



# Home for Life

ANIMAL SANCTUARY

Summer - Fall

2011

## Photographer: Mark Luinenburg

Except where noted, all photographs in this edition of the newsletter were taken by Mark Luinenburg, a professional photographer from Minneapolis who donates his time and talent to the creation of our newsletter. Most of the photos on our website were also taken by Mark. Mark has traveled the world on assignment for National Geographic Adventure magazine, GQ, ESPN Magazine and Health magazine. Purina recently sent him to numerous cities across the U.S. for the second year in a row, photographing pets and their owners. The ads for Purina One have appeared in numerous national magazines.

Photo, here and on the Cover by Mark Luinenburg, taken at the Apple River, Star Prairie, WI.

Home for Life® is a nationally recognized sanctuary that provides loving, lifetime care for dogs and cats who are unable to find homes due to old age, disabilities, or medical or behavioral issues. The special needs animals of Home for Life® come to us from all over the United States and many foreign countries. In addition, Home for Life® offers several community outreach programs that expand the impact of the sanctuary's mission of kindness and compassion under the umbrella of the Home for Life® Pet Peace Corps. Our mission is to establish a national network of sanctuaries where special needs animals that are homeless, will be treated with respect and provided with a quality life.

Home for Life® is a non-profit, tax exempt 501(c)3 corporation as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. Home for Life® funded entirely by donations from our supporters. We receive no money from any governmental entity. Our administrative staff, including our Board of Directors and Executive Director, is unpaid.

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This newsletter made possible thanks to the generosity of

Robert M. Weyerhaeuser

Bert Home for Life®'s St. Bernard, swims in the Apple River with Home for Life® Animal Care Specialist Jamie Petrie.

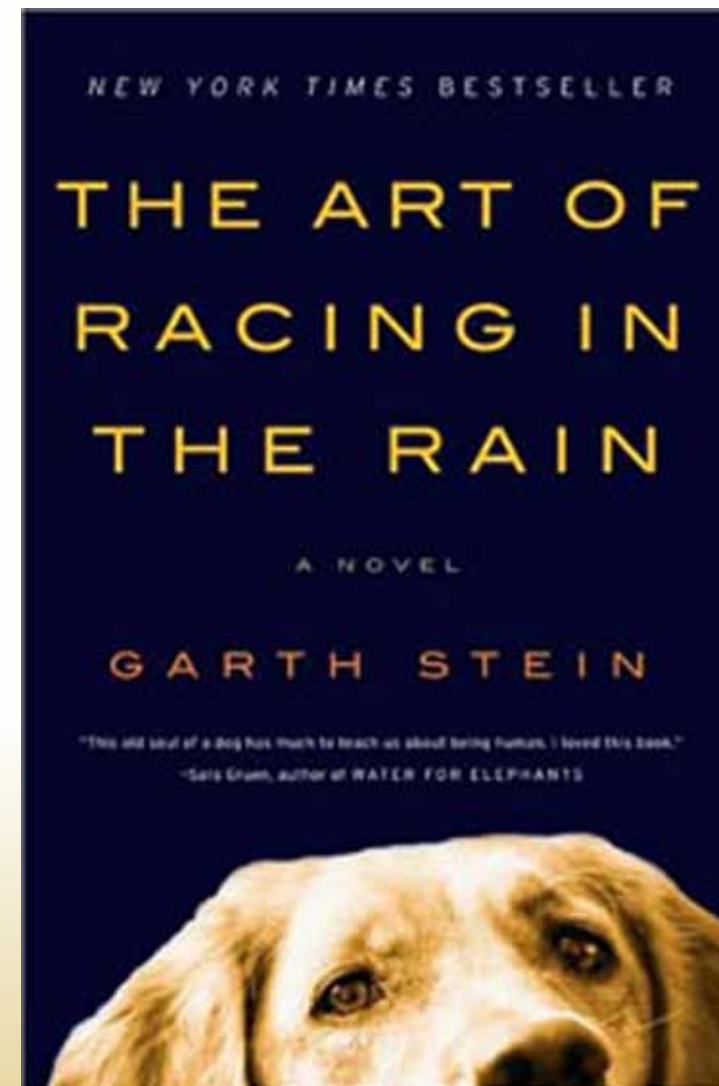
Bert, came to Home for Life® after being rescued weighing only 50lbs. He was diagnosed with a pancreatic insufficiency disorder. Swimming helps this giant keep his muscles strong and joints flexible.



# Home for Life®'s Fall Fancy Feast: November 11, 2011

Mirth, Great food and Great Company

The **Fall Fancy Feast**, our annual gala, is set for Friday November 11, 2011 at the Metropolitan in Minneapolis. We are thrilled to welcome as our special guest Garth Stein, author of **The Art of Racing in the Rain**, a New York Times best seller, told in the voice of Enzo the dog, which is to be made into a movie starring actor Patrick Dempsey for release in early 2012. Tickets are \$100 per person. The elegant evening will feature spectacular silent and live auctions, wonderful wines and buffet dinner, music and our fun loving, famous dog parade.



**The Art of Racing in the Rain** is a heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, love, loyalty, and hope, as told by Enzo, the family's dog, who dreams of one day having opposing thumbs.

If you haven't read the book, you have until November 11 to do so, and bring your copy to the gala for a signing!

For more information and for reservations for this event contact us at: info@homeforlife.org or 800-252-5918



# Home for Life® animals Pay It Forward

The Animal Rescue Site and Greater Good Foundation Support Home for Life®'s Sit Stay Heal Hospice initiative



Home for Life®'s **Sit Stay Heal** program's hospice initiative provides pet therapy to hospice patients. This part of the **Sit Stay Heal** program began in 2009 and is a collaboration with Asera Hospice, a provider of hospice service throughout the Twin Cities. The goal of our this program is to provide solace, companionship and joy to these most vulnerable of patients who are dying and determined to be in the last six months or less of their life.

Hospice is not a place but rather a frame of mind and a strategy of helping patients who are terminally ill. This **Sit Stay Heal** program was a big commitment for Home for Life® and for the HFL volunteers we recruited for the initiative. Unlike our other programs, which are driven by the facilities we visit, this **Sit Stay Heal** program is responsive to the individual patient. With this program, we don't visit the facility—we visit and commit to the particular

patient. We do that knowing the patient is dying. Each volunteer, along with the same Home for Life® dog, consistently visits the hospice patient every week. Patients qualify for hospice care when they have received a diagnosis which will be terminal within six months. The patients we are working with have requested pet therapy when they enter into hospice care. Touching bonds are formed between the patient and the HFL volunteer and the HFL dog who visit the patient weekly for the last weeks of their life.

Through the enlightened hospice movement, we are grateful that Home for Life® can offer this comfort and happiness of the companionship of the HFL dogs to critically ill, terminal patients. We are also grateful to the **GreaterGood.org Foundation** and the **Animal Rescue Site** for providing financial support for this heartfelt work.

The compassion and dedication of the Home for Life® volunteers who participate in the Sit Stay Heal Hospice initiative is remarkable. Asera provides thorough training for the HFL volunteers who participate in the Sit Stay Heal hospice program and also support when the inevitable loss occurs.

Sanctuary dogs who currently participate in the hospice program include Sammy, a blond cockapoo, Jack, a rat terrier mix, Harry a larger than life maltese and Minnie, a miniature schnauzer. Jack and Minnie came from abusive situations and Minnie, and Sammy have struggled with behavior problems while Harry had severe health problems when admitted to Home for Life®. The small dogs seem to be the popular ones among the current hospice patients: they like to be able to hold them and cuddle with them. The dogs can also lay beside the patients on their hospital bed. Even though Sammy, Jack, Harry and Minnie are very boisterous at the sanctuary, they seem to realize that when they are with their patient, and are subdued and sweet.

Ironically, though the survival of the Home for Life® animals no longer depends on their value to people, whether they are appealing or adoptable, they end up helping people in many real ways. Our hospice program illustrates our conviction that at risk animals can be incredibly effective in reaching out to the lonely, fragile and forgotten members of our society.



