
WISCONSIN WESTIE RESCUE

CHANGING LIVES ONE WESTIE AT A TIME

WISCONSINWESTIERESCUE.COM

Help! We Need You!

We hate to ask. We know every other charity in the country has already asked. We understand you can only help so many organizations, but WWR is only about five retired mill mamas' veterinary bills away from running out of money. We don't know, of course, if we will get any retired mill mamas or any other Westies in 2021, but we are nervous that if we get several mamas at once, as has happened so often in the past, we are not prepared and we won't have time to ask for your help.

You have heard this many times, in many ways, from other deserving organizations. In 2020, WWR was not able to hold any of our usual fundraisers except for the calendar sales. We do not yet know what events we will be able to hold in 2021. That said, a donation of ANY amount would be very welcome right about now. Checks made out to WWR may be sent to Greg VerPlank, 813 East Brandybrook Road, Wales, WI 53183. You may also donate via Paypal at the website (www.wisconsinwestierescue.com). If your employer matches your charitable giving, please contact your HR department, too. WWR is a 501(c)3 organization.

Thank you in advance for your continued support. The Westies would thank you, too, but we all know what an ungrateful bunch they can be.

Got a Great Idea to Raise Money? Let's Hear It!

WWR was founded in 1999. Since then we have relied on adoption fees, donations, grants, and fundraisers to pay the veterinary bills. We've held thrift sales, bazaars and bake sales, sold calendars and tee-shirts, raffled off Packers tickets, and sold coupon books in department stores. For several years one of our dedicated volunteers baked giant chocolate chip cookies and put them out at work with a donation jar. Our volunteers cooked for and staffed concession stands at dog shows and sold Westie paraphernalia at the Badger Kennel Club shows. We had a Westie night at a drag show in a bar. We've had silent auctions, online auctions, in person auctions. We've done everything we can think of short of making our own Westies get outside jobs as security guards, dogsled teams, and kitty baby-sitters.

Mostly the same old (and getting older) volunteers have thought up, planned, and executed all of the above. We NEED fresh ideas. We NEED fresh blood! We challenge you to come up with some new ideas for fundraisers or to come up with a new location for an old fundraiser (e.g., a thrift sale in Milwaukee or a bazaar in Wausau). We are seriously interested in new volunteers to plan and execute a fundraising event. Got an idea? Let's hear it!

Contact Greg VerPlank at westies@wi.rr.com for WWR Board approval of event ideas.

Biggie and Smalls by Amy Wolfgram

Those of you who know me know that I normally write funny, fluffy pieces for the newsletter. I'm doing something a little different for this piece; I thought it was only fair to give you all a little warning going in. I've been with WWR for about twenty years now and I've seen a lot--not everything, because just when we think Rescue has seen it all, something new pops up. (Hello, pandemic, I'm talking to you.) But I've been around long enough to understand that when we sign up for fostering we have to agree to take both the sweet and the sour. This journey with Biggie and Smalls has been all of that and then some. Here's their story.

"There are two Westies at MADAAC, can we help?" Those words came in an email mid-February. WWR had been closed for months due to the pandemic. We had not been asked to take any dogs in forever and suddenly there were two that needed us. And oh, how they needed us. The two dogs that were at MADAAC (the animal control shelter in Milwaukee) had been abandoned. They were estimated to be ten and thirteen years old, both males. One was not neutered, and we had no health information on either dog. Both were shaggy and unkempt, in desperate need of a bath and a haircut. Both were also terribly overweight, likely as a result of having been fed people food rather than dog food. The ten-year-old weighed in at twenty-seven pounds and the thirteen-year-old tipped the scales at thirty-five pounds.

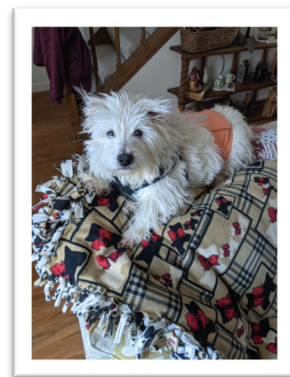
The larger, older dog I named Biggie because, seriously, he was just big. For context, thirty-five pounds is the equivalent of a preschooler, or one of those giant bags of dog food at the pet store. Biggie was the Andre the Giant of Westies. I digress, but you get the picture--Biggie was a chunky boy.



Sadly, Biggie started to show us that he had some underlying health problems almost as soon as he got to my house. Within twenty-four hours of arriving he was at the ER vet, having serious shortness of breath and lethargy. He got excellent care and medication, and had about a week at home before he started to exhibit more symptoms that sent us back to the ER, where he was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension and a grade 4 heart murmur. Biggie had a few more days resting at home before crossing the Rainbow Bridge on March 11, 2021.

