



# Gold Ribbon Rescue

SEPTEMBER 2011 28TH EDITION

DEDICATED TO HELPING GOLDEN RETRIEVERS AND THEIR OWNERS IN CENTRAL TEXAS

## Letter from GRR's President and Medical Director—Margo Biba The Long Hot Summer of 2011

Wildfires, drought, 100+ degree temps; Immiticide shortage, languishing economy, and dogs with complicated medical issues—oh my! We Golden Retriever rescuers are a tough lot, surviving & thriving in Central Texas.

As I write, the **wildfires** are abating somewhat, although new fires are expected to pop up. We braced ourselves for an influx of canine evacuees; so far, all GRR's evacuated foster families and their canines are safe. We wonder if there will be a surge in surrenders, as families who have lost their homes & properties may need to reach out to GRR for help. If so, GRR will be there.

We heard harrowing stories about the **wildfires**. One foster mom had 30 minutes to pack her 15 Golden, food & water into her van as the fires moved toward her. Another foster family grabbed their cats & 5 dogs, as the fires moved within a mile of their acreage. Their horses were nabbed by Equine Rescue & delivered to safety in Elgin. Yet another foster family had only moments to grab children, a cat & two dogs, along with their birth certificates as they dodged fires. I've spoken to many foster families who housed people & animal evacuees while the fires raged. Several GRR veterinarians treated & boarded affected animals for free. With a caring community of animal lovers like ours, we are supported.

The drought has been good for GRR in one regard: we've had **fewer heartworm positive dogs** than usual. To date, only 16% of our 2011 surrenders have tested heartworm positive, as compared to up to 29% in past, rainier years.

All **heartworm treatments** have been **suspended** since mid-August, due to a **nationwide shortage of Immiticide (melarsomine)**, the injectable drug used to kill heartworms. Veterinarians used their dwindling stockpiles of Immiticide to finish treating dogs who had already begun their 2-month-long treatment; untreated dogs are in limbo, on a regimen of doxycycline (an antibiotic) & Heartgard. Theoretically, untreated HW+ dogs on the doxy & Heartgard combo may be cleared of heartworms in 18 to 24 months, as the adult heartworms gradually die of natural causes.

In response to this shortage, which may last months or longer, **heartworm positive GRR dogs may be adopted prior to heartworm treatment**. We'll make financial arrangements for future treatment, should Immiticide once again become available.

Plan for Christmas – **GRR's calendar will be on sale ~December 1st**. Bids for the calendar pages were brisk, at \$1,083 more than last year. Those bids pay our

printing costs, so every single calendar is pure profit toward the Golden's medical care.

GRR's **Annual Holiday Party** is always loads of fun. It is scheduled for Sunday, December 11th, 11:00 to 2:00. It will be held at Jody Branson's home in Austin. Check the GRR website to make reservations.

Sadly, due to the drought, both last spring's & this fall's **dog swim parties have been cancelled**. Maura, when the rains come, we'll be back!

As part of GRR's goal of furthering responsible dog ownership & education, GRR has secured a large quantity of **Patricia McConnell, PhD's newest book, *Love Has No Age Limit***. This book, which is an easy & enjoyable 78-page read, gives phenomenal training & behavior advice for new—and old—dog owners. Dr. McConnell offers the book at significant discount for rescue groups & shelters; we are passing it on to our foster & recent adoptive families as **our gift to you**.

Members mark your calendars for **October 23rd**, and plan to attend GRR's **annual meeting**. Details are in the works & will be posted on our website, <http://www.grr-tx.com>, as soon as the San Marcos location is determined. Eligible members will vote on a bylaw change. Check elsewhere in the newsletter for more info. Food & refreshments will be provided on this fun afternoon.

As GRR's medical coordinator, I am on the front lines with the foster dogs' **medical care**. In addition to routine health care, GRR works with canine surgeons, internists, dermatologists, and ophthalmologists. This year, we have dealt with canine diabetes, cancer, hip dysplasia, ectopic ureter repair, pyometra, non-regenerative anemia, kidney failure, and many other health issues. Thank goodness for our dedicated & supportive veterinarians!