Home for Life® volunteer Sara Beigle visits her hospice patient with Sammy and Minnie.

## About Minnie:

**Minnie**, a miniature schnauzer, was surrendered to HFL with Jack, a rat terrier mix, and Fritz a standard schnauzer. All three suffered terrible abuse in their Northern Minnesota home. Fritz, a spirited puppy, suffered the brunt of the abuse.

All three dogs belonged to a couple whose lives had degenerated into drug and alcohol abuse. Perhaps at one time they had cherished their pets, but they hadn't shown the animals love for quite a while. Their "mom" suffered the effects of drug use and lost the capacity to look after her dogs. Her partner apparently had a sadistic streak, which he demonstrated towards the dogs, especially Fritz, when he took over their care. The wife seemed unwilling or unable to intervene to stop the abuse.

The dogs were kept in a small, outdoor dog run with no shelter. When HFL learned of the situation, it was the middle of a typically brutal Northern Minnesota winter. The run was completely covered in frozen dog feces and urine. The man fed the dogs one small dish once a day. He watched as the three competed for the tiny meal.

The man was particularly cruel to Fritz and beat him when he saw him go to the bathroom in the kennel. Sometimes, he abused Fritz for no obvious reason at all. All three dogs were severely underweight and the schnauzers had long, matted, filthy hair. They would

cuddle together to try to keep warm. It was obvious that the man was cruelly sending them to a slow and painful death by exposure, dehydration and starvation.

Finally, a witness could not stand the situation any longer. Not a dog lover himself, he still felt the need to take action. He called Zoë, a friend of our supporter Sabra. Zoë asked the person to see if the couple would voluntarily surrender the dogs that they clearly did not care about anymore. Amazingly, they agreed.

Officially unreported as abusers, it is sad that these people are still free to adopt and abuse another pet if the whim takes them. Still, at least Fritz, Jack, and Minnie were headed to warmth and security! As our friend Sabra noted, these three dogs never have to be at risk again.

All three dogs bear scars from their mistreatment, particularly the schnauzers. Fritz is still a submissive wetter who trembles and panics if he leaves the sanctuary for any reason. Minnie and Jack had enjoyed decent care early in their lives and were able to rebound somewhat.

Minnie is still shy and wary of new situations. She seldom leaves Jack's side. Jack, a sensitive rat terrier, is quiet and watchful, but eager to put his past behind him. He thoroughly enjoys all aspects of life at the sanctuary and loves to visit nursing homes with our volunteers.

## About Sammy:

**Sammy** is an adorable young neutered cockapoo. When he came to Home for Life®, his coat was very long and unkempt, but once properly groomed, his heritage—a perfect blend of cocker spaniel and poodle—could easily be seen.

Sammy was a pet in a family with several small children. The rambunctious household, with the activity of the kids and their friends, set Sammy on edge. There were incidents of his protectively nipping at some of the youngsters as they ran yelling and screaming around the house.

Unwittingly, the family gave the dog to a local humane society and was assured that the shelter would find the dog a good home. However, when the family called to see if a new home had been found for Sammy, the shelter informed them that he would not be offered for adoption due to his background of nipping when stressed. The shelter intended to put him down as "unadoptable."

The mother felt guilty and was distraught that they had unintentionally delivered Sammy to his death. They had tried to provide a good home for Sammy, and to see him end up dead was never their intent. The shelter refused to release the dog back to his family claiming the mother had relinquished ownership and that he was now their property.

The mother began frantically calling to see if anyone could intervene on Sammy's behalf. HFL agreed to take Sammy if the mother could get him released to our custody. The humane society agreed to surrender Sammy to HFL knowing that he would be safe and would not hurt anyone because we would protect him from the kind of stimuli that seemed to push him over the edge.

While Sammy is not big on children, he loves older people and has enjoyed visiting the seniors in the several nursing homes we visit each month. Their quiet energy and the attention and love they lavish on him suits him to a tee. He loves to sit on one of the resident's laps for petting and treats.

Sammy needed the right environment to turn the corner. Under all that hair was a beautiful dog and behind that feisty demeanor was a sweet boy with a lot of love to give. 🏠





Leo takes a joyful leap this winter. (Right) Leo takes a swim in the Apple River on a beautiful day this summer.



# SEASON'S GREETINGS

Snow, Sun and Swimming at Home for Life®

Home for Life® is located in Star Prairie, Wisconsin, just over the St. Croix River from Stillwater, Minnesota, and we experience four distinct seasons. Winter *seems* like the longest season, lasting from approximately mid November through the end of March. At Home for Life® we experience the range of temperatures with each season, and so must cool our buildings when the summers are hot and humid and heat them in the winter. While all our buildings are heated and air conditioned, including all of our 15 townhouses, they are spread out over several acres so the staff spends a lot of time outdoors, going in and out of the buildings to check on the animals every hour. Coping with the extremes of the weather, and the elements is a big challenge of the job.



Tom smiles as he runs into the snow.



Sheba in the snow.



The winter of 2011 was especially tough: for example, one morning in January the air temperature registered -30 degrees. That day, it was still below zero at noon. With the wind chill, it was oppressive and dangerous to be outside for any length of time.

Each townhouse and the apartments of our dog buildings have attached runs with one or more gates, as do the 4 fenced meadows we use to exercise the dogs: after a snowfall, each gate must be shoveled out so we can swing them open and closed. To access the property after a heavy snowfall, the long driveway, and all the areas in front of the buildings must be plowed and paths to all the buildings and townhouses shoveled or plowed with a snow blower.

One day last winter with over two feet of new snow in less than 24 hours, we plowed out the driveways and roads TWICE, at 1 am in the morning and again 9 hours later when the snowfall finally stopped. Winter went on so long, with the cold and heavy snows, that it seemed like it would never end. It became almost impossible to remember what the summer weather was like just a few months ago, let alone imagine that it will ever be sunny and warm again.

The warm months can have their own challenges including high temperatures with corresponding humidity. Although all our buildings and townhouses are temperature controlled, even air conditioning cannot take the edge off the double whammy of high temperatures and humidity which leaves the staff and animals alike prostrated with exhaustion. The only way to deal with seasonal extremes is

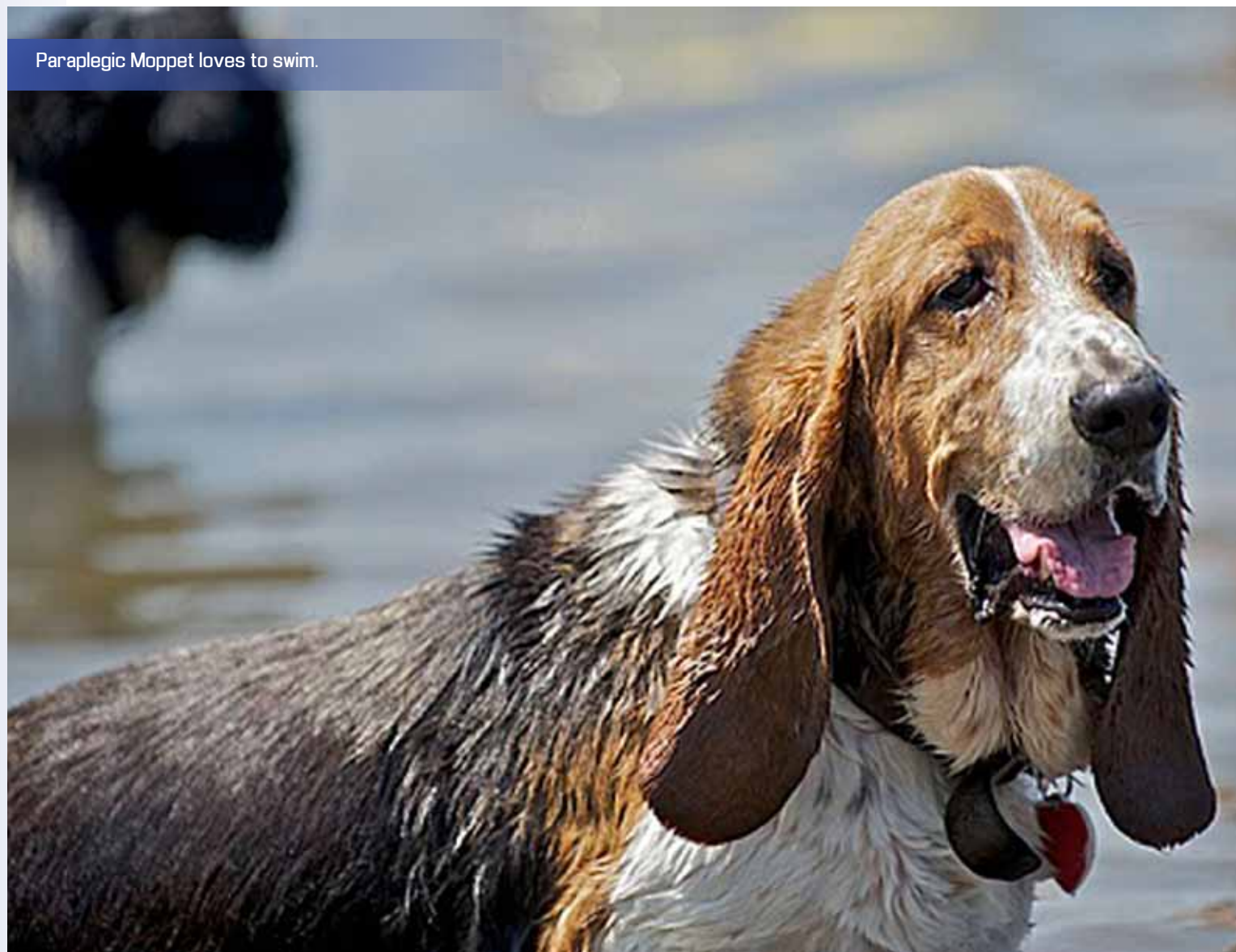
to think positive and dress for the weather. All seasons offer their own opportunities to provide great care for the animals. In the winter, the snow cover provides superb cushioning to put a spring in the step of the dogs who have suffered abuse and orthopedic injuries or are simply senior with old bones. For example **Leo**, an Australian shepard mix from Colorado, referred by the Handicapped Pets organization, had suffered a broken back after being beaten and possibly being hit by a car. Paraplegic when surrendered to Home for Life® last year, Leo initially used a cart to get around town. With time, good care and swimming therapy Leo has regained mobility though his gait will never be normal. With the abundant snow cover from this past winter, dogs like Leo can run and leap despite their past physical trauma.

Similarly, senior dogs like **Sheba**, a husky mix and **Tom** a shepard/dingo mix find the snow supplies the support they need for their world weary bones so even as larger dogs, they can enjoy running and playing as they did when younger. Sheba and Tom were given to a shelter as 11 year olds when their owner had to relocate to a new home where they could not accompany her. The shelter and owner contacted us because the two older dogs were there deteriorating, trembling with fear and anxiety in the kennels and unable to eat. They were larger dogs yet a bonded pair who would not have thrived had they been separated. Home for Life® was full but the dire plight of Tom and Sheba persuaded us to find a way to make room for them in the late fall of 2010. Sheba is a beautiful black and tan with whiskers and Tom is a striking chocolate brown with white socks. Upon arriving at Home for Life® both dogs immediately sensed that they were in a safe environment where they were cherished and would not be separated. They relaxed and regained their hearty appetites. Getting to run in our fenced meadows year around is just a great bonus for them since they have come to Home for Life®.

## Swimming

In summer, sometimes the only relief from the heat and humidity is to be found in the nearby Apple River. There, the dogs love to take a swim to cool off. The water provides more than an opportunity seek relief from hot temperatures: for our paraplegic dogs and those who have orthopedic problems, swimming against the gentle current of the river provides a natural form of water therapy to allow them to exercise without stressing their joints and muscles. The water keeps them buoyant and weightless so they can build muscle, flexibility and strength without risking injury. Moreover, swimming is fun for the dogs and the staff alike.

The weather in our region is what we make of it. While its extremes poses challenges for caring for the animals opportunities are also created to enhance their quality of life. 🏠



Paraplegic Moppet loves to swim.



HFL Animal Care Specialist Melissa Hubred and Grace Splash.



Jamie and Bert.



Bert and paraplegic Chesapeake Grace swim against the river current.



Moppet, Audrey and Christopher at the river.



HFL Animal Care Specialist Jeannie Schwartz help's spaniel mix Prince swim.



Doberman Juliet – look at her now!

# Making a Difference

Home for Life®'s  
Emergency Medical Care  
Fund Makes the Difference  
for Many Special Animals

*When love and skill work together,  
expect a masterpiece.* – John Ruskin

As one of the Country's only care for life sanctuaries, Home for Life® is often called upon to help desperate animals whose needs are beyond the scope or capacity of other shelters focused on adoption. Often other shelters will turn away animals with extraordinary medical needs, applying a triage philosophy to helping the most animals with limited resources. Occasionally a shelter will take in an animal with special medical needs, and then later recognize that the dog or cat will require on going, complex care that an adoption focused organization cannot provide.

In such situations, Home for Life offers another chance the "door number three" -for animals who are passed by for adoption but who can still live a quality life.

This winter Home for Life® spent a lot of time at veterinary hospitals with many animals who needed specialized medical care. In animal rescue and particularly working with a sanctuary, where we try to help the truly lost cause cases, we see the worst in people and also the most kind and generous people. The pet owners who bring their dogs and cats to veterinary specialists for care represent the most loving and dedicated of animal caretakers who will go to extraordinary lengths and expense to help their pets whom they love so dearly. It's not just that these people spend the dollars on their pet- you can tell that not all of them are wealthy-but you can see how extremely devoted they are to their dogs and cats-these pets are everything to them. Some of the dogs, are expensive and exotic pedigree purebreds but many, and certainly most of the cats, are not. These pets are lucky to have the devotion and sacrifice of these caretakers but it is hard to forget the many anonymous dogs and cats who are unwanted, unseen in shelters or rescues or abandoned will never have this effort made on their behalf. The only variable that seems to determine how resources will be directed on behalf of an animal in need seems is the degree to which an animal is cherished as unique and as an individual and whose caretakers, have invested themselves in their pets - they are part of their lives and their hearts.

*"To me you're still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a 100,000 other boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox, like a 100,000 other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world and to you, I shall be unique in all the world.*

–The Little Prince

Home for Life® had a number of desperate animals who needed our help this winter which is why were were at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Hospital so often. Frankie, is one of the several we helped this January. Named for his blue eyes, and also because he was saved near the birthday of Frank Sinatra, **Frankie** was found along a rural highway in Ohio. A concerned citizen saw him lying in the ditch unable to move. Three days later, the same good samaritan saw the dog again, still lying there, in 20 degree winter weather and decided to do something about the situation. He called the highway patrol who in turn call animal control. The animal control officers, along with the highway patrol,

recovered Frankie, who was unable to walk and in great pain. Evaluating his condition, the animal control and highway patrol officers estimated that the poor dog had been there as long as a week, somehow clinging to life without food or water and exposed to the winter elements. When recovered, he weighed just 30 lbs. He was neutered, but had no microchip.

Frank landed at the animal control shelter, where a kind volunteer learned of his situation. After checking the internet and newspapers, she determined that noone had lost or was looking for a neutered male Australian sheperd. The shelter gasses unwanted or unclaimed strays that volunteers cannot move to rescue and Frankie, who could not walk and was incontinent, was scheduled to be gassed when the required hold for stray animals expired.



Juliet at impound after being confiscated by police in a neglect case. She had been left outside in the brutal Minnesota weather with no shelter, water or food and was starving. Her right hind leg could not bear any weight, and she also suffered from demodectic mange.

