



Elaine's North Star Fund: A Legacy of Love and A Memorial to Honor Our Founder 2024 Centre Gives Campaign - May 8-9, 2024

An Open Letter to You -- Our Adopters, Supporters and Friends

In State College, people may remember Elaine (Skidel) Oleksa as a mild-mannered assistant to the School District Superintendent.

But in the greyhound world, Elaine was a force of nature.

In 1995, the dog racing industry was very different, and adoption groups were springing up around the country to place retired racing greyhounds in homes.

That year, Elaine had her first exposure to greyhounds. She and a friend had driven to Pittsburgh to pick up a greyhound. After hearing about people's adoption efforts and meeting this new dog, she was hooked on the greyhound story. She soon picked up another greyhound, Lily, which she kept as her own.

Shortly after Lily's arrival, she had a seizure and was attacked by their other dog. Lily was grievously injured, but Elaine whispered a promise in her ear. If Lily would fight to live, Elaine would dedicate her life to the greyhound cause. Lily lived, and Nittany Greyhounds was born.

Along with her husband, Joe, and some local greyhound owners, Elaine set up the 501c (3), the corporation, and the board and applied for a grant to renovate their garage into a kennel. When I spoke to Joe about it, he noted, "... and God forbid, we loved it. We had support from the local



community and businesses, which spurred us to go full steam ahead."

But that isn't the whole story. Over time, Elaine's sheer determination and leadership built Nittany Greyhounds into a premiere adoption group. She worked tirelessly and never took "no" for an answer.

Elaine took dogs that no one else wanted—the injured or unadoptable—and gave them a chance. That's also how she ended up with a dozen greyhounds of her own. The disadvantaged dogs often stayed with her, and her love transcended their issues.

Her enthusiasm was contagious and it wasn't long before friends and colleagues were adopting greyhounds, volunteering to do meet 'n greets and other community events, and assisting with the kennel they had built.

The team sometimes stood along the highway in the middle of the night waiting for the hauler. Then, they would set up an assembly line for bathing, flea-picking, ear-cleaning, and nail-cutting before tucking them into their kennels with a good meal and a warm, soft blanket. We were all on Team Greyhound, but really, we were all on Team Elaine. She inspired us, and nothing stopped us—blizzards, downpours—we loved every minute of it.

After retirement, Elaine moved to Arizona, but she remained intimately involved as a board member and our sounding board and guiding light.

Elaine was the most dedicated, energetic, stubborn, and sweetest



person I had ever known, and I was honored to take over the leadership position when she retired. Since Nittany Greyhounds' incorporation in 1997, we have placed more than 2,000 greyhounds in homes.

Elaine passed away in December. The light dimmed but is still strong; now, she is our North Star.

In her honor and in celebration of her life, Nittany Greyhounds is creating "Elaine's North Star Fund," specifically for the disadvantaged greyhounds we never turn away.

We invite you to stand with us -- and Elaine -- to fully fund her legacy.

I've stepped down from my leadership position at Nittany, but our new President, Bob Koch, is carrying on the mission. Elaine was one of my best friends, my mentor, and my inspiration. Join me this week in celebrating her. -- *Toni Duchi*

We are asking for your donation during this 2024 Centre Gives Campaign, our annual online fundraising event. Participating through the Centre Gives Foundation increases the money we receive through stretch pools and matching funds. In other words, every donation goes further. Elaine's North Star Fund means she will never be forgotten.
-- *Bob Koch*

Thank you so much for considering a donation to Elaine's North Star Fund. Scroll down for specific giving information.



Lily

CENTRE GIVES CAMPAIGN 2024

WHEN: Starts Wednesday, May 8, 8:00 a.m. - Ends Thursday, May 9, 8:00 p.m. This week!

WHERE: <https://centregives.org/organizations/69-nittany-greyhounds>

BONUS: We have chosen **2 POWER HOURS** within which we will compete for bonus dollars, for the most unique donors and most money donated. These will be from 7 to 8 p.m., **BOTH WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY** evenings. Shoot for making your donation during one of those two hours (or split your donation between the two days) so we can maximize our chances for extra bucks!

Keep in mind that even though this is a specific 2-day event, you are welcome to donate anytime on our website, www.nittanygreys.org, or even by simply mailing a check to Nittany Greyhounds, 30 TLD Circle, Port Matilda, PA 16870. You can even call us at 814-933-6981 and give us a credit card number.

Nittany Greyhounds is a registered charity and your donation may be tax deductible.

The entire Nittany Greyhound board, and our dozens of volunteers, thank you for participating in our mission to place retired ex-racers in homes.