

Holiday Edition 2015

# Rolling Dog Farm



A special place where disabled animals enjoy life.



## Deaf, elderly Esther's zest for life





**Alayne and Steve with Aurora. Eighteen months after the start of her nearly fatal blood clotting disease, Aurora remains remarkably stable, thanks to daily heparin injections, other medications, and vigilant monitoring by her doctor.**

Dear Friends,

As winter approaches, we think we're as ready as we can be. The firewood is in the shed, the hay is in the barn, the root cellar is full of potatoes, carrots and onions, and the snowplow is on the tractor. We had a glorious autumn foliage season, and as we write this, only the larches and oaks have any fall color left. The green of the spruces, firs and white pines will sustain us until the spring.

We had one of our quietest years ever on the medical front. As of November 1, our veterinary expenses were just over \$31,000, about half of normal. It's due to fewer emergencies and surgeries, and no new chronic conditions to manage. Of course, that could change at any moment, but for now, we're counting our blessings!

The adorable girl on the cover is another of those sweet dogs who came to us because a shelter couldn't find anyone willing to adopt her. In Esther's case, she had three "strikes" against her: advanced age, deafness, and blind in one eye. Once here, she soon got the very best in medical care and all the love she deserved.

It's only because of your generous donations that we can take in disabled dogs like Esther. Thanks to your gifts, they get another chance at a wonderful life. We appreciate your support so much!

*Steve Smith and Alayne Marker, Co-founders*

## How to help

**The best way to help the animals is with a cash donation.** You can mail a check in the enclosed envelope or make a secure online donation at our website. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Also, if you'd like to leave a legacy of helping disabled animals, **please consider making a bequest** in your will. Bequests are important gifts that secure our long-term mission. Thank you!

## Tug-of-war



One of the things we get to enjoy is watching dogs with different disabilities play with each other. They learn not only how to cope with their disability, but how to compensate for it while playing.

For example, here are three-legged Tanner and blind Stella playing tug-of-war with a toy in the living room. Tanner has a natural advantage by being able to see, but having only three legs means the much larger and four-legged Stella can use *her* strength to her advantage.

In fact, Stella likes to wrestle with Steve, too, and she's been known to knock him off his feet a few times. This has earned her the nickname "Stella the Steamroller."

In case you're wondering, Tanner won this round in the end, though Stella insisted she "let" him win.



Volume 14, Issue 3. Written by Steve Smith. Graphic design by Cathleen Clapper. Photos by Steve Smith and Alayne Marker. All rights reserved to the Rolling Dog Farm. ♻️

## Deaf, elderly Esther's zest for life

Esther is a Sheltie/Beagle mix who arrived from a humane society in upstate New York. The shelter staff emailed us to say the girl they named Esther "came to us as a stray after she was found on a busy highway. We have no idea how she got there or where she came from. She is very lucky that she did not get hit by a car." As is too often the case, the original owner never came looking for her, and no one wanted to adopt her.



She was totally deaf, blind in one eye, and very much a senior – though exactly how old we don't know.

Hearing and vision weren't Esther's only problems. She was covered in lumps and bumps, leading us to worry if any of them were cancerous. There were so many that our internal medicine specialist created a "body map" to keep track of them all, and aspirated each one. Fortunately, so far they have all turned out to be benign.

We also noticed some hind-limb weakness and incoordination, leading to neurological exams and further tests. We found Esther had a spinal infection called discospondylitis, which we successfully treated. Our ophthalmologist examined her eyes and diagnosed her with KCS or dry eye, for which we also have a treatment plan. (Sadly, we cannot restore vision in her blind right eye.)

None of this slows her down at all. Esther enjoys cruising around the front yard, head up, sniffing the air, then bounding back to the porch.

But "cruising" and "bounding" may not be the best descriptions of her motion. That's because she has a unique, somewhat stiff-legged gait in which it appears all four feet are going in a different direction at the same time, even as she's making forward progress! It's endearing to watch, kind of a Raggedy Ann effect. Alayne soon began calling her "Flopsy Mopsy."

Esther quickly came to adore Alayne, in fact, following her everywhere as her faithful little sidekick, barking happily as she went. Esther's face just lights up whenever she sees Alayne, and it's easy to tell these two have a very special bond.

In truth, here at home we hardly ever call her "Esther" any longer – it's usually just "Mopsy." This led Alayne one day to declare, "Mops is the tops!"

Maybe it's because she's from upstate New York, but Esther loves cold weather and snow. While most of the dogs are loathe to venture outside in winter, Esther enjoys

## Yay, it's the FedEx guy!



Nothing is more exciting really than when the FedEx guy shows up. Whether sighted or blind, the dogs rush to the fence to check things out, barking and yipping as they go. It reminds us of our distant childhoods when the ice cream truck arrived with the bells ringing and the kids would go rushing into the street.

You can tell from the body language that the blind ones are just as engaged and interested as the sighted ones. After the FedEx guy leaves, the dogs drift back out into the yard and onto the front porch, waiting for the next exciting moment to arrive.



rolling around on her back in the deep snow. We suspect the other dogs see her doing this and think, "There goes that crazy old lady again!"

Because she's deaf, Esther sleeps very well, oblivious to the other dogs and other sounds around her. But when she's awake, she likes to head outside to explore, no matter what the season. Some days we spend so much time opening the door for her trips outdoors that we feel like a glorified doorman!

We don't know how much longer we'll have her, but we do know that she is making the best of her new life here. And that's all we can hope for.

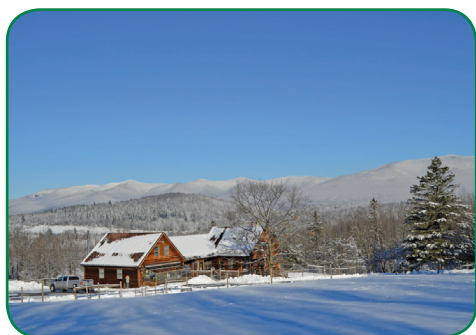




P.O. Box 150, Lancaster, New Hampshire 03584  
[www.RollingDogFarm.org](http://www.RollingDogFarm.org)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**For updates, visit our blog at [www.rollingdogfarm.org](http://www.rollingdogfarm.org)**



This photo of the farm house is from last winter, and it will soon look like that again! The “dog wing” is on the left, and the “people wing” is on the right.

## About the farm

Rolling Dog Farm has been home to many types of disabled animals over the years – our residents have included blind dogs, blind horses, deaf dogs, blind cats, three-legged dogs and cats, and others with neurological and orthopedic issues. While we focus primarily now on disabled dogs, we still have a couple of blind horses.

Although these animals may have disabilities, they do not consider themselves handicapped. They just want to get on with life and enjoy themselves. Thanks to your support, that’s what they get to do here.

Yet these are the animals who are among the least likely to be adopted and among the most likely to be euthanized in traditional shelters. That’s why we work with the disabled.

Steve Smith and Alayne Marker founded the farm in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization known as a private operating foundation. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The Rolling Dog Farm is located in the beautiful White Mountains of northern New Hampshire. This special place for disabled animals is supported 100% by your donations. **Thank you for your gifts!**

## My snow cone

Soba, our wobbly girl with cerebellar hypoplasia, loves to eat snow – especially after a fresh snowfall. But really, any time is a good time for a snow cone as far as she’s concerned. Yes, she has full access to fresh water, but she just likes to eat snow, and always has.

Here she is going for a big mouthful:



As you can see, Soba doesn’t get it all in but she’s working that tongue to get as much as she can:

And more tongue action to finish off the snow cone, the first of many that morning:

