



**“Where does my GRR contribution go?”** You’ve heard of our Extraordinary Golden Fund, a special account used for high-cost procedures such as hip replacements, complicated surgeries, prolonged hospitalization, and the like. But across the board, the costs of getting even “ordinary” rescue dogs healthy enough to embark on a new life with a new family can really add up.

Spay/neuter, blood and urine testing, X-rays and ultrasounds for suspicious limbs & lumps, antibiotics and shampoos for ear & skin infections, heartworm treatment (typically required for about a quarter of our dogs): for the 150 dogs we rescued and placed in 2014, our expenses totaled over \$100,000, and 2015 won’t be any different. It’s all part of what your donations make it possible for us to provide.

Adoption fees cover less than a third of our costs (far less, for some dogs)—so you can see just how greatly we rely on you, our members. Your contribution means that we can keep on saying, “Yes, GRR can help!” when a Golden in need comes our way.

And there have been plenty this year! **Below, we highlight just a few, including THREE litters of puppies.**



## **YOUNGSTERS...**

### ***The First Puppy Brigade: Ritz, Graham & Porter***

It’s an old, old story for shelters: the staff leaves for the night and returns the next day to find a anxious dog tied to the door or a box of kittens on the front steps. So it was for a local animal control on the May 1: no sooner had the first officer opened the building and started on her rounds than she heard a mysterious “yip-yip-yip” from the exercise area. Investigation revealed that not one, not two, but three fluffballs had made an unauthorized entry onto the premises, likely simply dumped over the fencing. Even muddy and covered with fleas, tiny **Ritz, Graham, and Porter** provided a triple dose of oh-so-cute! When photos of the trio popped through to our e-mails, those button noses, bright eyes, eager grins, stubby puppy tails, and downy coats instantly generated a cascade of oohs, aahs, and “can I help with transport?!”

Once at the shelter, we whisked the pups into their crates and sped them to the clinic for their exams, squeaking in just before closing time. Needless to say, GRR's newest Golden retrievers created quite a stir! Just 12 to 14 weeks old, they were utterly irresistible; in fact, Ritz (the huskiest, at a whopping 30 pounds) immediately conquered his doctor's heart, to the point where she put in application to adopt him before he was back out the door. Aside from being grubby & tangled, the trio looked great (aside from yeasty ears, for which each received a bottle of drops).

But trouble was brewing... just 48 hours later, puppy Porter became lethargic, then started to vomit. Then more vomiting, then diarrhea and refusal to eat or drink. It was alarming enough to warrant a trip to the ER, where we got the news we always dread where unvaccinated shelter pups are concerned: parvovirus. In addition, the tiny patient was severely anemic, perhaps due to a heavy infestation of hookworms. Porter was promptly put in an isolation and started on IV fluids and meds (the virus kills through dehydration, so keeping ailing dogs well hydrated is crucial).

Parvo is highly contagious. Hoping to keep Ritz and Graham safe, we started both on antivirals. But within another day, Graham, too, was becoming listless and uninterested in food. Ritz followed suit a few days after (his case was the lightest, probably thanks to the ameliorating effects of the meds).

A bit of a rough start, no doubt. But we're happy to report that quick action and good care saved the day—and the puppies. All three pint-sized patients soon turned the corner: chewing on their IV lines, eagerly accepting solid food, and yodeling in protest at being left in the hospital: "Get me out of here! It looks like a lot more fun out there!"

*At this writing, Ritz has of course moved in with his own personal physician, and Graham and Porter have found their forever homes, too. It's onward to a long and happy life!*

### ***Puppy Brigade, Waves Two & Three: Layla & Family, Jade and Her Pups***



Three weeks after our first puppy trio arrived, springtime Puppy Pandemonium broke out in force: eleven pups in only two weeks!

On April 1, shelter girl **Miss Layla** arrived from way down South. Carrying stowaways!! She kept it a secret while she recovered from kennel cough & got healthy enough for spay surgery. But by that time, 7 weeks later, her rotund form (and an ultrasound) revealed the truth: five pups had come along on the trip north. **Yankee, Doodle, Dandy, Glory, and Rebel** made their entrance in dramatic fashion during the historic Memorial Day storms: four girls, one boy; two black, three gold with white stripes and spots. Puppies and their devoted mom are all doing beautifully.



Just three weeks later, yet more puppies! This time it was a young mama and her 12-week-old family of six. Gaunt, covered with fleas, her skin raw and itchy, trembling with weakness, **Jade** clearly hadn't had a moment of TLC in her young life. Her babies, too, were itchy and flea-infested, but for lucky **Coral, Opal, Pearl, Topaz, Onyx, and Jet**, life is going to be peaches & cream starting right now. Just 5 to 7 pounds each, the pups (there are four girls and two boys; two brown pups, four black) are already feeling much better. Jade, too, is getting all the help she needs, and you can tell even now that she'll be a beauty in a few months' time. Stay tuned for updates!