Late on a Wednesday night in mid January, we received an urgent email from Paula and another volunteer she works with, a desperate email: if we could help Frankie, who was paraplegic and would need his bladder expressed, we had to let them know by 8 am Thursday morning or he would be put down. The volunteers said they would bring him to a veterinarian to be euthanized by lethal injection, so he would not have to be killed in a gas chamber at animal control. At this point the dog had had no additional medical care and had sat for more than a week, at least, with the terrible injuries. With less than 12 hours to gather any further information on the dog, his tempermant , or his medical status, we had to call it. Other rescues or shelters contacted by the volunteers had either not responded to pleas for help on Frank's behalf or had turned him down. Home for Life® decided to try to help Frank and told the volunteers to send him north to us. After travelling via **PilotsnPaws**, Frank at last made it to Home for Life® on the Sunday afternoon of that same week.

Once they knew that Frank would be coming to HFL, the Ohio volunteers sought some preliminary veterinary evaluations on his behalf, where it was learned that his

right femur had been fractured. The extent of any other injuries was unknown at the point he departed for Minnesota and Home for Life®. But all who met Frankie were impressed by his will to live and also his stoicism: despite his injuries he was very gentle and never tried to bite.

First thing Monday morning, Frank was off to our local vet who discovered that, in addition to the badly fractured femur, Frank had a dislocated left hip that was completely out of the socket. Because of the time that had elapsed since the injuries occurred, surgical intervention was necessary to correct the injuries. Frankie was put on pain control and kept quiet and off his feet. By Thursday, just a week after we had accepted him at HFL, Frankie was in surgery at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Medical Center where renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Betty Kramek, repaired both the right femur and dislocated hip. At this point, poor Frank had gone nearly two weeks with the terrible injuries, and the two ends of his right femur were completely out of alignment, with the muscles severely contracted. The hip socket of the left leg was filled with scar tissue and blood clots and again the muscles badly contracted. Dr Kramek elected to repair both injuries at once so he would be able to walk rather than risking further injury to either side. Frank's surgeries were done at the same time and both procedures were very successful, thankfully. He spent three days at the University recovering from surgery, before returning to Home for Life®.

Not much is known about Frankie's background but the vets estimated his age to be about 4 years judging from his teeth. Another interesting observation made by his veterinary nurses was that Frank is deaf. His lack of hearing may explain how he came to be hit by a car; he would not have been able to be aware of the oncoming cars from the sound of the motors or tires, especially at night. Frankie intently watches everything around him, and relies on his sight to follow directions and anticipate what is going to happen. But at night, if he was

abandoned, or lost and alone, he may not have been able to save himself from being hit by a car if he could not hear.

Since it was the beginning of the new year, we had money from the holiday donations we had received from many generous contributors who had directed their gifts to the **Emergency Medical Care Fund**. Thankfully, we had the funds available to help Frankie, and pay his veterinary bill at the University and at local clinic: the total: over \$4000. Frank is able to go to the bathroom on his own, and Dr. Kramek feels that he will be able to walk again after he recovers from surgery. Frankie does tend to walk with his right hind paw knuckled under due to the trauma of the accident and length of time he went without treatment. Our staff applied hotpacks to his hip and thigh and working with Frank doing physical therapy exercises to help his leg muscles regain extension and flexibility. This summer he also goes swimming at the Apple River when the weather is warm. Frankie is now best friends and roommates with another "January" rescue and member of the "Class of 2011" who benefitted from the Emergency Medical Care Fund: that is the tiny Doberman **Juliet** who was confiscated by the police in a neglect case and came to HFL with several medical problems.

Frankie's case raises an important question about animal rescue and the philosophy of our sanctuary with regard to the animals we help. Why direct so many resources to helping one single animal? That amount of money it took to repair Frank's injuries and allow him to live a pain free life and to walk again, we hope, could have been used to help several animals. Where resources are limited trying to do the most good for as many as possible is a legitimate approach to rescuing animals.

Home for Life® has always believed that helping animals in need and saving lives requires a multi-faceted approach. A focus on moving numbers of animals thru adoption addresses one aspect of the need. An exclusive focus on the numbers, however, will exempt many deserving animals from help. Sanctuaries like Home for Life® have a vital role to play if as many animals as possible are to be saved because a true sanctuary is created to focus on the individual animal and their unique needs. The current focus in animal welfare is on moving animals through the system to adoption and posting high adoption numbers. Dogs such as Frank and Juliet who fall outside the parameters of the 'adoptable' animal and who require a rescue to divert disproportionate resources to help them will not be served by the conventional current models offered by animal welfare. Frank was hours from losing his life when Home for Life® stepped forward to help him. Sanctuaries whose focus is on the individual animal provide a depth of care and a life saving, life affirming alternative for these special animals. 🏠



Frank, at Home for Life®, does not like cameras. He relies on his sight as he is deaf.



Best friends Juliet and Frank who were admitted to Home for Life® in January, 2011.



Frank at the local veterinary hospital the day after arriving at Home for Life® (Right) Frank swims in the Apple River with help from Jeannie



# A Destination Full of Hope

## Home For Life®'s International Rescues

This past year has marked a new phase for Home for Life®, and the recognition and awareness created by the sanctuary's mission and work. Home for Life®'s focus is on specialized, high-quality care for at risk animals—many of them disabled. These are animals that often are the first to be abandoned at shelters and rescues and the last to have any chance of finding a new home. With few organizations willing or able to take on the challenge of animals with special needs, word of the unique services provided by Home For Life® has spread through word of mouth and the internet, bringing the sanctuary to the attention of shelters and rescues from around the U.S and now, even internationally. In the last year, Home for Life® has accepted two dogs from Mexico, one from Saudi Arabia via Dubai and two from Thailand, all who were in desperate need of a second chance.

The obvious question is why Home for Life® would take dogs who live thousands of miles away, in another country. We're sure you'll agree after reading the dramatic stories of survival of our international rescues that we could not disregard them because of where they were born. We stretched to help them because we could not turn away. When it becomes easy to disregard

*“Love recognizes no barriers.  
It jumps hurdles, leaps fences,  
penetrates walls to arrive at  
its destination full of hope.”*

*—Maya Angelou*

suffering and desperate need, simply because of where it originates, Home for Life® will have lost sight of what we stand for. No matter where they came from, it was clear these dogs had no other options and needed our help.

Part of Home for Life®'s mission is showing what is possible- that animals like **indi**, **Nino**, **Kitchee**, **chok-dee** and **Leah** can live a great life if given the opportunity. Though these are just five dogs out of many that we helped, they are emblematic of the many animals who come to Home for Life®. These animals have nowhere else to turn.

### A DESTINATION FULL OF HOPE

Everywhere, there are many animals who deserve a chance and want to live but for whom adoption into a typical home is not an option.

While conventional shelters and animal rescues focus on “adoptable” dogs and cats, until Home for Life®, few opportunities were available for special needs animals. Home for Life®, “the third door” in animal welfare, provides a lifesaving and innovative alternative for animals who may never find an adoptive home but for whom euthanasia is premature and inhumane.



The irrepressable chok-dee

## THAILAND

**chok-dee** is from Thailand. (In Thailand, capitals are not used so their names are not capitalized.) He was named “chok dee”, which means lucky, by the policeman who rescued him. Both chok dee and indi are paraplegic, and were born street dogs. chok dee was found dragging himself along the street, covered with wounds, most likely having been hit by a car. Both dogs arrived in September from Phuket, Thailand to begin their new life at Home For Life®!

