They run a three-week in-house training program that our local director was familiar with, and she had good things to say about them. However, the cost would not be cheap at \$3,000. Still, Jax needed work to be adoptable. Sheri Thomas, the lead trainer, did an assessment on Jax and felt that they could help him. Following the assessment, Jax undertook their comprehensive program in which they addressed human, dog, cat, and food aggression as well as basic obedience. Significant improvement was made with each, but you never know if the problem behavior is completely solved.



During this training period, we continued without success to identify a foster or adoption option for Jax once he was released from training.

During his training, Jax met a four-month-old boxer mix named Peanut. Jax and Peanut quickly built up a friendship and were training buddies. Peanut’s owners were longtime friends of the Specialty K-9 trainers and had a prior dog which was also trained by them years ago. Peanut’s owners had another dog, who was loved, but had recently passed. When the owners heard about Jax and his friendship with Peanut they decided to adopt Jax. These owners were going to pick up Peanut and spend a week at the facility learning necessary follow-up training techniques for both Jax and Peanut. What a win-win situation. Jax living with a buddy and owners committed to any necessary follow-up training. We are grateful for the training efforts of Specialty K-9’s and preparing Jax for his forever home.

Gypsy's Walkabout

One of our more recent and stressful experiences was when Gypsy, a new sheltie in our program, escaped from her foster and was on the run for a couple of nights. Gypsy's original owners apparently dumped her over the fence of a known El Paso area rescuer. The rescuer notified us, and we immediately got Gypsy into our program. Gypsy was middle-aged and very over-weight. We felt Gypsy would not be particularly mobile. Gypsy was placed in foster care in the Alamogordo NM area. She was regularly walked and seemed to tire relatively quickly. We did have an incident where she slipped her collar and took off. The foster mom was experienced enough to not go after her, but turned around, called her, and she returned.



Gypsy was ultimately transported with three other dogs to Phoenix and arrangements were made to quickly get her into a foster home. Gypsy was fitted with a martingale collar and microchipped. When Gypsy got to her foster home in northwest Phoenix, she unexpectedly slipped out of her martingale collar and took off. She quickly got out of sight and the process to find and catch her was on. The foster mom searched unsuccessfully through the first night. The next day, we mobilized additional volunteers to search and the foster mom contacted Humane Animal Rescue and Trapping Team (HARTT). HARTT is a group well known in the area for trapping lost dogs. During the day, they walked the neighborhood and accumulated some Gypsy sightings. Gypsy was hanging around the golf course and able to secure water from the course water features. Unfortunately, this area was home to several coyotes who were very comfortable and freely roamed the course.

Gypsy's Walkabout (cont)

Gypsy sightings were irregular but at least she was staying in the area. We just needed reliable and timely sightings to develop a plan. Late in the evening of the third day, we got a fresh sighting. It seemed as if Gypsy was preparing to leave the residential area as she was sighted on the main road entering the neighborhood. A four lane road that led to nearby commercial and retail establishments, and increased road traffic. We were quickly losing light. Luckily, one of our volunteers sighted Gypsy now bedded down right off the main road. HARTT quickly mobilized and secured several additional volunteers and necessary capture equipment. When the plan was ready, the capture process began. HARTT arranged for the fire department to stop traffic on both sides of Gypsy's area to eliminate traffic considerations from the capture. At the right time, HARTT volunteers pounced and Gypsy was netted. This middle-aged obese girl who had eluded capture for three days was safe and the nightmare was over. HARTT volunteer Nick is shown with the net he used to snare Gypsy.



We remain very grateful to the volunteers that searched for Gypsy and the HARTT services that were instrumental in her safe return. Gypsy's foster mom decided that Gypsy was not the right fit for her and we are currently reviewing adoption applications for Gypsy.



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COLLIE AND SHELTYE
RESCUE

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Do you have a story to tell about life with a Southwest Collie-Sheltie Rescue dog? Of course you do! Contact our editor, Christine Long, (cmlong100@gmail.com) and perhaps your story will find its way into one of our newsletters. Include close-up, well-lit photos in .jpg or .pdf format.

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