

Hope: A Dog Adoption Success Story

Dog overcomes injury and chemotherapy with a loving new owner.

Jennifer Quasha

“You could see incredible sadness in her eyes,” says Amanda Welles, recalling when she first saw Hope, a German Shepherd Dog-Australian Cattle Dog mix, in her kennel at the Second Chance Center for Animals in Arizona. Welles knelt down near Hope. “She looked at me, put her paws on my thighs, and pulled herself up to get into my lap. The way she was looking at me made me cry,” Welles says. “And I didn’t feel sad. It was like I knew her, and we were seeing each other again.”

Hope had come to Second Chance in December 2004 after she was found with a group of stray dogs. “She was moving slowly,” says Diane Jarvis, the education director at Second Chance. “The other dogs would push her out of the way to get to the garbage to eat. I thought she was an old, old dog.”

When Jarvis approached Hope, she was docile. “I was able to pick her up since she was so skinny.”

When Hope arrived at the shelter, she weighed 39 pounds. The shelter veterinarian estimated that she was between 2 and 3 years old. She was pregnant; had four large canine venereal tumors, which would have made giving birth fatal; an old left-shoulder injury that had calcified and become frozen; and foxtails embedded in her eyelids and ears.

“The tumors were the worst the vet had ever seen,” Jarvis says. Hope required seven treatments of intravenous chemotherapy. Her left shoulder and leg also needed to be removed. “She was in extreme pain, and the leg muscles were wasted,” Jarvis says. “She was depressed, but alert.” Although everyone in the shelter made an effort to pet Hope and give her attention, they were concerned because she was subdued.

That was until Welles entered the shelter in late March 2005. “It was like she had been waiting,” says Welles, who within one week was able to take Hope home with her. Today, Hope is thriving in her new home and can easily handle three-mile hikes. Says Welles, “She’s getting stronger and stronger and stronger.”

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