



Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue, Inc.

Winter 2012

Blue Ribbon Special

Just before the holidays, I usually start contacting the owners of all the Labs we've fostered over the years, requesting updates, pictures, etc. Invariably, I receive their wholehearted cooperation, especially after three or four threats to flatten their tires. Others, for some reason, change their email addresses from year to year without notifying me.

Without exception, these families describe their new companions as "cherished members of the family," "our best Christmas present ever," "the perfect running buddy," "a watchful protector" who lets "our diapered toddler brain him with her Transformer toy—only to slouch over out of reach." All of these are forever dogs. None will ever be un-adopted.

But sometimes dogs are "un"-adopted. That is, they are adopted... then "un." "Pees on rug." "Counter surfs." "Whines in crate." "Climbs on people." "Doesn't get along with A, B or C." "Ate my best TopSiders." "Snores." "Farts." And so on and so on. But, for whatever reason, they do come back—these un-adopted ones—these 5%.

This is three times a sadness: First, for the adopted dog who now is thrown again into a life of uncertainty, chasing something he thought he'd already found. Second, for the people who adopted the dog and surely



agonizing over the decision and perhaps second-guessing it the rest of their lives. And finally, for that one dog who was rightfully meant to be theirs, their true forever dog who was never found because they stopped looking too soon.

Rescue organizations like GGLRR exist for the very purpose of preventing that 5% from coming back. We are committed to placing these trusting and loyal friends—not just in a home, not just in a good home—in the perfect home. A local shelter can tell you that, "um, #17 peed at four, and pooped at six." But call the family that's fostered that same dog for a week, and you'll learn she marks every fifteen feet, does her business once a day and is fearless around any dog behind a locked gate. You'll learn that she can be trusted around soft toys and soft children, but not pork chops on the counter and that she is working on Part Two of "fetch and bring," likes bananas and anything else on the sidewalk.

It is not surprising that, in today's busy world, well-intentioned folks might hastily adopt, only to find they've found no match made in Heaven. Good intentions do not always good outcomes make. With the help of dedicated organizations like GGLRR, you can truly find that one guy or gal who waits for you—your "Blue Ribbon Special."

And even more important, they can find you.

—James

Clyde & Chloe

Dogs have been part of my life from the day I was born. My parents brought home a Springer Spaniel the same day I was brought home from my grandfather's hospital. With rare exception, there have always been from one to four dogs in my life. Springers. Labradors. Briards. Rhodesian Ridgebacks. I would not like to be without them again.

When my parents came to live with me, I bought a home that would handle three adults—two with business activities—and four medium to larger dogs. There were three Labs and a Rhodesian. Imagine what a greeting at our house was like!

As time marched on, three of the original four pups passed on. One of those three, Ruby, was an adoptee through Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue. We found another Lab when Ruby was unable to manage the walks with my father. So we had two dogs, Duffy and Bella, that provided the companionship, fun and entertainment with which dogs always seem amply endowed.

In 2009, we had a fire that destroyed our home and took the older Lab, Duffy. Fortunately, Bella survived the fire. She really was the glue of sanity for my father and me in the ensuing two and a half years of getting our lives and home back together. Then, at age seven, Bella became unable to walk due to a tumor on her spine. It was wrenching to put her to sleep. Then there were no dogs.

We had only recently moved back into our home.



Life was still pretty hectic dealing with the fire, my business and my father's needs. I thought I would wait a bit before introducing a new dog into the picture. But a month down the road neither my father nor I could stand the quiet of the house. Finding a canine companion was essential.

Our search ended when we found Clyde and Chloe on the GGLRR website. Sister and brother were almost eight years old and needed a home. I hadn't been considering two dogs, but when we met these two, it was impossible to imagine separating them. GGLRR had adopted them out a year earlier, but it hadn't worked. Eleven months after the adoption, the pair was returned. Having had four dogs at one time, I was sure two would be workable. Actually, I think it's best to have two. GGLRR was concerned that my father, then 93, might have difficulty with the dogs. We assured them that we could handle it. Thankfully, GGLRR believed us!

When Chloe and Clyde joined us they weren't house trained. They were expert escape artists. And Clyde seemed to have quite a taste for books—which drove me crazy to see goods recently purchased completely mangled. There were also other things this long-legged Lab could reach—and did.

Imagine being jostled from place to place. Clyde was most uncertain this would be his forever home. Chloe figured if she stayed glued to my side I couldn't possibly give her up. The house training and escapes were something of a test for me. Chloe took the longest to figure out that the outside was the right

place for her pee. The escapes were curbed when I had concrete poured underneath my fence, added a low voltage wire around the inside of the fence and figured out that if I had one dog by the collar, the other simply will not leave.

It's really rather funny watching Chloe planning an escape. It happens when someone is at the front door. I make a point of holding onto Clyde's collar while talking to the person at the door. If the conversation goes on a bit, Chloe goes out into the driveway. You can see her mind working away. I know she's saying, "This would be a really good time to run to the open space!" She starts off, going about 10 feet and then notices Clyde isn't with her. She looks back and wonders why he isn't joining her. Then she concedes that this isn't really the best day for a run around the neighborhood.

Clyde doesn't plan escapes. And he won't leave if I have Chloe's collar. In fact he is the best at returning on first call. I think he likes having his place and knowing where home is.

One never knows what an adopted dog has experienced before coming to your home. You can be surprised by a behavior that suddenly emerges. It takes time for the adoptee to settle in, decide this is home and be willing to express herself fully.

We were very lucky with Clyde and Chloe. They had good training—even if houstraining wasn't part of it. They don't charge down the stairs. They don't jump up on people. They are very easy with other dogs. They've



accepted the new rules of our home in pretty short order.

It's now seven months since the adoption. These two characters are the softest, sweetest Labs I've ever met. I'm so glad they weren't split up. The two are usually in touching distance of one another and rarely separate. The only thing that makes me sad is that they are already eight years old, limiting the time we will have with them. But it is quite worth it.

Dog owners who have one dog often say that they could never replace their pet when it dies. As a former dog trainer, I used to suggest that owners get a second dog while the first is still alive. It makes it a lot easier to transfer the affection and reduce the pain. It isn't that you don't miss your dog friend, but there's a sweet, soft companion to help lessen the burden of the loss.

For us, it was completely easy to love Clyde and Chloe. We miss Duffy and Bella. Nothing can replace my feelings that come from raising Duffy, doing agility training together and our travels. All dogs have their very own personalities that are unique and wonderful. We are grateful to GGLRR, which has such committed and determined volunteers to find homes for Labradors in need and to the vets who care for them. There are so many Labs without homes these days due to the economic downturn. I'm glad we weren't at all ready to have a puppy and sought out an older friend in need. There is no question that Clyde and Chloe have their forever home. I just wish it was my forever, and not theirs.

— Ora Citron

Lexi

Forever adopted at 10, on July 27, 2010.
Laid to rest on December 26, 2011.



I fulfilled my promise to Lexi yesterday by being the last face she saw in this life. (My vet office has really clean floors!) Years of neglect, bordering on abuse, had taken its toll on Lexi's health before we ever met. Lexi

was the sweetest, kindest dog I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. I've cried harder on her passing than I imagined. The silence is the hardest part. No "yarfing" distress calls just to know I'm in another room, no rustling of the trash cabinet and most of all, no dog snores beside my bed. I've lost my dog shadow, kind of like Peter Pan! While my vet and her tech told me how I had gone above and beyond in my care for Lexi, it does little to ease my sadness of her passing. I miss that dog and always will. I'm in my mourning period, but my birthday is in February. May I please have another dog? I have an acre, fully fenced and will consider a pair that needs to stay together.

See? I'm already planning!

Lexi taught me a great life lesson: age never matters, it is all about quality time. I did not think my time with Lexi would have been this short, but every moment counted. From the days swimming in the Russian River to chasing trout in the big pond of Lake County, every walk in every neighborhood was joyous to Lexi. She wanted to walk long after her health started to fail, and we still went on short dawdles about until the end. Thanks to you people for getting us together. Thanks to the foster home in Sonoma. Please let them know how thankful I am for deciding to foster! Lexi was their first foster and they were great people, I don't remember their names. Most of all, thanks for Lexi and from her too. Sexy Lexi, Yarf, Big Yellow Dog, Big Blond Doofuss has left the building and we miss her. But, it's all part of love.

– Nancy O'Byrne

Charlie



Charlie is such a great addition to our family. So sweet and kind. Funny timing, I was just thinking about sending you an update last night. He and I have really become best of friends. I take him over to the neighborhood school and let him off leash in the evenings to let him do his thing, and he comes right back when he is called. He really is a great dog. You would never know he is nine. This picture is Charlie in his "new" bed in our bedroom. This used to be a giant pillow my boys used to lay on to watch TV. But after a day or two of Charlie being around, he claimed it as his bed and we moved it into the bedroom to sleep on at night. That is, of course, after has been up with me on the bed watching TV and getting belly scratches. He also loves to ride in the car and I take him with me on cool days for car rides. Our family has really fallen in love with him and he with us. It feels like he has been with us forever. I changed his food from the foster, back when we first brought him home to a no grain food and started him on glucosamine and fish oils. He seems to be really responding well to all of that. His coat is beautiful and shiny and he seems to be doing fine off the Rimadyl. Charlie is the best!!