### SENIOR GEMS....

#### *Two Wanderers Find a Home: Willow and Nolan*

Of course, it's not just tiny pups in need who come to GRR. We're just as likely to see the other end of the age range. So far this year, almost one-fourth of our dogs are over the age of eight—and senior strays and shelter dogs often come to us after a lifetime of neglect.



Case in point: **Willow and Nolan**. Right about the time the “morning surprise” puppies were dumped at the shelter, a similar scenario was playing out on a farm 120 miles southwest of Austin. This time, though, the trespassers were senior citizens of 8 to 10 years old. Bony and dirty, they may have been living off the land for a while: but luckily for them, the kindly farmer gave them shelter in his barn (and a complimentary flea shampoo or two) while he figured out what to do. He put out an SOS to our sister Houston group, and—networking to the rescue! A few days later, Willow and Nolan rolled into Austin.

This brother-sister pair (or maybe husband and wife?) are total charmers. A hard life didn't make a dent on that amazing Golden ability to stay upbeat, curious, friendly, and relaxed through one change after another. Nolan in particular needed that positive attitude! “He's a bit of a train wreck,” said the vet. Heartworms; whipworms; itchy, tender, “allergy” skin; chronic ear issues (so common in older strays), with an active infection raging at intake. Are we done yet? No! Nolan had entropion on both eyes: his lids turned inward, scratching his eyeballs and causing a lot of discharge and irritation. “Surgery coming up,” we thought.

However: one step at a time. And four weeks of step-by-step have already wrought a stunning transformation. “Thanks to great vet care and all kinds of love from us, Nolan has blossomed into the most amazing dog,” says his foster mom. “He is slowly gaining weight, his coat is becoming soft and beautiful, and his eyes are clear, bright and happy

(incredibly, the entropion resolved all on its own: no surgery needed!). I cannot say enough good things about this sweet, sweet boy. He walks well on a leash, gets along well with other dogs, and loves our kids. His favorite pastime is being anywhere the humans are. Anyone who meets him will immediately fall in love with his look of pure love and his goofy smile.”

Lovely Willow, though skinny as a rail at 47 pounds, started out in better shape than her pal. No heartworms, good eyes, great ears! Her main problem was those pearly whites: severe tartar, some teeth missing, three broken canines, three incisors cracked & starting to abscess. We got that handled right away: when she was under anaesthesia for her spay, the vet pulled out the bad teeth and polished up the rest. Willow then needed a course of meds to take care of intestinal worms; she had three different kinds, likely due to living off who knows what kind of forage for the past months.

*Just as calm and sweet as her friend, Willow flourished in foster care. Under “any concerns?” on her weekly report card, her foster mom commented, “Just that I am worried I won’t have her here much longer, ha ha.” Those “fears” were realized: after just over one month, Willow was healthy enough to move in with her new family! She was adopted on June 14.*



#### **GRR’s Senior Valentine: A Lucky Lady at Last**

It was a little before Valentine’s Day when an SOS came in from the shelter: “We got this 11-year-old in today. Looks like she has been a mom many times over. She is an owner surrender and available right now. The woman had her for about 1 month and the dog had been abandoned with her. Teeth are atrocious, saliva is tinged with blood. She is heartworm positive as well.” But—if there’s any dog who knows how to Rise Above, it’s a Golden, so when GRR volunteers arrived to collect her, lovely Lady ignored her physical woes to greet them with grace and enthusiasm. A vet check confirmed the awful dental issues (periodontal disease, gum recession, likely multiple extractions needed) and heartworm disease. Blood tests turned up something else, too: very low platelets, possibly related to tick disease (for which she also tested positive). A low platelet count means blood won’t clot properly, and that makes surgeries very risky. So—spay and dental on hold while we work on the blood issue. Four months’ worth of antibiotics later, we’re still not where we want to be, but there’s no doubt that Lady herself is JUST where she wants to be. That rough road has finally turned into Easy Street, and nobody could enjoy or appreciate it more. “Lady is sweet, adorable, calm, velcro, quiet, happy, eager to make new friends, low energy. So well-mannered, polite and sweet! She is one big teddy bear. She adores all grooming: baths, ear cleaning, pedicures. Lady is most happy when you are touching her. She actually prances!”

## AND IN BETWEEN...

Besides our newborns and seniors, of course we get lots of “in-betweens.” **Alvin, Thorne and Tango** are just three of these...

### Alvin Says Hooray for Rescue!

The very same day that Jade and her family came to Austin, **Alvin** tagged along for the ride as well. Alvin seemed to be in the best but what’s with the awful breath?! The horrific Dracula-esque fumes persisted and finally warranted a trip to the clinic, where the source was discovered: the vet found a thick, forked piece of bone wedged, and actually imbedded by ¼ inch, into the roof of in Alvin’s mouth! “What a complete & utter sweetheart,” she said. “He let me open his mouth & look all over. He is so good and friendly. I will sedate him & get the bone out now.” Alvin will return to the vet soon for some tooth extractions and a dental cleaning (the vet had a good look around when she removed the bone), but right now he’s home recuperating. “I can’t imagine how in the world he has been so sweet-natured,” says his foster mom. “He must have been so miserable and in such pain. The vet said the bone was so imbedded that the roots of his teeth were exposed. She said he should start feeling much better very quickly. He’s a little woozy from the anesthetic, but otherwise seems OK. What a soldier!”

### Meet Tango

Among our special-needs dogs is 18-month-old **Tango**, a rescue girl from Houston. She arrived in Austin a few weeks back and entered training to become a service dog—but her habit of drinking lots & lots of water all the time was concerning enough to warrant a vet visit. The news wasn’t good: sweet Tango has congenitally malformed kidneys, an issue which will likely shorten her life to 4 or 5 years. But she doesn’t know it, and for now, this lovely Golden is having a great time in foster care!

### Survivor San Antonio: Thorne



**Thorne**—pretty classy name, right? Sounds like an earl, or a business tycoon, or an actor, or a famous singer. But the name hardly seemed to suit THIS dog: “Tick-infested, dirty, unkempt. Unable to stand on hind legs, likely pelvis injury, right front leg knuckling useless and knuckling under.” Yet the shelter staff member who christened him “Thorne” must have seen his heart, not his down-and-out exterior. Because this dog most surely has style, dignity, class, and go-get-em attitude to spare!

Thorne’s story began at the end of April, when a motorist spotted a motionless bundle of matted golden fur by the side of the road and contacted Animal Control: “There’s a dead dog here, must have been hit by a car. Could you please come remove it?” He then climbed out to shift the body further off to the verge. But when he approached, the dog

rustled his tail, marginally lifted his head, and looked at the man through crusted eyes: “I’m still here.” And when the AC officer appeared, Thorne even tried to stand, though he soon sank back down again. Still, that initial veterinary assessment sounded pretty dire—and there was more, too. Thorne has a tic affecting his head: his scalp and ears twitch, and his teeth clack. That, and the way one front paw rolls under as if he doesn’t know it’s there, pointed to some neurological damage. It was all enough to earn Thorne an early release from the pound.

It was too late for the vet that evening, so 5-year-old Thorne went home with Donna and Arne. Ahhh! A long, warm bath, a nice dinner, good pain meds, a soft bed, and lots of love: pure bliss for Thorne. Once all the grime was rinsed away, we realized we had a real prince on our hands. His flat, grayish, matted fur turned soft, fluffy and creamy blonde, with darker gold on his ears; and his expression could not be sweeter.

Thorough vet exams confirmed that Thorne was NOT hit by a car. The symptoms all point to a past case of distemper. This dreaded virus attacks the nervous system, and many dogs die once they contract it. Those who somehow pull through are usually left with neurological issues, and this is the case with Thorne—hence the twitching & tremoring in his head. The unusable front leg likely has the same source; the virus set up house in the nerves, and there isn’t any way to repair the damage. “There’s not much chance he’ll regain use of it. He doesn’t seem to have any feeling in it at all.”

As is true for so many other rescue strays, Thorne’s past is a mystery. When did he get sick, and how did he manage to pull through? How did he wind up where he was found? Did he wander off and collapse, unable to go farther—or, as seems sadly likely, given his inability to walk far, was he simply discarded by the roadside? We will never know... and it doesn’t really matter. Starting from the day he rode away from the shelter, he’ll live like the Important Personage he truly is.

And seven weeks down the road, his progress just about defies belief. That dog who was left for dead on the road is thoroughly alive, lively, & loving every single minute! “He is doing great! His clicks and tremors continue, the scalp is constantly twitching and the teeth are chattering, but it doesn’t faze him one bit. He tries to use the ‘bad’ front foot at times; he has learned how to flop it forward as he hops through the yard, and he figured out how to lift a leg to pee by leaning against a tree for support. He is a very smart cookie! He is the most vocal dog we’ve had in the house—he just loves to ‘talk’ (not bark), and has a lot to say when we get up in the morning and arrive home at night. We have no way of knowing is how his disease will progress from here, but for now he has the best attitude in the world—and he is such a *happy* dog, just a love, and has such a sweet disposition.”

## Helping Golden in Need

Your contribution gives these dogs, and so many more, the opportunity for a happy new life. Your GRR contribution is tax-deductible. [Click here to make your donation](#). To read the full stories and details about these dogs, [click here](#).