**indi** is still a puppy. At only 6 weeks old, a cruel kick left her a paraplegic due to a broken back. indi was rescued by a boy monk who witnessed the assault and intervened. The boy monk made sure indi got safely to the **Soidog.org** Rescue in Phuket before he left to go back to India to continue his studies. Thailand is a buddhist country so neither dog was at risk for being euthanized but their prospects for getting the care they needed to reach their potential and enjoy a comfortable and healthy life were minimal. Both dogs were cared for by the Soidog.org rescue, a wonderful no kill shelter in Phuket which cares for over 300 former streetdogs. They spay and neuter the dogs, and provide medical care. Then

they work diligently to place those that they can in great homes. Through their networking efforts, many of their dogs have found homes in England, many countries in Europe and in Australia and New Zealand. In the case of indi and chok dee, there was no prospect for a home for them due to their paralysis.

Thanks to the efforts of Soidog volunteer Diane Thurbon, an Australian national, donations were raised for the air fare for both dogs to fly to the United States. In September 2010, both dogs safely made the long journey from Bangkok Thailand, staying overnight in Amsterdam before flying the second leg to the United States where Home for Life® representatives met their flight in Minneapolis. indi was only 3 months old at the time of her journey but with the support of the intrepid and confident chok dee, she weathered the trip like a champ. chok dee thought the whole experience was a grand adventure and could not wait to get out of his crate upon his arrival to Minneapolis. The airlines took great care of both dogs and Soidog had the crates outfitted with water bottles and comfortable cushions as well as disposable pads so the dogs stayed clean and dry.



Sweet, shy indi.

chok dee has demonstrated a feisty personality and has done best as a companion to our formidable female paraplegics, chow mix Ashley and Grace, a Chesapeake who is a beautiful dead-grass color. These two strong willed girls are not intimidated by chok dee's intense personality and energy. chok dee was so happy to get his own a cart shortly after arriving. After he was injured, it was very frustrating for him not to be able to move around as he wanted to and have his freedom so constricted. It was only his strong will to persevere that helped him avoid becoming depressed after he was left unable to walk. In his cart, he fairly flew in the Home for Life® fenced meadows running at top speed with his wheels. chok dee has such a zest for life and his optimistic spirit and "never say die" attitude inspire all and endear him to anyone who is lucky enough to get to know him!

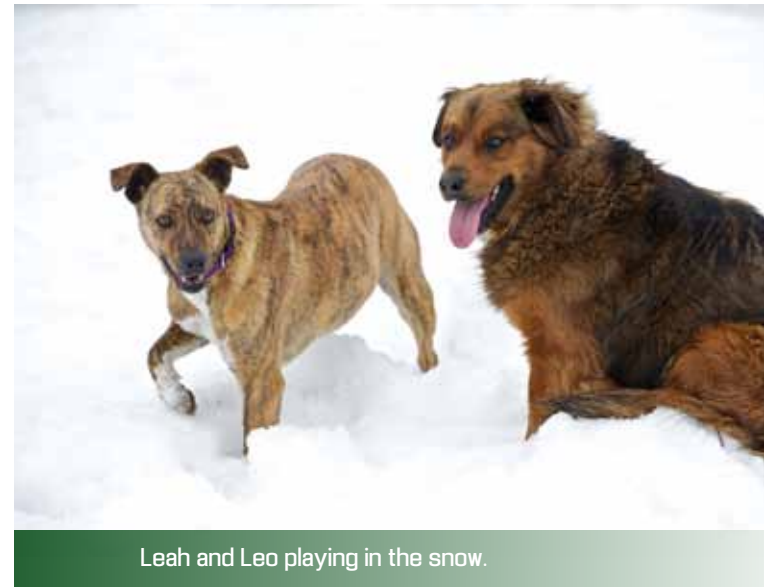
indi has grown into a dainty young lady who is the size of a small sheperd but with unusual thick golden brown fur. She is very shy, with a gentle personality and is not as confident as chok dee, probably due to coping with being disabled from such an early age. She has done well with her new companions which include Luke Skywalker, a young fawn and white boxer from Washington State who was left paraplegic at the age of 6 weeks after being injured by his first owners, Moppet our kind basset who is also paraplegic and now 10 years+ and Frosty an American Eskimo who was abandoned in an animal control facility in Nebraska after being hit by a car . indi had to wait until she was full grown for her cart although we had ones she used to practice with until she got her custom made set of wheels. She loves to watch the other dogs play and keeps in touch with chok dee who resides in a townhouse right next door. Her best friend is Juliet, the young doberman. (Page 12)



indi in her new cart.

## MEXICO

This past year Home For Life® accepted two wonderful dogs from Mexico. **Leah**, a striking and sweet small brindle mixed-breed was a street dog rescued by well-known Minneapolis attorney Jim Schwebel and his wife Mary who help many Mexican street dogs find new lives and homes in the US. In the case of Leah, she was either born with a spinal deformity or suffered some trauma which resulted in incontinence and a hopping-like gait. She has become fast friends with Leo, an Australian Sheperd mix from Colorado. **Leo** was found on a reservation being beaten with rakes by a group of boys. He had suffered a broken back either from the beating or a previous trauma such as being hit by a car. Leo has regained some mobility through water therapy, although his gait will never be normal.



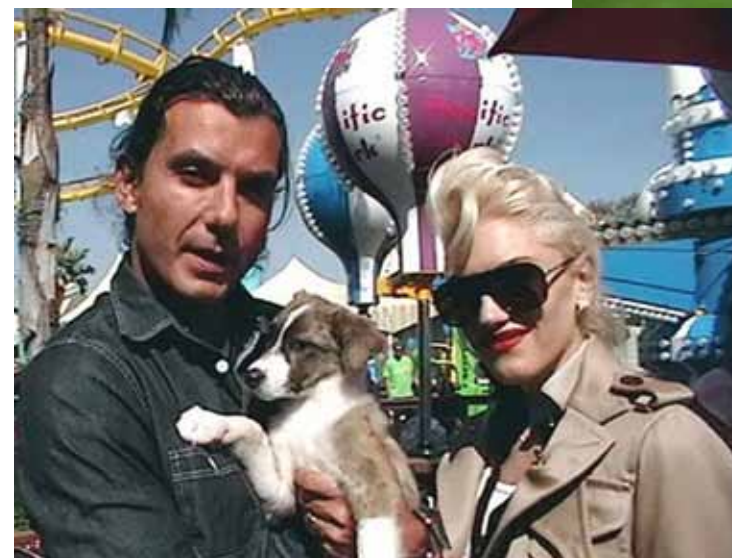
Leah and Leo playing in the snow.

**Nino** was born to a street dog who lived in a village outside of Cancun. The mother dog gave birth to a litter of five puppies and kept them hidden in one of the jungles near the village. These jungles are like the protected national and state forests here in the U.S. Three weeks after Nino and his litter mates were born, a gang of boys wielding machetes found the puppies and slaughtered the entire litter, with the exception of Nino, who was saved only because his mother grabbed him in her mouth and ran for safety. However, the boys cut Nino's back legs off before his mother could save him.

A kind man and his wife from the village who owned a taco stand and knew and fed the puppies' mother saved Nino and brought him to a rescue in Cancun, **Rescate Malix** ("rescued strays" in Spanish). Rescate Malix then asked Home for Life® to take him in. Nino came to the sanctuary in May of 2010 at only 12 weeks of age. Nino was too young to remember the trauma of being mutilated and was a cheerful and happy puppy. He is very agile and like a circus dog, can walk on just two legs, with his weight balanced on his front paws. As Nino approached his first birthday, we tried to have him fit for prostheses Sadly, a series of x-rays taken of his legs persuaded his doctors and the rehabilitation consultants that the prostheses would not be suitable for Nino because of the way his legs were cut off when he was mutilated by the machetes, so high up on each leg and unevenly. Although Nino moves incredibly well on his two legs, he will soon be fitted for a cart as his chosen way to get around will put undue stress on his shoulders in time.

It's not every dog who gets to meet a rockstar. However when Rescate Malix was in California in route to bring Nino to Home for Life, they ran into rock stars Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale, in Los Angeles, Nino's brush with fame and the star dust that rubbed off on him was captured for posterity in this baby photo of him, left inset.

Nino below and as a puppy with rockstars Gavin Rossdale and Gwen Stefani, left.