– Brian Hays



Kody

Having been a faithful Lab owner and therapy dog trainer for over 20 years, volunteering with Golden Gate Lab Rescue is a wonderful opportunity for me to give back to a breed of animals that has brought so much love and joy to me, my family, and those around me. In working with GGLRR, I've fostered and evaluated a variety of Labs needing to find new homes, each situation different, yet every dog possessing an endearing quality that affirms my desire to donate a few hours each month to their cause.

It wasn't until I met Kody that I had an insight into the important role so many different people play in helping these dogs. As typical, I received an email with a brief description of Kody's situation and some contact information. After coordinating busy schedules, I finally met Kody as he quietly peered through a sliding glass door leading to a lovely manicured backyard. I was shocked by his dull coat, his protruding ribs, and hair loss caused by dehydration. While most dogs show an interest in meeting me, usually wanting to at least sniff the scents of my own three dogs, Kody stood and looked at me blankly. Looking into his sad eyes I spoke softly to him, but there was little response. He just stood looking at me blankly.

Kody allowed me to pet him, remained still as I examined his coat, checked his ears, his teeth and asked his owner specifics about Kody's history and general behavior. As I took pictures for prospective families, Kody continued to look at me blankly, even when I offered a treat. I allowed him three small treats, which he devoured. When he saw I had nothing more to offer, he searched the patio, only to paw at an empty water dish. He was given several bowls of water as I assured his owner we'd find Kody a good home.

It was arranged that Kody would be dropped off the next day at a local vet. When I picked him up that night, I was met by a bathed dog who nuzzled into my side as he was discharged into my care. We drove through torrential rain as I gave thanks for the many people who donate time and money to ensure compassionate medical evaluations and grooming for dogs entering our program. I was grateful for the volunteers who coordinate foster homes often available



at a moment's notice, and for the families willing to trust that the homeless or abandoned dog we deliver into their care won't wreak havoc in their lives.

I left Kody several hours later as he settled into his foster home. It was hard to believe it had been just 24 hours since we first met. Here he was, eating a full meal, playing with squeaky toys, and being shown to his own bed inside a warm house. What touched me most was the way he wagged his tail and grinned broadly as I snapped photos of a transformed dog.

Several weeks have since gone by and Kody has moved on, happily settling in to his forever home. I'm happy to report that the pictures from the day we first met have been deleted, and replaced by pictures of a happy dog owner hugging a smiling black lab with a shiny coat. On Kody's behalf, I continue to give thanks to the slew of volunteers, many of us who have never met, plus the financial donations that add up to cover veterinarian care that GGLRR incoming dogs often require. Some of us give our time, some open our homes as foster parents, some donate money. No matter how we serve or what we donate, I feel privileged to see the dramatic impact that both large and small efforts have on the animals, their families, and our community.

– Liz Mesenbring, volunteer

Jake

I wanted to give you all an update on our dog, Jake, whom we adopted from GGLRR in November. He has done so well at our house, it feels like he has always been a member of our family! We had a wonderful Christmas, which was all the merrier with Jake around. He loved to wear his jingle bell collar and has been “playing” tetherball with the kids (their present from Santa) every chance he gets. Our vet had us take him off the seizure medication to see if he was still having seizures, and he did start having them again so he is back on the meds, probably for life. The epilepsy doesn't slow him down at all. The vet expects him to live a full life with no adverse effects. He has been enjoying daily runs with my husband and we have also taken him on many hikes and trips to the beach (which he loves more than anything in the world!) Since we both work from home, he gets lots of attention, and the kids and their friends adore him. He is the favorite dog of the neighborhood! Jake is so loveable and we feel so lucky to have him. Thank you ALL for the kindness that you showed to him, for saving his life and for allowing him to find his way into our lives... for that we will be eternally grateful. Attached are some recent photos, maybe one for the next calendar?