In spite of our best efforts, **not all dogs can be saved**. Yesterday, a young male, **#11-101 Groovy**, was euthanized. Groovy was a San Antonio shelter stray; he contracted **distemper**, which quickly progressed from respiratory issues to neurological involvement. As we reflect upon Groovy's death, we are frustrated that such an easily preventable disease took his life. If only his previous owner had provided distemper vaccinations, Groovy would be alive now. We are thankful that Groovy had several weeks of safety, comfort & the love of his foster family, at the end of his life. His rescue was a victory, in spite of the outcome.

**Gabapentin** is a medication that has long been used in humans for seizures and neuropathic pain; now it's being prescribed for **dogs with severe hip dysplasia, lumbosacral stenosis, and arthritis**. This relatively

inexpensive medication can be added when NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Rimadyl, Metacam, Previcox or Deramaxx, plus tramadol, are no longer enough to keep the dog mobile. One of GRR's permanent foster dogs, #08-052 Annie, is one of our first gabapentin test cases. With gabapentin, senior gal Annie has gone from extremely painful and barely mobile to walking 1 1/2 miles at a stretch. It has truly given Annie back her youth.

As the years progress, we are observing increasing success with non-traditional health & behavior solutions. **Flower essences** (google Bach Flower Essences & Perelandra Essences) are inexpensive & often quick helps for behavior issues. **Thundershirts** are proving to be solid help for thunderstorm phobia, anxiety, and in one case, overly rowdy behavior. (<http://www.thundershirt.com>) The **Nzymes healthy skin program** at <http://www.nzymes.com>, when followed to the letter, provides phenomenal results for skin, allergy & leaky gut issues.

Recently, GRR's **109<sup>th</sup> & 110<sup>th</sup> rescues of 2011** arrived in care. #11-109 Addy came from a north central Texas shelter. Found stray, she was scheduled for euthanasia due to a contagious upper respiratory infection. We couldn't let that happen! The intake team sprang into action; now Addy is safe & already recovering. A few days later, an urgent hotline call came in from a small shelter outside San Antonio: a young Golden had been spotted in a busy intersection and literally pulled out of traffic, but his stray hold, too, was at an end. Once again, it was "meet, greet, and grab," and now #11-110 Garfield is at the clinic and will soon be starting a new life.

**It takes a village** to rescue so many Golden Retrievers. Thank you all for your volunteer hours, your financial support, for fostering & adopting, and for spreading the word about Gold Ribbon Rescue. **You are saving lives!**

### Ranger



We'd all agree that there was too much sun this summer... but the morning light did let Laura Shimer get this wonderful shot of 7-year-old Ranger, GRR #06-003. "Ranger is the

most laidback, adaptable, calm dog. Since adopting him, we've had a continual stream of foster/respite Golden come through our home, and he befriends them immediately. He shares his toys, balls, bed, and sometimes even his food without so much as a growl or yelp. He likes to play chase in the backyard with other dogs—and squirrels (needless to say, the squirrels don't enjoy it as much as the dogs do)! He's not a big barker, but he makes his presence known by being right up there with the pack. A lover of walks, but a hater of water... he is always ready and waiting for you to pay attention to him!"



P.O. Box 956  
Austin, TX 78767-0956

Non-Profit 501(c)(3)

24-Hour Hotline  
**(512)659-GOLD**

**www.GRR-TX.com**

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**Volunteer@grr-tx.com**

## GRR's Annual Meeting Sunday, October 23rd, 2011 4:00 PM, San Marcos, TX

Members are invited to our annual membership meeting. We look forward to seeing all of you! Expect food, friendship and fun.

Details are in the works & will be posted on our website, <http://www.grr-tx.com> as soon as the San Marcos location is determined. We appreciate your RSVP & will provide a link on our website.

There is no charge for the annual meeting. Food & refreshments will be provided. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know our volunteers, adoptive families, foster families, supporters and friends.

A brief vote will be held at the annual meeting on a bylaw change. Should the need arise, the proposed change will allow for *e-mail* voting by eligible members. As the bylaws stand now, business requiring a vote by membership must be conducted at an official meeting or by mail.

Voting eligibility: "Voting membership is granted to individuals who have paid dues, are in good standing with all local and federal laws pertaining to animals, are at least eighteen years of age, attend one meeting per year, and who volunteer a minimum of 20 hours a year in accordance with GRR guidelines."

Please Join Us on October 23rd!

\* NOTE, THE ANNUAL MEETING IS A HUMANS-ONLY EVENT.\*

## Extraordinary Golden Fund Update: Ride 'em Naia!

Puppy Naia, just 4 months old, arrived in GRR care with a broken leg. Nobody is quite sure how the injury occurred, but what we did know was that (a) the break wasn't recent; and (b) it needed fixing pronto! Just a few days after her initial check-up, Naia had the surgery she needed. And as soon as her recuperation was complete, she found the perfect family. Here's the happy news on Naia – now named Bea:



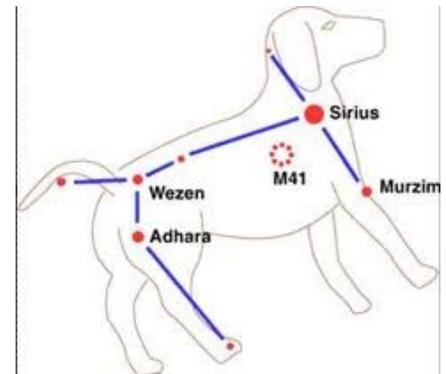
Bea is doing quite well in her new home! When we first met Bea, her great foster mom Emily told us that she was very timid and needed a lot of work to build her confidence. Bea has definitely come out of her shell and is so confident that in a visit to a barn last weekend, she went right up to the horses to play. She has met so many different people and dogs and loves every minute of it. Bea goes to day school once a week to socialize with other dogs and the trainers have even called her "sassy." On the health front, she has built up strength in the leg that was broken, and it is definitely not holding her back. She is full of energy and loves to romp around our neighborhood in South Congress.

Thanks to everyone for your generous contributions to our Extraordinary Golden Fund! All donations, large and small, make it possible for us to keep on providing medical care to Golden retrievers who need a little something out of the ordinary to make them healthy & whole.

## Canine Astronomy: Dogs in the Sky

BY ARLEN ZANDER

People have been fascinated by celestial phenomena since the dawn of time. Millennia later, after domes-



ticated dogs came into being and achieved a bond with humans that was both endearing and enduring, humans became fascinated with them as well. So it was only natural for humans to incorporate dogs into their observation and exploration of the heavens.

One of the earliest examples of this is the naming of four of the 88 constellations after wolves and dogs: Lupus (wolf), Canis Major (big dog), Canis Minor (little dog) and Canes Venatici (hunting dogs). (There are no constellations named after cats!) These names originated with the ancients, who imagined many of the stars in these constellations to be mythological figures.

According to mythology, Canis Major is one of the dogs of Orion, the great hunter. This constellation is one of the best known in the sky because it contains the brightest star in the night sky: Sirius, also called the Dog Star. The ancient Egyptians named this star after one of their gods, Osiris, who was sometimes depicted with a dog's head. They also noticed that this star was in the sky at the same time as the sun during the hottest part of the year, and hence these times came to be called "dog days." The brightest stars in Canis Major are shown below (M41 is a cluster of about 100 stars).

## How Do You Spell “Success”? That’s Easy...

*R-E-S-C-U-E!*

It’s been another busy year at GRR, with over 110 Golden Retrievers arriving in care so far —ranging in age from a sextet of month-old pups (and their teenage mom) to senior Sail-or, age 12 (see him posted in our Current Care dogs, at <http://www.grr-tx.com/adoption/>). As usual, we’re about equally divided between shelter dogs and owner turn-ins. But one thing that stands out this year is the unusual number of doggie duos: two dogs turned in at once. We’ve had ten pairs to date: mothers and sons; siblings (two sisters, two brothers, or one of each); some “husband-and-wife” couples; and several who were just friends. The most recent arrivals are **Pop Tart** and **Moon Pie**, abandoned on the grounds of a wildlife rescue outside San Antonio. Check these two beauties out on our website. They are both available for adoption right now!

Here’s the latest on just a few of our Golden pairs, and we hope to have more updates for our next newsletter:

**Maxx** and his brother **Marlin** came to GRR at the very end of March. A recent divorce, young children, health concerns... the owner was overwhelmed and just couldn’t care for two tearaway 10-month-old Golden Retrievers. The pups were spending too much time crated. They needed more. And they found it: both youngsters went to foster-pend-adopt homes, and there they stayed. Marlin’s mom says: “Marlin arrived in our home on the second of April; I remember it clearly because that is the day India won the Cricket World Cup after 18 years. A very special day in more than one way! Marlin is now renamed ‘Mahi’ after the Indian captain :) The first few weeks he spent with us, he was a little sad and apprehensive; he did not respond much to our dog Laila’s offers of play. We were concerned that he would not adjust—but we just had to be patient. Laila and Mahi are now best friends! He quickly won our hearts with his goofy, adorable personality. He continues to be quite the troublemaker, but how could anyone be mad at someone as cute as him... and he knows it, too. :) He is a wonderful addition to our family and we only wish we had gotten him sooner.”



Meet Marlin aka Mahi

Just about one month later, **Jovi** (she’ll turn six in October) and her 8-year-old pal **Nemo** were surrendered to us by a young lady getting ready to move to a tiny apartment in New York City. Two large Golden Retrievers living in a 300-square-foot walk-up while mom worked 18-hour shifts as an intern at a local hospital? Um, no. The two dogs were well-loved and well-socialized—great with other dogs, great with kids. “Placing these guys will be a breeze,” we thought. It was true... especially in Jovi’s case, since all it took was finding her a foster home. She never moved out! “Jovi came to my house for foster care on April 30th. Right away I fell in love with her and was pretty sure I was not going to let anyone else adopt her! She had just had surgery to remove an aural hematoma, so her ear was all bristling with stitches and little drainage tubes. Even so, she was cute as a button and so sweet my heart just melted. I adopted her on June 1st. The biggest change with Jovi has been her name. My other Golden Saxon (GRR #07-114) has a Cocker Spaniel BFF named Joey—sounds a lot like ‘Jovi,’ and everyone was getting confused! After test-driving names for a few days, I finally decided on ‘Miss Bunny.’ When she gets excited she hops around like a bunny, and she loves to snuggle, so I was calling her my snuggle bunny.”



Beautiful Jovi  
aka Miss Bunny

“Miss Bunny really loves going for our nightly dog walks with Saxon, Mattie (my current foster), & Joey and his new brother Logan (the Cockers across the street). She’s determined to stop and get pets from any children we meet. She is a very curious gal who likes to follow me around to see what’s happening. She also likes toys of all shapes and sizes and loves to scatter

them about. Miss Bunny is looking forward to our trip to North Texas this month so she can meet her two Corgi cousins and explore their big yard. In the photos, that’s beautiful Miss Bunny in the purple party lei—the occasion was Saxon’s tenth birthday party.”



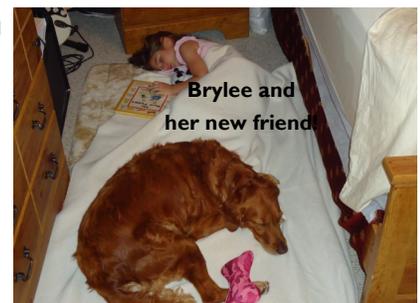
Sweet Mandy

One more month later, one more pair: 5 1/2-year-olds **Mandy** and her brother **Gary**. Sharp-eyed volunteer Lisa spotted a “free to good home” ad on Craigslist and jumped into action. It was another case of life changes, a move to a friend’s home, and time & finances too stretched to care for a pair of big dogs. Mandy and Gary both proved heartworm positive—but that’s the only “negative” we can think of! Gary moved in with a foster-to-adopt family, and we’ll feature his update in an upcoming newsletter. In the meantime, enjoy the photos of this handsome boy. As you can see, he loves his stuffies... sometimes a little too enthusiastically! As for Mandy... “What an amazing dog,” says her foster mom. “She is so loving, never a growl or even a bark at visitors. If we were looking for another dog, she would be it, no doubt.” Mandy’s had a bit of a tough time with her heartworm injections, particularly shot #2. In fact, she was so painful and lethargic after the treatment that the vet elected to skip the “clean-up” shot and re-evaluate a month later. It took a few days, but Mandy perked up again. As of September 15: “Mandy is doing great and I think she will be healthy enough to continue her treatment. It is amazing how she has changed from a dog that could not get up without assistance to a bouncy 6-year-old who acts like she’s about two!”



Gary and his stuffy!!

Two-year-old **Brylee** and her gentleman friend, 6-year-old **Bowan**, were a pair of strays who appeared as if out of nowhere over the Memorial Day holiday. One minute the street was empty; the next, two handsome Golden Retrievers with shiny fur, trimmed paws, and newish collars were strolling into Good Samaritan’s garage, ready for a drink, a snack, and some socializing. The baffled family drove the neighborhood with the dogs cheerfully looking out the windows, then walked the area with the friendly pair on lead—but nobody recognized them. Next, they visited the vet to check for microchips; then they called all the local shelters and clinics they could think of, to see if someone had reported missing boy-and-girl Golden Retrievers; and finally, they posted “found” ads. After all that ... zero results. Both pups were soon adopted. Brylee’s mom sent this photo, with the comment: “Brylee is doing wonderful! She has settled right into our home. She loves our children and is a wonderful addition. Thanks so much for matching us with the perfect dog!” (Note the little girl’s appropriate choice of reading material.) (“The New Puppy” in case you can’t read it.)



Brylee and  
her new friend



**Isis** and her pal **Troy**, both around 6 years old, arrived in care right around Independence Day. Their owner was having a real problem with neighbor kids opening the gate to her yard—and since Golden Retrievers are social creatures, always looking to expand their circle of friends, it was “Don’t mind if I do!” – and out the door and down the street, or up two streets, or over several blocks. It was time for these two to start living the secure indoor life before they strayed so far away they never made it back home. Both dogs were heartworm positive, unfortunately—but the good news is that they’re almost done with their treatment, and that means they’re almost ready for their new homes. A couple of families are going to be very lucky indeed! Isis’s foster family says: “She is fully housetrained, doesn’t jump, great in the car, very good on the leash, very social—especially wonderful with children, calm and friendly. A real sweetheart and champion snuggler. As a bonus, she’s great with cats, too. We think whoever adopts Isis will have to adopt our kitten Alfred, too... just kidding.” But as is often the case, the better the dog feels, the more those devil horns start to sprout... and Isis is no exception. She is a counter surfer extraordinaire. “If I leave the pantry open, she’ll help herself to olive oil (just a small bottle), bread crumbs, & boxes of rice. I think she wants me to bake her a casserole or something! She has got hold of a remote control, the cat’s bed (had to replace it) and has shredded up a newspaper. We no longer leave her alone without a peanut butter-filled Kong and stimulating toys.” Well, it’s all part of the package!

Want to know more about Troy? Please read up on this smart cookie online—he’s accomplished, to say the very least! Knows many commands, intelligent and directable, plays well with others, super car rider—and a constant source of entertainment. Troy’s foster dad recounted how the industrious & observant canine waited until the coast was clear, then carefully pushed a roller bin full of dog food out of the pantry closet, down the hall, and into the kitchen... apparently aiming to wheel it right into his crate, where he figured he could “hide” it and have a feast (this dog does love his chow). Luckily for the health of his stomach, the bin hit a floor mat, tipped over with a crash, and the humans came to investigate—and “we caught a very sheepish Troy trying to decide how to best capitalize on his success. We’ve now put the doggie food under lock and key!”



### Sweet Angel



It was one of those very sad stories: 11-year-old **Angel** and her friend, 5-year-old **Wheeler**, came to GRR at the beginning of August, when their dad passed away. Mom was left to support three young children on a shoestring budget, and knew she couldn’t care for the dogs as well. Both Golden Retrievers had been devoted to their owner—especially Angel, who was at his hospice bedside when he passed away. It’s no surprise, then, that this sweet old girl has continued her “ministering angel” work in her new home. “She has a very wise sense about her, such a sweet spirit,” says her new mom. “I work as a speech-language therapist with adults going through rehab following brain injuries, strokes, etc. Angel often joins me at work, and all the patients just adore her. She just seems to ‘know’ what they need. Nothing fazes her! It’s been amazing to see how they open up and relax when she is there. She has even somehow managed to have quite the calming effect on our VERY energetic 3-year-old Golden, Charlie! We jokingly call her ‘Charlie’s Angel.’ It is truly a gift to have been matched with her. She could not be a more perfect fit for our family. She is very loved.”

**Wheeler**—also known as **Wheels**, for her excellent car behavior!—is still in foster care. She’s more of a high-stress girl, so we’ve just shifted her to a new foster home where Mom is home almost all the time, and where there are several other older, calmer Golden Retrievers to help soothe and mentor her. We’ll have a report and more details soon.

...and with over three more months to go in the year, who knows how many more pairs we’ll be taking in? But whether it’s one at a time, two at a time, or even more (you never know when another litter of puppies will appear!), we’ll keep on making room—and working hard to create more perfect matches & happy endings.

## Special Needs = Extra-Special!

Every year brings us Golden Retrievers who need something extra—help for medical issues, special attention to behavioral problems. 2011 is no exception; in fact, earlier this year we took in three medical-needs dogs in just under one week (you can read about **Maverick**, **Mikki**, and **Naia**, all Extraordinary Golden Fund dogs, on our adoption page: <http://www.grr-tx.com/adoption/>). Such dogs can be hard to place, so when handsome **Cornflake**, just 5 years old, was diagnosed with megaesophagus, we were worried. He’d already escaped from the shelter by the skin of his teeth, on the morning of his “end hold” day – and now this??

In megaesophagus, the esophagus doesn’t contract properly, so food and water don’t move down into the stomach as they should. Instead, whatever is ingested remains largely in the esophagus, for varying lengths of time—and then it comes right back up. In most cases, and that includes **Cornflake**’s, the cause is unknown. But sometimes the condition resolves spontaneously, and in the meanwhile, it CAN be managed. The trick is to feed smaller and more frequent meals, to limit water consumption to a cup or so at a time, and to elevate food and water bowls to just below head level, so that the dog eats and swallows standing upright, letting gravity help propel food down into the stomach, where it should be.

Still—would we be able to find a family willing to deal with the challenge? Well—as you can guess, we did! **Cornflake**’s mom takes up the story:



**When we started working with the GRR matchmakers, they suggested we take a look at the Golden profiles online. When we saw Cornflake’s story, our hearts went out to**

**him. A sweet Golden with an esophagus problem? We have experience with this same issue in our own family, but we’d never heard of it in dogs. We spoke with our matchmaker a few times, sharing our interest in Cornflake but also our concerns. What if we can’t handle it? What if it’s too much for us? Thank GOODNESS we set our concerns aside and went to meet this wonderful Golden!**

When we walked into **Cornflake**’s foster home, he seemed to know that someone special was coming to see him. He greeted us so quickly and wouldn’t leave our side. He showed us what a good retriever he is and wouldn’t let his tennis ball out of his sight either. We thought he was a wonderful dog then, but just wait, it gets better.

We brought **Cornflake** home and quickly learned what an esophagus problem looks like in dogs. He regurgitated a little bit; we cleaned up the mess and went on our way. We had every family member in town over to meet our new Golden. EVERYONE loves him! Even people who don’t like dogs love him!

He and our Yorkshire terrier, **Annie**, have become buds. In the past, she wouldn’t let another dog anywhere near us. Now, **Cornflake** shares the couch with all of us and she gives him kisses to greet him on the couch. They are the SWEETEST match and believe it or not, have started a forever game of tug-o-war. He lets her win and it’s pretty cute to watch.



Other than elevating **Cornflake**’s food and making sure he doesn’t roll around too much after he eats (so he can let his food settle first) nothing about his esophagus problem has been an issue or has ever made us think twice about keeping him. We went on a limb thinking we might be biting off more than we could chew—and in return, we received a Golden who has filled our hearts, completed our family and has found his forever place in the world. We love him SO much and are SO happy we are the ones who GET to care for him!

Now THAT is a happy ending!

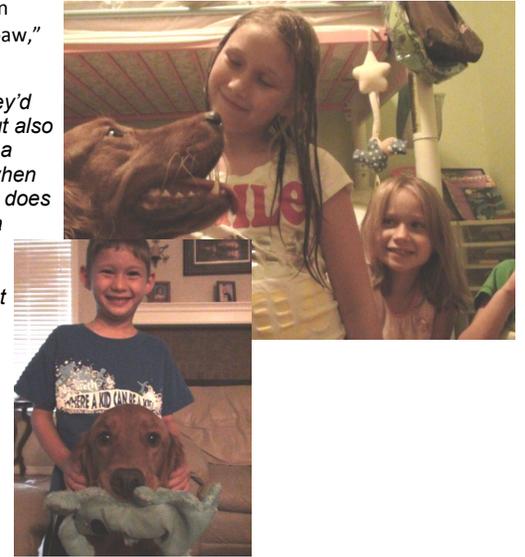
... a few months later, another possibly-hard-to-rehome boy appeared on the radar. It's a story we have heard all too often in these tough times: 4 1/2-year-old **Takota** came to us when his family lost their jobs—and then, their home as well. Takota is charming, cute, petite, likes cats & kids; but he developed epilepsy at age three and had been taking phenobarbital since then. At his initial vet visit, the doctor decided to reduce his pheno dose—and then it would just be watch, wait, and get blood levels tested regularly. Would we find a family willing to deal with an open-ended problem of this sort? Yep... as Takota's foster family said, "He quickly wraps everyone around his paw," and his new family is no exception!

*Takota is my velcro boy. He follows me everywhere. In fact, the kids were a little jealous at first when they'd invite him to play outside and he wouldn't go unless I went too! He still loves fetching his tennis balls, but also enjoys his stuffy duck that squeaks, his rawhide bone, and big sticks from the backyard. We bought him a comfy dog bed (well, actually he chose it himself at PetSmart!) & he sleeps there every night... except when Jeff's out of town and I let him sleep with me! Takota and I are enjoying our morning walks together. He does pretty great on the leash. Last week he met a Golden Girl and made quick friends, but he seems to be a snob when it comes to those less adequate "other breeds." We've all been looking forward to seeing Takota swim and I guess he was too. We were at Brushy Creek Park, he bolted, chased a group of ducks, and SPLASH! He ended up going on an unexpected, brief, muddy swim. He of course got his first bath here later that day, which he loved. Yes, Takota has our entire family wrapped around his paws. He rides in the car to take the kids to school and pick them up every day. He is already a star at Deepwood Elementary!*

Here's what the other Crawfords have to say about our sweet boy:

- I love to groom him and play fetch with him. He's an angel! (Christine, age 10)
- I wanted a puppy but I'm glad I got Takota instead. He's fun! (Colton, age 6)
- I love him! I like that he likes my hugs. (Olivia, age 8)
- It feels like he's been part of our family forever. (Jeff)

*Takota is the perfect addition to our family! (Well, in ALMOST everyone's opinion. Clea the cat says, "He seems nice enough, but I like to keep him in his place. He is a dog after all." But we'll ignore Miss Sourpuss!)*



And sometimes, a dog needs some extra help AFTER adoption. Adorable **Chance** was surrendered to the Giddings shelter because he likes chickens... but not in a good way. Nobody ever told this young fella that he was supposed to protect the chicken coop from marauders, not plunder it himself! Clearly he wasn't going to make it as a ranch dog, so he found himself in the clink hoping desperately that the charges would be dropped. Phew! – help soon arrived in the form of volunteer Pat, all ready to post bail and spring the miscreant pronto. She found a petite, bright-eyed, lively, gentle redhead "with the cutest facial expressions." Chance's foster family was equally charmed: "He's delightful, energetic, outgoing, eager to please. A very quick study, learns very quickly. Play time seems to be something new to him, but he shows great pride in his progress fetching tennis balls." In fact, he did so well so quickly that he was adopted just twelve short days after arriving in GRR care. Hooray!



... but the very next day, Chance developed a serious limp. A vet visit revealed a problem called *osteocondritis dissecans*, in which the cartilage in a joint (in this case, Chance's shoulder) becomes inflamed; and then a small piece actually chips off & floats about in the joint capsule. It is painful! "Imagine a sharp pebble in your shoe that moves around and hurts you at every step," said the vet. Since Chance's problem was clearly pre-existing, GRR quickly arranged for the surgery he needed to repair it. Time was of the essence, since the lucky boy was soon to head off for a month in cool Colorado with his new mom and dad.

Just this week, we got this happy report. Chance, now Charlie, is doing great!



Charlie had a wonderful time with us in Colorado, despite being restricted to the crate much of the time. The great weather and the plethora of critters made him very happy. Upon our return, he got the "all systems go" from Dr. Kerpsack, and we are delighted about that. Dr. Kerpsack removed about a quarter-size piece of cartilage floating around in his shoulder, and I am sure it must have been quite painful for him. Now he is bounding around and has acclimated very well to our household. Even Abbie, our miniature Pinscher, is warming up to him. She was quite wary at first! In the photo you can see the two of them returning from the park after their morning outing. We hope to see Charlie through a very long and healthy life.



Thanks to generous donations from our GRR community, we are able to help dogs with health issues from minor to severe – and thanks to wonderful families willing to take a chance on a dog who isn't quite "perfect," we are able to give our special-needs Golden Retrievers the lives they deserve. Thanks to all of you for helping give ALL our rescue Golden Retrievers the opportunity for a bright future!