## SAUDI ARABIA/DUBAI

**Kitchee** is another dog who travelled from far away to find a new life at our sanctuary. A small Alsatian (German Shepherd) female, Kitchee was born in Saudi Arabia with deformed hips and hind legs. Abandoned by her owners and thrown out into the street, Kitchee was stoned, nearly to death, by a gang of boys before a good Samaritan came upon the scene and rescued the puppy in the nick of time. The man rushed the nearly dead Kitchee to a veterinarian in Saudi who saved her life but had no place to care for her long-term.

During her recuperation, Kitchee stayed in a small back room at the vet clinic that was dark and had only a cement floor for her to lie on. The back room of the clinic is where a rescue run by Mimi Al-Dainy from Dubai, found Kitchee and agreed to help, hoping that her chances for a new home might be more promising in that country. Kitchee was moved to a boarding kennel in Dubai where she was well treated.

Rescuers, utilizing word of mouth and social media, were not able to find an adoptive home for Kitchee after several months of hard work. The networking by her rescue group led them to Home For Life®. In July, 2010 a representative from the group came to Home For Life® to visit the sanctuary and determine if we would be a quality alternative for Kitchee. In September, Kitchee made the long journey to the United States from Dubai arriving just two weeks after Indi and Chok Dee.

It was clear after just a short time that Kitchee was in pain even though she was receiving pain medications. She needed reconstructive surgery to give her the ability to walk without suffering constant pain.

At the time Kitchee arrived at Home for Life®, we did not know if her legs had been affected due to injuries from the stoning. Her veterinarians at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Medical Center discovered that, though she might have been badly injured from the stoning she had been born with deformed legs from the knees down, the likely reason she was put out of her home in Jeddah when it became clear that she would not outgrow the condition. Her feet were twisted so that she could not walk on her paw pads causing great pain though the determined puppy with the relentless will to live tried her best to keep up with her new dog friends at the sanctuary. In January, the doctors at the University performed reconstructive surgery to relieve her pain and restore her mobility, focusing on the right leg as it was the most painful. The surgery on the first leg was successful and Kitchee is in far less pain now that her foot is in the correct position. Her second leg will be operated on this early fall so that she has time to heal while the weather is still warm.



Above: Kitchee swimming in the Apple Valley River this summer as part of her rehabilitation.

Right: Kitchee at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Medical Center after her surgery

Below: This summer, with rescuer Mimi Al-Dainy of Dubai, who visited Kitchee at Home for Life®



# Home for Life's Other International Rescues

## Taiwan

**Pluto** and his brother **Yuri** are Taiwanese Mountain Curs and were rescued from Taiwan as puppies by a rescue group, who then surrendered them to the **North Shore Animal League**, located in Long Island New York. The goal for the twin brothers was to adopt them out. However, Yuri, the smaller of the twins, was very shy and did not come around despite North Shore's best efforts. Pluto, who was bigger, seemed as if he might be capable of finding an adopter and was in fact placed in a foster home. But he pined for his brother, and did not adapt to his life as a pet in an American household. Yuri also started to decline without his older brother to protect and guide him. Finally North Shore decided to try to find a permanent sanctuary placement where the two dogs could stay together and live a peaceful life. They are very small wiry dogs and are gentle but really enjoy the company of other dogs more than bonds with people. To put their leashes on, North Shore's trainers taught them to hold still with the command "Get Dressed!"; to take the leash off: the command was "Undress". With the steady, dependable care and schedule at Home for Life®, the brothers gained confidence and weight since coming to the sanctuary, enjoying their companionship and new dog friends they have made.



Yuri

photos by Sarahbeth Photo, Minneapolis.

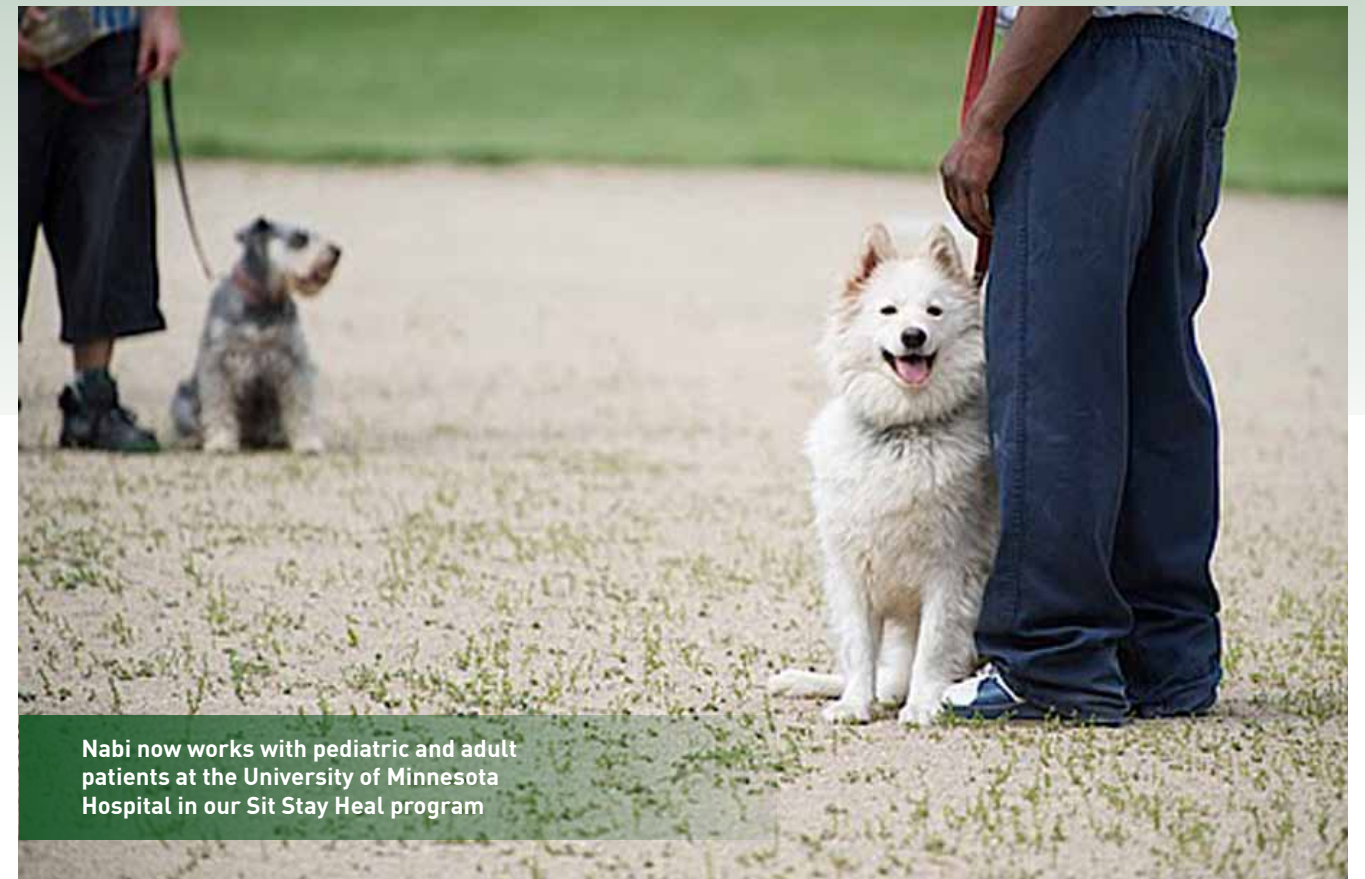


Pluto



## South Korea

**Nabi** was found as a puppy running the city streets, obviously abandoned. Recovered by a rescue group made up of Australian nationals who were working in Korea in other professional capacities, Nabi had survived distemper but with residual nerve damage that causes her to shake as if she has mild Parkinson's. When rescued Nabi was limping badly on a hind leg: vet evaluation in Korea revealed that she had had an injury to the leg and a pin put in. However the pin was left in longer than it should have been and was now pressing painfully on nerves. Her leg had also frozen in a "peg leg" position making walking painful and difficult for her as she could not flex her knee. With her young age and health challenges the rescue believed she needed to be in a permanent sanctuary setting and arranged for her to come to Home for Life®. Nabi (which means "butterfly" in Korean) had to have her painful hind leg amputated once she joined us as the surgeons at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Medical Center did not believe mobility could be regained with the leg, even with surgery, and that Nabi was in a great deal of pain. Once the hind leg was removed, Nabi improved rapidly, and when just a year old completed the Renaissance Program where she successfully graduated with her student, pictured above, and became certified for therapy dog work. 🏠