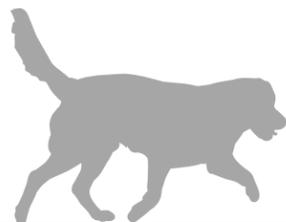
– Courtney Blair



Callie

This is my story of my donation to you! I was at St. Raymond School, in Menlo Park (my school), one day and my teachers told me we were going to have people from Half Moon Bay Garbage dump come to our school and tell us about recycling. I was excited. When we came into our school gymnasium, they were there and started talking to us about how we can recycle. They also told us that instead of throwing out garbage we could reuse it. They took out a bag that was made out of candy wrappers, a water-proof journal with paper made out of trees, a journal with paper made from bananas, a journal with paper made out of elephant poop, and lastly my favorite, a Capri Sun (the juice boxes) wallet! I was so inspired that I wanted to make my own. When I went home, right away I went on to YouTube to see if anybody posted videos on how to make Capri Sun wallets. I looked for a while and saw a video that was just right. I didn't know how to sew yet, so I asked my mom to help me. Now I'm a pro! The next weekend I started making them. Then, I thought, when I go back to school I could share them with whomever wanted to have one. I started selling them for fifty cents. After a while I thought I don't need to keep the money for myself and I wanted to donate it to Golden Gate Retriever Lab Rescue. Today that is what I'm doing. I wanted to donate it to the GGLRR, because that is where I got my sweet black Lab Callie. Whenever someone calls my name, Callie thinks they are calling her because my name is Allie and our names sounds so alike. Also, I went onto the website a couple weeks ago and wanted to donate money to dogs with disabilities. There was a dog name Kane who was blind and deaf. I just saw that he got enough money donated to him so he could have surgery (what a tough fighter). Please put this letter into your newsletter, so I can raise more money for Golden Gate Lab Retriever Rescue. I want to end human cruelty to animals like Kane.

Sincerely,
– Allie Doyle



Kane

Dear Allie, my name is Judi and I just read your letter to Golden Gate Lab Rescue and wanted to tell you what a wonderful job you are doing saving the planet and saving dogs. I would love to be able to see your wallet,s but I wanted to tell you also about my adventure with GGLRR.

I also saw the story about Kane and knew he was worth “recycling.” That is why I made an appointment with his foster parents Tom and Dale in May, 2011 to let him interview me. Well, he gave them the “OK” and I adopted Kane, blind and deaf and arthritic as he was. He wasn't ready for the trash and I hoped I could give him a second chance at life. He came to live with me and my three and a half-pound dog named Joey soon after meeting him. To say he is special does not do him justice. Kane is kind. Everything about him is about kindness. He accepts kindness from everyone he meets and he shows kindness through his talking, even though sometimes he sounds grumbly. He is a labrador thru and thru, with food and walks and love being all he needs.

Last December his eyes, non-working as they were, gave him a lot of pain and so, because of special people like you, he had the surgery to remove them both. He had a couple of tough weeks but was the new and improved Kane by Christmas. No longer do his eyes give him pain and he doesn't require medication to keep him comfortable. The real surprise is his hearing. He hears so much more than he did and I can no longer sneak past him without his head popping up with the question “Are we going somewhere?” Because I do not need to be careful of hurting his eyes he is hiking and walking the trails as confidently as any Lab. The up side to this is his arthritis doesn't seem to make him stiff or sore because he has muscle and so the medication he was taking for that is a thing of the past.

I guess we never know what one act of kindness can lead to, but I want you to know that Callie is a lucky dog to have a “Person” (you) as kind and giving as we wish we could be. You have put a new meaning to recycling and it will live on long after we have forgotten about that little piece of trash that has a new life.

– Judi, Kane & Joey

Cinnamon Joy



It had been a year since we lost our Lab, Tyler, and I was getting those nudges that it was time for our next dog. All my previous dogs have been rescues that were between two- to four-years-old, and my intention was to look for another dog in that age range. When I saw Cinnamon's picture on the GGLRR web page, she caught my eye...but she was thought to be seven- to eight-years-old, and we didn't want to get a dog that old.

Her picture kept calling to me though, and we decided to go see her. What we found was a happy, active dog. We don't know her history, but her belly showed she had been a breeder. GGLRR had arranged for her to be spayed, and she had come through the surgery just fine.

After spending time with Cinnamon, we went home to think it over but knew as we were driving away that we wanted to adopt her. We haven't regretted it for one second. She is well-mannered, a puppy at heart and enjoys interacting both with her dog and human buddies. We are constantly laughing around her, and she definitely knows how to give (and get) lots of love.

Cinnamon Joy also helps me to live in the moment. We never know how much time we have, but having an older dog makes me stop and appreciate her even more. And really, she's not an “older” dog to us any more. She's just a furry cuddly loving goofball who brings us so much joy... and we're so glad we brought her into our lives.

– Judy & Rick

Cheeto



We would have never thought of adopting a blind dog, but when Kathleen and Ronnie at Lab Rescue gave us an opportunity to foster Cheeto, a 5-year-old, 108 lbs, blind dog, we were up for the challenge.

