

## "My Rescue Dog" Contest Winners

**In the 2006-2007 Puppies USA, we asked readers to send us their rescue stories. The first-place winner receives \$150; second-place, \$100; and the third-place winner receives \$50. Congratulations to our winners, and we thank all our readers who submitted their wonderful stories.**

### First Place: The Unexpected Visitor

By Jennifer McCord

She was the saddest thing I'd ever seen. Actually, my grandpa saw her first. He was on vacation with our family on Lake Cumberland in Kentucky waiting for my family to arrive when it happened.

As he was about to dock the boat, he suddenly saw a dog onshore. He wasn't sure if it was safe for the kids to go near the dog, so he went farther down the lake. As soon as he docked, the dog reappeared. My younger cousin Jackie coaxed her onto the boat.

The next day, I arrived, and everyone told me they had a surprise. My family knew about my love for animals and my desire to become a vet. When I saw the dog, I was shocked by how terrible she looked, but I still thought she was cute. It was awful. Her head had nothing on it but blood and wounds. Her ear had a ticks' nest, and her body was covered with them. Her eyes were swollen along with her paws, and she was very skinny. I found out later that her skin condition was due to scabies and mange.

My family decided that we would take her until she was better (by that time, I figured I'd have talked my mom into keeping her for good). About this time you are probably getting tired of hearing "her," "she" and "the dog." I knew I had to come up with a name that fit and that also had meaning. So, I named her "Lucky." It worked, because she was so lucky to find us, and we were just as lucky to find her.

On the way back from the lake, we stopped at the store and bought hydrogen peroxide and Neosporin to heal her wounds. I think she knew that I was trying to help because she sat there like a little angel while I put medicine on her sores. I slept on the couch near the door that night to keep her company because Lucky was not allowed inside. For the rest of the trip, we were connected at the hip.

When we finally returned home, we made an appointment for Lucky with a vet. My mom tried to prepare me for the worst, but I knew that this dog was sent for me, and God would not send me a dog that would just turn around and die. When we got to the vet's office, he examined Lucky and told us that she had a good chance of surviving and that she was a German Shepherd mix. I was so happy.

The vet also warned us that it would be difficult and expensive to make Lucky well. We had to give her medicated baths twice a week. She also had to be on pills for her skin condition.

Lucky has the best personality I've ever seen in a dog. I was surprised that she could love and trust humans even though she had been abused by them. I believe Lucky actually thinks of herself as a human! Lucky loves to protect her family, and we will do the same for her. She is no longer a visitor but an important part of our family.

### Second Place: Touch of Grey

By Linda MacRae

I had been thinking seriously about purchasing a purebred dog for some time. Never having owned a dog before, I, of

course, tended to the lap-dog variety. Then, a friend told me about Greyhound rescue organizations and how many dogs were available for adoption. Being an animal lover, I began to investigate the plight of the Greyhound.

On a cold day in February 1998, I drove out to a farm to view the many Greyhounds that this particular rescue had to offer. Once again I had in mind the type of dog I wanted: a large black-and-white Greyhound that I saw run off into the field. As I began to follow after the dogs, I wasn't really looking where I was going and proceeded to step into a hole and fall, breaking my ankle!

There I was injured in the middle of this huge field as all the dogs ran ahead of me having a wonderful time. However, one rather pathetic-looking and skinny Greyhound looked back and saw me on the ground. He turned and ran toward me. When he reached me, he nuzzled his long, cold, wet nose in my neck. That was it! That poor, pathetic-looking Greyhound came home with me that day. We have been together, joined at the hip, ever since.

Although he already had a name, I thought that if I changed his name, he would soon forget the obviously awful past that he had overcome. I believe it worked. His name is now Rembrandt Claude, or Remy or Remy Claude, for short. He is no longer that poor, pathetic dog and has blossomed into a most beautiful, light-red brindled Greyhound, befitting his new name. He now weighs 85 pounds, and his beautiful and expressive eyes have become very large and bright.

Much to my delight, he is not an alpha dog; he is a true couch potato but goes almost everywhere with me. Over the years, he has worked his way so deeply into my heart. I have never been so loved in all of my life by such a wonderful creature.

Unfortunately, time goes by so quickly. Remy Claude turned 10 in October 2006 and has developed a few health issues. Hopefully, I will have him around for a few more years. He knows there isn't anything I wouldn't do for him. I continue to live my life with him one day at a time, enjoying each day with each new experience. He never ceases to amuse me. He is still full of many surprises. It is always a joy to wake up each morning and look into those big, beautiful brown eyes.

I feel certain that God chose Remy Claude for me, as this Greyhound has changed my life forever. Please consider adopting a rescue dog. You will not be disappointed.

### Third Place: My Wilderness Buddy

By Stephanie Rainey

When I first saw her, she was sharing a small kennel with another puppy at the Humane Society of the White Mountains in Pinetop, Arizona. She was different from the other dogs: She sat silent, never barking, just wagging her tail and watching the people walk by.