Nabi now works with pediatric and adult patients at the University of Minnesota Hospital in our Sit Stay Heal program

# Can Do Cats

## Home for Life®'s Disabled Cats Focus on the Possibilities

Unwanted cats, even when they are healthy and well behaved, still have a terrifically tough time finding new homes. When a cat is old, has a special medical condition, a disability or a behavior problem, the opportunity for that cat to find a new home is slim. Not much has changed for cats in that regard in the 12 years Home for Life® has existed. Cats still make up the majority of the five million unwanted animals euthanized in the United States each year. Kittens and cats who come into the world with disabilities find a safe haven at Home for Life® where they will be loved and cared for as long as they may live. As we get to know these special cats, their disabilities become less of a defining and identifying feature, while their courage and their indomitable spirits become what we think of when reflecting on all they mean to us.

All our cats are so cherished at Home for Life® that it is hard to fathom the magnitude of the loss of life that occurs each year among cats like them-forsaken from their first home,unable to find a new home- thousands and thousands of nameless faces -each as special as our cats at Home for Life®. Currently in animal welfare the focus is on spaying and neutering cats to bring down the numbers of kittens born and therefore reduce the cats ultimately put to death. Aggressive adoption initiatives showcasing and marketing the cats surrendered to shelters tries to find homes for the rest. For feral cats, trapping,altering and returning them to outdoor areas with people to feed them gives unsocialized cats a fighting chance to live out their lives and be content.

Home for Life® believes to save the lives of the millions of cats put to death each year will always require a multifaceted approach. Our hope is that all these strategies plus the option offered by Home for Life® sanctuary, the "third door" model in animal welfare, can save many cats from a premature and inhumane death. The cats who found their way to Home for Life® could not have been helped by any other tactic but a care for life



Alabama

sanctuary. They were already born, had been overlooked for adoption, sometimes repeatedly, and were not feral nor capable of living outdoors on their own. Yet they did not deserve to die, and because they found their way to Home for Life®, they will be able to look forward to many happy years with us. We hope their stories will demonstrate the viability of a new phase in animal welfare,where the contribution of the "third door" option will be recognized for the life saving alternative it can be, to diminish if not end the euthanasia of so many cats .

Disabled cats take alot of work and creativity to care for to ensure them a quality life. It takes patience, work, and imagination to picture the potential of the animal instead of focusing on the limiations. Dogs will usually be helped before cats but not always. Also the prevailing idea is that if an animal cannot see or walk like a normal cat they must have no quality of life. That position is pretty ignorant. Most animals want to live if they can and will make the best of their situation, focusing on what they CAN do not their lack. If they can enjoy the sun,tasty food, treats and attention,the company of their dog or cat friends, the animal still has quality of life that should be preserved and cherished. We accepted one young adult three legged cat with leukemia and two wonderful special needs kittens this winter who are thriving at Home for Life®.

**Alabama**, a little male cat with jet black fur, was born with deformed front legs to an outside cat. His loving mother protected him but the family who owned the farm where the cats lived did not believe he would be able to survive outside for the winter and asked us to help him

after the mother cat weaned him. Thanks to his caring family and loving mother cat, Alabama is confident and a happy little guy who climbs cat trees and feels he can be like any other cat.

**Indiana** is an adult calico who was surrendered to Home for Life by **Feline Rescue**, a wonderful cat rescue in St. Paul MN. Indiana, whose original name was Shirley(?!) was born with a condition like cerebal palsy called hyperplasia cerebellum in cats. The condition is caused by a prenatal distemper infection of the mother cat. Shirley/ Indiana was the most severely affected of her litter. Home for Life® has two other cats similarly affected **Beatrix** and **Athena** but Indiana's symptoms are much more severe. Indiana doesn't care that it takes her a bit longer to get where she wants to go: her determination makes up for what she lacks in coordination.

**Ingrid** is a calico female, who was found in rural Wisconsin as a hungry, cold stray cat. It was a shock for the woman who found her outside in the middle of winter to discover that Ingrid had only 3 legs. One of her front legs was amputated as some point during her short life. Ingrid has alot of orange in her coat pattern and seems to have freckles adorning her sweet face. Before being



Ingrid



Indiana

admitted to Home for Life®,Ingrid was screened for infectious diseases which stray cats are especially subject to; sadly she turned up positive for feline leukemia. Leukemia is a contagious virus transmitted through close persistent contact among cats over a long period of time. However cats who are positive can still live long healthy lives, and should not be euthanized if they can live segregated from uninfected cats. At Home for Life®, we have a building devoted to the care of these special cats,where we welcomed Ingrid as our newest resident this past winter

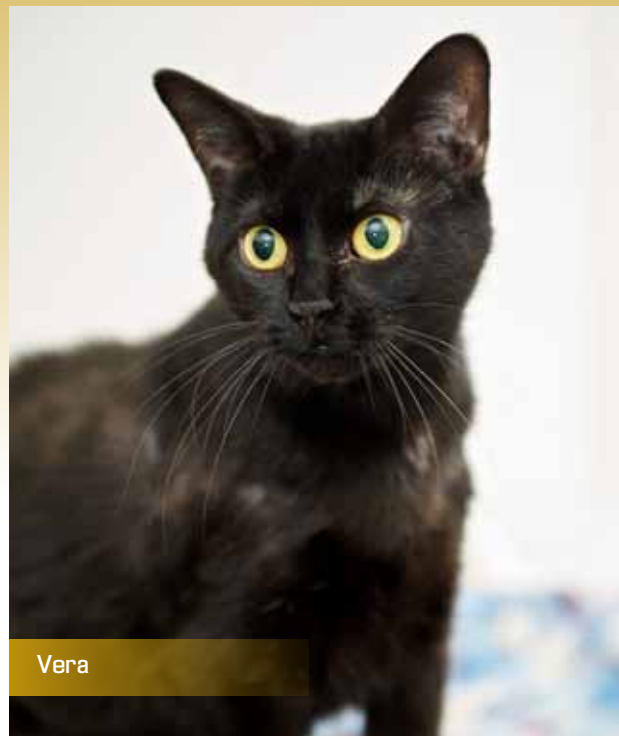
For any animal, losing a front leg is much worse than losing a back leg. Because the front legs carry the majority of their weight, losing one affects the animal's balance and ability to walk without growing tired. For cats who revel in their agility, the loss of a front leg is even more significant. In addition to mobility, a cat's front paws are important for grooming, picking things up, and moving things around. It is hard to think of how difficult Ingrid's first year or two must have been, positive for leukemia and missing a leg as well. We may never know when befell Ingrid before she came to Home for Life® but her inital shyness and wariness revealed the hard life she must have had. Yet with the consistent loving care she has received at Home for Life®, Ingrid has gained confidence and has learned to enjoy attention and affection from our staff and those supporters who visit. Ingrid's favorite perch is the top of a couch in the feline leukemia cattery which gives her a bird eye view of all happenings around her. From this elevated vantage point, Ingrid can keep in touch with all activity on her own terms, feeling safe yet a part of the feline leukemia community. We have found that with shy cats who have led a hard life, they will come around and learn to trust us in their own time if given the chance.