Smalls, the other Westie (because, you know, smaller than Biggie!), continues to foster with me. He is a delightful little squirt, but we still have a way to go before he is ready to be adopted. Smalls is working through his very selective people food palate and is learning to eat dog food again. I've been joking that we really need to get McDonalds to sponsor us because this dog will do some shady, shady stuff for a Big Mac. He remains unconvinced as to the nutritional value of kibble!

The situation with Biggie absolutely breaks my heart. This was an incredibly sick dog. Biggie couldn't walk across the room without getting out of breath, he couldn't walk outside, he was in pain, and just wanted to sleep twenty plus hours a day. For a dog who obviously had been overeating, the only food I could get him to tolerate was small portions of cooked chicken/rice/baby food. He spent his last days medicated and gasping for breath, yet just so sweet and soaking up any love you gave him. This is no life for a pet, or for any animal. WWR exists for this reason--saving lives, one Westie at a time. There's no way to know if we could have made a difference for Biggie if we'd had a chance to get to him sooner, but we had no choice but to help him at the point where he was.



One last thing--I'm totally and unabashedly going to hit you up for donations, and I'm not going to be sorry for it. I did warn you at the beginning!! As I mentioned, Rescue has been closed because of the pandemic for about a year. That means our avenues for fundraising have been effectively cut off, as well. Among other things, (continued next page...)

(...continued) we canceled the Holiday Bazaar in Eau Claire last fall which has always been one of our largest fundraisers. Things are starting to open up again, but at the time of this publication we are not sure if we will be able to hold any events in 2021 so funding is very much top of mind.

And I get it, I know you're saying well, we didn't have any dogs so why do we need money? Well, here it is in black and white--at the time of this writing, we've spent close to \$3000 on just these two dogs and the hits keep coming. Smalls still needs to be neutered and have his ears cleaned, plus any other things that may come up between now and his adoption. These little guys have been really, really expensive dates--they ordered an appetizer AND dessert and I'm going to guess that Smalls left his wallet in his other pants!

Guys, I know it's a pandemic. I know people are out of work and we're all tired and we're all a little short on sunshine and unicorns these days. But--WWR is here for dogs like Biggie. It's here for dogs like Smalls. It's here for that dog lying at your feet, on your couch, or at the Rainbow Bridge welcoming Biggie home. If you can, please donate. Please volunteer. Please foster. Please recruit a new member. (Ask my family how that works!!) WWR is an amazing family that I am proud to be a part of. Please help us to continue one Westie at a time.

A great big personal thank you goes out to Susan for your help in providing jailbreak/transport to the boys, to Paul and Cari for letting us hijack your driveway for WWR business for the umpteenth time, to Kris and Tom for dog-sitting services, and to Barbara, Cheryl, and Greg for your unending support in this fostering journey. An additional thank you goes to all of you in WWR who have ever walked a dog home for us. It's a tough thing we ask of you, but you so graciously rise to the occasion.

Looking for a Forever Home



As we mentioned, Smalls still has a little way to go before he is ready to be offered for adoption. He is scheduled to be neutered at the end of March, and he has got some dirty ears that the vet is working on cleaning up. Because he is not neutered, Smalls does wear a belly band and we are not sure if this will continue after his surgery. Once he is ready for adoption, we are recommending Smalls for a home where he can be an only child. We prefer he have no other furry siblings of any kind (cats, etc.) as he really seems to think of them as appetizers!! Smalls has some separation anxiety, so he will do best if someone can be home with him at least part of the day. Like so many of us, he is working on his weight, so he is going to need to join you on those long walks and stay active! If you think you might be the one for Smalls, please drop his foster mom, Amy Wolfram, a note at llbj77@gmail.com

Call For 2022 Calendar Photos: Deadline May 15 2021

We are once again looking for your best Westie photos for our 2022 benefit calendar. This has been one of our favorite fund-raising activities and everyone loves to see all of the photos of our rescued Westies, Westie mixes and their siblings!

Please email photos (do not compress photos, please) to aroooo@charter.net OR snail mail photos to 1332 Armstrong PL, Eau Claire WI. 54701. We are happy to return photos if requested.

We do have some remaining 2021 available for the low price of \$10 which includes shipping. Email us for availability!

Deadline for photo submission is May 15, so please don't delay!