I was looking for a dog who could travel into the wilderness with me when I was out hunting or filming. You see, I host an outdoor television program called Stepping Outdoors on a local cable station in Arizona. Since I'm constantly wandering in the woods, either hiking, backpacking or hunting, I thought it would be good to have a companion with me, especially one that could smell danger coming from an approaching bear or mountain lion.

After looking at all the dogs, I kept returning to her cage. There was something about her that drew me back. She was multicolored, black and white, with brown-colored specks up and down her two front legs. She was a 3-month-old mix that was part Border Collie and the other part, well, unknown. She had a pretty face, and she was quiet, the perfect behavior I needed to accompany me into the woods.

I wasn't sure she was the one until I happened to glance over to the clipboard hanging from her cage.

Her name caught my attention: Stephanie. "That must be a sign that I'm supposed to adopt her," I thought, since "Stephanie" was also my name. What are the chances of that?

After waiting for her to be spayed, I was finally able to take Stephanie home after a few days. I took her to a vet right away because she was constantly itching, scratching and biting at herself and found out that she had sarcoptic mange along with an infection from her surgery. For the next three months, we were at the veterinarian's office every week.

Once the mange and infection cleared up, she was diagnosed with an intestinal disease called coccidiosis. When I would feed her, she would scarf down any amount of food I gave her within seconds. The vet said that puppies who are malnourished when they are born have a tendency to gorge themselves when they haven't received enough food. I shuddered to think about what life must have been like for her when she was born.

For the next six months, I doctored her and fed her as much as she needed, until finally, she got through it. After that, I started taking her on short walks; then we hiked a bit farther until she began to follow me into the woods on longer hikes.

Now, Shawnee (I renamed her to avoid the confusion) is doing very well. The vet says she has recovered completely from her illnesses. Her coat is healthy, and some days I find it difficult to physically hold her back from running free into the wilderness because she has grown so strong.

Shawnee and I hike into remote wilderness areas now, looking out for each other while experiencing the great outdoors. She no longer devours her food; I believe she knows she has found a home and realizes she will never go hungry again.

### Honorable Mention: Finding Goldie

By Eve Donnell

Meet Paw Paw Chivas. He was a 2-month-old puppy when he rescued me from a world of no pets (30 years!). Some people would even refer to me as "not being a dog lover." I would think to myself, "I'm not?"

I'm allergic to cats and just never had the desire to own a dog. The last dog I had ever loved was a purebred Golden Retriever that our neighbor had found. When no one claimed Goldie (that was the name us kids had given him), I began taking care of him.

He had come into my little life at the perfect time. I was at that tender preteen age, not feeling too good about myself yet. Goldie was beautiful inside and out! We did everything together from swimming to sleeping that summer. I even met my first boyfriend because of Goldie; people always wanted to meet that dog. I was so proud of him and couldn't believe how Goldie was bringing me out of my shell.

When I had her for about six months, a man came to our door. He had been looking everywhere for his lost Golden Retriever. He thanked us for taking care of him and walked to his car with Goldie.

I stood in shock. What had just happened?

Goldie had become my whole world over that summer, and now he was gone, just like that. I cried every night for weeks and prayed that Goldie would come back. I missed him so much. He was the sweetest, most loving, smartest, funniest and most caring dog, and he was my loyal friend.

Then, one day, he was back. Goldie had returned!

I was so happy. My mother said the owner would be back, though. We were surprised when two weeks went by before he returned. He told us that Goldie had traveled more than 20 miles from his ranch to our house! My mom told him that if the dog came back here one more time that we would not be handling him over. "This is just not fair to my daughter," she said. "She has been heartbroken for weeks, then happy and excited, and now this."

A few days later, Goldie was running back up our driveway. My heart jumped up into my throat, then down to my tummy when I noticed his owner was right behind him. No words were spoken, he just grabbed Goldie and they were gone.

That was the last time I saw Goldie. It is difficult to think about even to this day and still brings tears to my eyes. For a long time, I held hope that Goldie would come back again and for good this time. That was 30 years ago.

Many people over the years have offered me puppies, but I have never taken them. Maybe I just did not think I could ever love another dog as much as I did Goldie. Not until my cousin told me that her son had bought a dog (named Chivas) for his girlfriend. Her parents, however, had said "no thanks," and my cousin didn't know what to do with this puppy. They held up this big, fluffy, beautiful Golden Retriever mix with deep, wise eyes, and asked if I wanted him. I heard myself say "yes" and remember walking down their driveway with Chivas in my arms thinking they were going to change their minds.



They didn't.

Paw Paw Chivas has been such a blessing to me and my family ever since. He is the sweetest, most loving, smartest, funniest and most caring dog, and he is a loyal friend. Perhaps, Goldie was his grandfather!