# Blind Cats at Home For Life®

Animals are resourceful and courageous about living their life to the fullest, always focusing on possibility and not their lack and limitations. Among our many dogs and cats who are blind, it is apparent that they compensate by relying on their other senses: hearing, touch, smell and taste. Their other senses become especially acute to allow them to not only get by but truly relish their life. At Home for Life®, we reinforce and develop these senses by feeding tasty, high quality and aromatic food, playing beautiful classical music, providing brushing and grooming to keep their coats clean and healthy and stimulate their sense of touch and encouraging safe access to the outdoors where even our blind cats can enjoy the fresh smell of springtime grass and the crisp fall weather, the sounds of birds singing and the quiet settling sounds as evening falls. Their disability has not stopped our blind cats from learning, growing, and enjoying life's simple pleasures.

## Vera

Vera is a 3 year old blindcat from the **Animal Humane Society** in Minneapolis who came there as a stray. She has a beautiful short, shiny and dense black fur coat and wide green eyes. Their veterinary staff noticed some abnormalities in her eyes and diagnosed her with bilateral mydriasis. After a month on the adoption floor, she was able to see an eye specialist, and it turned out she really had bilateral retinal atrophy which caused permanent vision loss (she only has the ability to tell light from dark); there is no treatment for the condition. Since Vera appeared healthy otherwise and was already spayed and felv/fiv negative, the AHS asked Home for Life® to



Vera



Sunshine

take her in. Vera enjoys the spacious cattery and has a favorite perch - atop the cat scratch teepees. She drapes herself on the peak, her paws hanging on either side. From this prominent position, it is obvious that she feels she will readily attract attention from staff and visitors for extra attention and affection. After the floors are swept, vacuumed and mopped each day, the teepees are always replaced in about the same position, as Vera has memorized the lay out of the cattery and major furniture pieces to easily negotiate her path in the location of the cattery to feel at home and safe.

## SUNSHINE

Sunshine is blind, most likely from birth, due to optic nerve atrophy. She is a young spayed female, medium-sized with a plush silver tabby coat. Although she is a short-haired cat, her rescue group described her as a Persian mix, probably because her coat is so thick. Her beautiful green eyes, even though sightless, are expressive in her sweet round face.

Sunshine was rescued by a Minnesota foster group, **Pleading Paws**. She had been abandoned at an old farm where she lived with many other unwanted cats. The owner of the property, an elderly gentleman, tried his best to feed and care for the cats but was overwhelmed. Sunshine, along with over 30 other cats, was living outside on her caretaker's property, doing her best to survive. Her clipped left ear tip reveals that the rescue worked to spay and neuter as many cats in the colony as possible.

Pleading Paws was slowly trying to get all the cats placed into homes but was most worried about Sunshine as she was so vulnerable—without the ability to see she was fair game for predators and cars, and would have little chance of surviving a harsh Minnesota winter outdoors. Sunshine's past left her shy with strangers. She does not like to be picked up, but enjoys quiet pets and conversation. Her head moves back and forth as if to pick up the surrounding sensations, sounds, and smells with

her whiskers, nose and ears. Sunshine's strong survival instinct enabled her to adapt quickly to life at the sanctuary. She moves around the cattery with ease and has no trouble finding her favorite food among the bowls and plates of canned food that we serve for "kitty brunch" each day. The other cats, like most members of an evolved feline society, accept Sunshine as she is and welcome her as a new friend at Home for Life®.

It was serendipitous when Pleading Paws proposed that Sunshine come to Home for Life®. We had just lost one of our longtime residents, a Shepherd/Lab mix who also named Sunshine. Sunshine the dog was also rescued as a puppy from a hoarding situation

in Baldwin, Wisconsin. The homeowner had several dogs on the property and was not feeding them or providing shelter. Dead puppies only weeks old were found frozen to the ground, and the adult dogs were desperate, dehydrated, and starving. The living dogs were taken in by Second Chance Rescue, whose goal was to disperse them to various other groups for adoption. Sunshine, an older mixed-breed puppy with an extremely timid personality, came to Home for Life® when no other rescue group would take her. She received her name from the vet clinic, where they called her "their little ray of sunshine on a cloudy November day." Although she remained shy with strangers, she became a sweet and well-loved member of Home for Life®, where she had many canine friends, especially Iris the blue cattle dog. When the cat named Sunshine, with such a similar background, needed our help so soon after Sunshine the dog passed away, it seemed like fate. In a special way, Sunshine the dog lives on in our beautiful new cat.

## RUDY

Although Rudy, also known as Rudolph, is blind, he seems to know how sleek and handsome he is. His appearance is exotic—almost Abyssinian—but his origins are humble. His owners dropped him, along with a female calico, at a farm in the middle of winter, abandoning them to either the farmers' care or a certain death from starvation and exposure. The farm family took pity on Rudy and his companion and gave them shelter in a garage. However, the family was struggling financially and could not provide vet care for the cats, who were suffering from exposure and ear mites. When Home for Life® learned of the cats' plight, we arranged for a vet to treat them, hoping that once they received rudimentary care, they could find homes. An adopter was found for the calico, but no one wanted blind Rudy. The farm family could not keep him, and they claimed that he had tested positive for feline leukemia. We did not want Rudy to infect the other farm cats, and we knew he would not survive the harsh winter in an unheated garage, so we agreed to take him in. Upon

Rudy's arrival at Home for Life®, we retested him for leukemia only to learn he was negative. So, Rudy joined our uninfected cats in the north cattery, after he was neutered.

Rudy is delighted to be at Home for Life®, where he can live the life he is certain he deserves. His blindness and hardscrabble past have not diminished his excellent opinion of himself. Other cats who are rude enough to allow Rudy to bump into them receive a hiss and a swift swat. The other cats, being a benevolent bunch, simply roll their eyes and keep moving. Rudy has decided that reclining on the futon is the best way to spend his day, and he plants himself in the dead center of the couch, stretches out full length, and enjoys the classical music piped into the cattery. It is great to see Rudy land on his feet, like any reputable feline can, with his self esteem and attitude intact. 🏠



Rudy in full relaxation mode, listening to classical music

# Home for Life

The Animal Sanctuary of St. Croix Valley, Inc.  
A Minnesota Non-profit Corporation

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## OUR WISH LIST

Queen or full-size futon mattresses, couches, and love seats for both the cats and dogs | Premium quality canned dog and cat food such as Royal Canin canned cat food, Precise, Wellness, Sensible choice, Science Diet, and Fancy Feast and Sheba for our finicky cats | Metal Storage Building, preferably insulated, to store vehicles | Gift certificates to Petco, PetSmart, PetEdge.com, Lowe's, Home Depot, Walmart, Menards, and Foster and Smith | Dish soap, dishwasher detergent and laundry soap | Odoban cleaning liquid (available at Sam's Club, Home Depot or through the manufacturer, Clean Control Corp.) | Top Performance Cleaning Solution, available at PetEdge.com | Paper towels and bleach | Contributions to our capital campaign: Our next goal is the completion of the Dog Training and Exercise Building. We are also raising funds to purchase 160 acres of former farmland adjacent to the sanctuary to prevent development that could disrupt the sanctuary's serene environment. | Contributions for fencing the meadows on our property to create more off-leash exercise areas for the dogs | One or two snowmobiles, along with sleds that can be pulled behind them, so that we can more easily reach the outer townhouses during the winter to deliver food and water to the dogs and transport our cleaning supplies and equipment. | DOGS' WISH LIST | Big puffy dog beds and thick orthopedic beds for the older arthritic dogs | Old quilts and blankets to act as dog beds for those dogs who like bedding but also like to chew | Dog toys, especially sturdy ones for our big dogs | Dog biscuits (Old Mother Hubbard, Milk Bone) | More sponsors! | CATS' WISH LIST | Climbing trees | Cat toys | More sponsors!

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### We're Blogging!

Now there are more ways than ever to stay in touch with Home for Life®! Check in regularly to learn what's happening in our residents' lives, and find out about events and volunteer opportunities at <http://www.homeforlifesanctuary.blogspot.com/>

And don't forget, we're on Twitter too! Follow us @HFLAnimals

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