What Makes a Permanent Foster Westie

Most of the Westies that come into WWR arrive in a foster home, get veterinary care, are loved up, sometimes fattened up, sometimes thinned down, and their behavior assessed. Then the WWR Adoption Coordinator starts contacting prospective adopters that seem like a good match based on the foster family's assessment of the Westie's personality. But now and then we welcome into WWR a very senior Westie that may be both hearing and vision impaired. Or upon veterinary examination we learn that this Westie is terminally ill and really requires hospice care. Sometimes the Westie in question will require such very expensive ongoing medications or treatments that the average adopter would not consider taking on that responsibility.

When a such a situation occurs, the WWR Board will make the decision to look for a permanent foster home for the Westie. WWR willingly accepts the ongoing cost of veterinary care, but this alone does not meet all of the Westie's needs: he also needs a loving home, daily care which may be extensive given her medical situation, regular transport to the clinic, and a caring person to help him take that final walk home. Those foster families who volunteer to give a Westie a permanent foster home are the most cherished and respected volunteers we have.

At this time, we have two permanent foster Westies in our care, Georgie and Maisy. Please see their stories below and doff your hat to Jane and Peter Olk and to Dawn and Mark Schepcke for their long-term care of our two most recent permanent foster Westies.

We understand what a huge commitment it is to foster a Westie with serious medical issues and perhaps a very limited number of days left to lie in the sun. If you are interested in volunteering to be a permanent foster home, please contact Barbara Peden, WWR Volunteer Coordinator (aroooo@charter.net or phone 715-514-8681).

Meet Maisy by Dawn Schepcke

My name is Maisy. I am what is called a *permanent foster*. I have been living with my foster mom for about four years now, and boy, this being rescued stuff is AMAZING! You see, I came into rescue with a bunch of other dogs. When I got to my foster home, my foster mom noticed that I couldn't go for walks like most dogs do because I got really short of breath and I overheated really fast. As a result, the nice people at Westie Rescue drove me all the way to the Twin Cities more than once to visit a special doctor to see if they could do something to help me get better.



The bad news was that I have a collapsing larynx, which is not something that can be routinely fixed with surgery. (Editor's note: The University of Minnesota School of Veterinary Medicine surgeon did not recommend surgery due to the complexity of Maisy's collapsing larynx and the life-long risks of pneumonia.) That meant I could not be un-fostered, or go to a new forever home. But that was just fine with me you see, because my foster mom decided that I was such a special girl that I could just stay with her the rest of my doggie time on earth! I have it REALLY good as you can see from my picture. I love to take naps on the people bed. They even let me use the pillows to prop up my head because I can breathe better that way when I am sleeping. I also like to sit with my dad in his chair when we watch something called TV.

Westie Rescue continues to pay my vet bills and other expenses for as long as I live. Isn't that super nice of them? I sure appreciate all the wonderful people that help them out so special dogs like me can live a happy life in our forever (foster) homes. My forever mom says I am not even the only special forever foster! Now that is amazing. I thought no one could be as special as me!

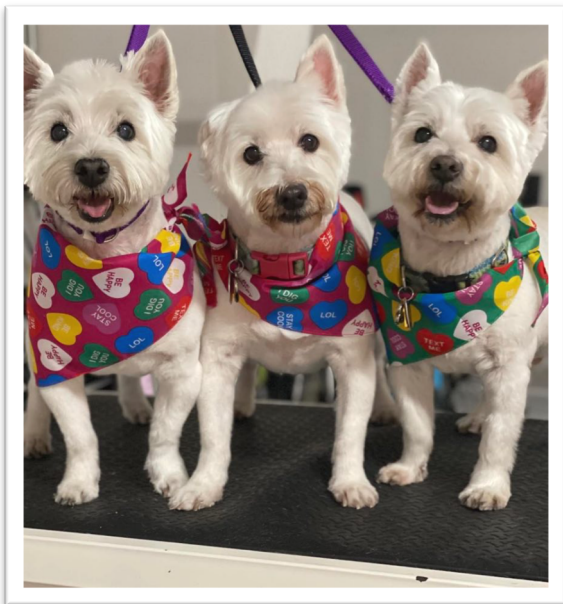
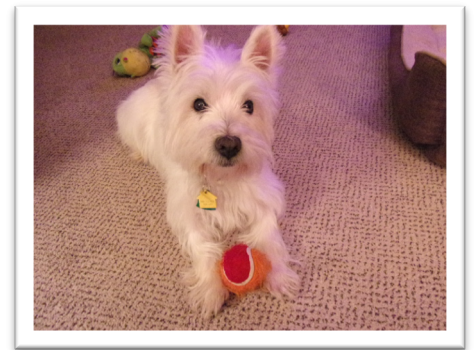
Meet Georgie by Jane Olk

Hi, everyone! My name is Georgie and this is my story:

I was found in Milwaukee in the fall of 2019. Nobody was trying to find me, so the MADACC got in touch with the Wisconsin Westie Rescue and my new adventure began....

While I was being fostered, I was having a lot of problems with my urine concentration and it was determined, after much testing, that I had diabetes insipidus. For those of you who are not familiar with this, it is not a sugar diabetes, but a condition that is characterized by excessive thirst/drinking and the production of enormous volumes of extremely dilute urine. I didn't know it at the time, but my future new mom was watching me on Facebook and was considering adopting me. She and Dad had already had a sweet Westie, Abby, who they had adopted through the WWR with diabetes insipidus so they were familiar with the medications and the struggles that I could face. The only condition was that I had to get along with my sister, Neely.

So in November of 2019 they came and got me from my foster home. I was nervous at first, but I made my sister, Neely, as well as my sister, Gracie, (also adopted through WWR) love me!! In fact, Neely loves me so much that Mom says she has changed so much for the better! We play every day and I have this great little game I like to play with my sisters, especially Neely. Mom calls it my "little bull imitation" because I paw the ground and pounce at the girls like a bull. All the while I am making lots of noises, including barking, to get their full attention!



Even though I love my new family, I still have many health issues. Mom and Dad say I am a big mystery. After a couple of months, they noticed that I started falling down and that I walk funny. After many visits to the vet and a couple of ultrasounds, it was determined that I really didn't have diabetes insipidus. What I do have is a large mass on my liver, a probable congenital neurological issue that makes my back legs not work so well, hence my falling down, poor eyesight, and poor hearing. I am currently going to be tested for some heart issues as my heart rate has been very high. I also take medicine to keep my bile moving from my gallbladder and, oh, I almost forgot...I had a large bladder stone removed while I was being fostered! I am a loveable wreck!!

Since I have had so many issues, the WWR asked my Mom and Dad if they would permanently foster me. They, of course, said yes and the rest is history! We are a happy family of five and everyone agrees they

don't know what they ever did without me! I am a happy boy who falls down a lot, but I pick myself up and keep going. I have also learned about this great thing called "snuggle time!" I just love to snuggle in with a comfy blanket and my Mom or Dad! I also have a favorite pastime...I go outside and lie in wait in the weeds of the shoreline of the lake where we live and watch for my neighbor's ducks to swim by! I love to sneak attack them from afar and scare them out into the lake. I bark and I pounce and I bark at them!

In spite of all of my issues, I love my new life and I am so thankful the WWR took me in! I am going to live every day of my life to its fullest!

Wisconsin Westie Rescue

c/o Jean Anderson
4325 Tottenham Road
Charlotte, NC 28226

Take a Look!

WWR has a fresh new website (www.wisconsinwestierescue.com) with charming Westie photos and bright colors. Thanks to Jean Anderson for taking on the website task while continuing to edit/print/distribute the WWR newsletter. Now we have our own dedicated news department! Be sure to check it out for upcoming events and maybe even available Westies should we ever have any again.

We also want to thank Barbara Peden for the many years she developed and maintained the WWR website, keeping us informed of Westie intake and adoptions and many other things, as well. Thank you, also, to husband Blaine Peden for his help in the early days with the massive amounts of work to get the website up and running after inheriting the job abruptly due to the previous volunteer's sudden departure. And no thanks at all to the Peden Westies who impeded website progress every chance they got.

No Picnic in 2021

Due to lingering COVID concerns, we will not be hosting a picnic in 2021. Hopefully, in another year we will all feel much freer to congregate and celebrate our love for Westies.

In the next newsletter we will be asking for your input for future picnics. WWR has hosted summer picnics over our twenty plus years, first starting out as occasional happenings every few years. As our number of adoptive families grew, picnics became yearly events. Usually the day after a picnic we are already getting inquiries about where and when the next picnic will be happening.

However, due to the fact WWR has adoptive families in four states (Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota) having a location that works for everyone is a challenge! One lament we often hear is the distance to travel to attend one of the picnics. While having a larger gathering for all is fun, perhaps we want to look to having smaller gatherings throughout the state with occasional larger events. We'll be setting up a picnic committee down the road to address some issues and to help with planning these events. Let us know if you'd like to be a part of this committee by emailing us at aroooo@charter.net.

