

Holiday Edition 2023

Rolling Dog Farm



A special place where disabled animals enjoy life.



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Hello, Dolly!

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Blind Oscar

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Mickey

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Lena: 1992-2023



Steve and Alayne with Silly Sally

Dear Friends,

The sweet elderly Beagle you see in the photo above came to us a few months ago from Georgia. Sally has a neurological condition that causes her to wobble – and sometimes fall down – when she walks.

She also has a severe heart worm infection, which she is being treated for by our internal medicine specialist in Burlington. The doctor could see the worms moving around in her heart when he did an echocardiogram on her.

Her mouth is a mess, with many rotted teeth, but she can't have a dental because she can't go under anesthesia until we get her heart restored to normal function. Our neurologist couldn't do an MRI on Sally for the same reason.

Despite her health struggles and a very hard life before coming to us, Sally is full of joy and energy. She's a funny girl, and we call her "Silly Sally" because of her antics. We just love her to pieces.

But she is very old, and so compromised medically that honestly, we're not 100% sure if she will still be with us next year at this time. So we wanted to introduce you to this adorable little girl in this issue, just in case.

Sally is the kind of disabled dog that we can take in when others can't. And we can also provide the best possible medical care for them. We can do this because of your wonderful, generous donations. Thank you!

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!

Please welcome Oscar!



This lovable blind Dachshund came to us from his previous owner in Alabama. She was no longer able to care for Oscar, and asked if we could take him.

Of course, because Alayne was diagnosed many years ago with the incurable and perplexing condition known as "Doxieholc syndrome," we immediately said "yes!"

Oscar's family had bought him as a puppy from a breeder about nine years ago, and so they had been the only home he had ever known. This is always a difficult and emotional situation for all concerned. Our hearts always break for a dog whose life has been so suddenly turned upside down.

We were also a bit worried about how Oscar would do once he arrived, because he had been the only dog in the family.

As it turned out, the other dogs here actually were a comfort to him. We think they helped distract him from the disruption he had just gone through. During his first evening here, as we made the introductions one-on-one, Oscar eagerly greeted each dog in turn with a happy tail wag and a little bounce in his step.

He reminded us of the extroverted person who shows up at a party and quickly makes the rounds, shaking hands and introducing himself to everyone there. Oscar, we quickly realized, was a very sociable little fellow!

Oscar is blind from progressive retinal atrophy, or PRA, which means the retinas gradually degenerate over time and no longer function. So unfortunately there isn't anything our veterinary ophthalmologist can do to restore his vision.

But clearly being blind doesn't stop Oscar from being a happy, friendly guy who enjoys life to the fullest. And there is no greater enjoyment for him than meal time, when he jumps up and down in excitement at the food dish that's coming his way. He can jump way higher than you'd think a low-slung Dachshund can go!

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Hello, Dolly!



Diabetic and blind from cataracts, Dolly had bounced through four homes before coming to us. The general issue seemed to involve people not being able to adequately manage and/or afford her diabetes treatment.

Two longtime supporters of ours in Washington state, Judith and Rusty, heard about Dolly's predicament from the rescue group that was trying to find yet another home for her. They contacted us and we offered to take Dolly. Judith and Rusty then kindly fostered her until our transport arrived.

Once here, we noticed that her pupils immediately contracted when we shined a flashlight in her face. Dolly would even turn her head away because the light was uncomfortably bright. This suggested her retinas were still working fine. If so, she might be a candidate for cataract surgery to restore her vision.

We scheduled appointments with our veterinary ophthalmologist for an eye exam and ERG to test retinal function, and with our internal medicine specialist for a full work-up and diabetes management review.



We put a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) on Dolly so we could check her glucose levels around the clock for 14 days at a time. That's the white disc you see on her in that photo. This device automatically uploads the glucose data to a phone app, where you can see time-in-range, average glucose, daily patterns, and low glucose events.

The data showed us that Dolly's diabetes was very poorly controlled.

In dogs, whose diabetes is similar to Type 1 diabetes in humans, the typical treatment is an injection of a single

Here's Mickey!



A Vermont shelter asked if we could take this tiny Chihuahua. Mickey was hairless and had a mouth full of rotting teeth. Once here, he tried to bite us whenever we got near him. Literally he'd bite our hand as we fed him. We began discussing what we were going to do with him.

He must have overheard those conversations, because one day he suddenly became a completely different dog. Friendly, sweet, and, well ... nice! Our vet couldn't find a reason for the hair loss, but did need to remove all his teeth during a dental. That would have been more helpful in the early days!

intermediate-acting insulin twice a day, 12 hours apart. Working with our internal medicine specialist, we began adjusting Dolly's insulin dosages over months. We also put her on a low-carb diet. Nothing seemed to make a difference. We finally changed her insulin to a longer-acting one, but this made it even worse.

Frustrated, we eventually found a recent veterinary study that had tested a "basal-bolus" insulin therapy — combining two different insulins, a shorter-acting one and longer-acting one. This is the approach commonly used by human Type 1 diabetics. The research was limited, having only been done with six diabetic dogs, but the results were promising.

Our internal medicine specialist agreed to try this method after tailoring the protocol to Dolly's specific needs. The impact was dramatic. Suddenly, her diabetes was well controlled. Day after day on the CGM, we watched in amazement as her glucose numbers started coming down to levels we had never seen before.

With Dolly's diabetes better regulated, the next step was finding out what we could do about her eyes. The ERG had indeed determined that her retinas were indeed working beautifully, and other eye tests confirmed that she would be a suitable candidate for cataract surgery.

A couple of months later, Dolly had her vision back!

She was pretty high energy even blind, but now that she can see, she zooms everywhere, darting back and forth. She races into the house, does a few mad circles in the living room, jumps onto a bed, then off again, and bolts for the kitchen. Dolly is one food-motivated young lady, and that kitchen is where she wants to be!

For updates, visit our blog at www.rollingdogfarm.org



Steve turning one of the many compost piles we make each year. When finished, we spread them on our extensive vegetable gardens, and any extra goes on the pastures. It's the only fertility we need on the farm.

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. We focus primarily now on disabled dogs.

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!**

Lena: 1992-2023



Our lovely blind mare Lena made it to her 31st year but no farther. She was the first disabled animal we ever took in, back in 2000 on our ranch in Montana, and she led us to take in many more blind horses.

Recently she had been losing weight and didn't have the same appetite she once did. But then Lena suddenly developed a severe case of lymphangitis, which left her permanently and painfully lame in her left rear leg. We didn't want her to suffer, and so we made the emotionally wrenching decision to euthanize her.

Because she had been with us from the very beginning, she helped us define our mission of focusing on disabled animals. For 23 years she had been there with us, always a constant in our lives. Losing her was like losing a part of ourselves, too.