In fact, Cheeto has not been a challenge at all! He gets around as well as a sighted dog. He figured out the doggie door by the third day and uses it whenever the back doors are closed. He goes up and down the stairs without a problem. Cheeto is a great companion and playmate to our 9-year-old fox terrier mix, Beau. Beau is aware of Cheeto's handicap and always puts toys in his mouth whenever he wants to play tug-of-war. Beau will also very quietly walk over to eat Cheeto's spillover food.

When we go for long walks in the parks or at the beach, we always let Cheeto off leash, and he plays catch and runs like any normal dog. If he is in unfamiliar territory, he occasionally bumps his head, and we have to make sure he doesn't hurt himself. But he gets the lay of the land very quickly.

We love Cheeto and he has been a really fun addition to our family.

— Carter, Kaleen, Beau & Cheeto

Miranda

1999 - May 3, 2012

When I first met Miranda, I was looking for someone else.

I was at the May 2011 Adoption Fair in Redwood City, having recently lost my dog Butterscotch at age 12 (a Lab-St. Bernard mix, about 90 pounds), and I was fascinated by a six-year-old yellow Lab called (I think) Minnie. But could I provide the amount of exercise she needed? "Perhaps you should try an older dog," I was advised. And so here was poor Miranda, pretty much ignored amongst all the younger dogs, standing alone in a small enclosure, but attentive to all the goings-on around her—very alert, white muzzle and all. Well, not so poor after all, but twelve years old? Who would adopt such an old dog? Well, I would, but I didn't know that yet.

I talked to my vet, and he said, "Why not? She may be good for a few more years, be a devoted companion, won't need a lot of exercise, and you can give her the good home she might never find otherwise." Well, OK... perhaps I should visit her in her foster home in Pleasanton, just to meet her, no obligation.

Nice neighborhood, nice house, nice living room where we sat down to talk. Miranda was lying down across the room, but as soon as I sat down, she came over to lie down at my feet. Well, that just settled it right there—she actually seemed to have chosen me; the rest was just a formality. We went for a walk and she was fine on the leash, active but no problem.

And then, home with Miranda on May 26, 2011. With great curiosity from the beginning, she spent more than half an hour going over my house with a fine-tooth comb (I should say nose), and even longer in the yard, squeezing between bushes and the fence where Butterscotch couldn't go. Bright and alert in spite of her years, I'm sure she knew more about my house than I did, at least by way of her nose, and which of us knows what that could be like?

The vet was right: she was a fine companion. She loved walks, loved riding in the car and otherwise mostly



followed me around the house, usually lying down near where I was working and at night noodling around before settling down on the rug beside my bed. It really is true—dogs turn around three times (well, maybe just two) before lying down again! She liked chasing a ball in the house (not so much outside) a few times, then got bored. She had a good sense of time. When I went out to the garage either in the morning or near five pm, she knew it was to get her food and responded by running around from sheer animal joy, a vision I'll always remember. She also knew when it was time for my music friends to arrive on Sunday morning. When I started to tune my harpsichord, she lay down near the front door anticipating the visitors.

But she was always quiet. After a week or two, I realized I hadn't heard anything from her—no barking, no growls, no whines, no yelps, no sound whatever. When she was outside and wanted to come in, she would nose at the door or bang on it with her paw, very effective. Did she have a voice? Well, I finally heard her bark in response to another dog, with a surprisingly loud and deep voice. She seemed to like other dogs, but after the usual sniffing around, lost interest in playing with them. A notable exception was when she met a friend's older female Lab at the dog run in Palo Alto's Hoover Park, where they ran around barking like a couple of puppies. Wish I'd had my camera!

Speaking of her nose, I once left a wrapped-up sandwich

a few inches from the edge of the kitchen counter. I came back later to find a) no sandwich, b) empty wrapper on the floor and c) Miranda looking very satisfied and not the least bit guilty. Her nose must have told her there was food up there even though she couldn't see it, guiding her to jump up with her front paws on the counter and stretch forward to get it. I couldn't get after her, but secretly admired her enterprise!

The vets loved her. The reports from the GGLRR vets in Sebastopol & San Ramon mention "sweet dog," "nice girl," etc. as did the emergency clinic near me on Middlefield Rd. My vet always called her "a real trooper." More than that, all my friends loved her, and she was always glad to see them—who knows, they might have a biscuit!

And so life went on, as it does, until Jan. 1 of this year, 2012. Walking her in Hoover Park nearby, I noticed a red bulbous lump on the rear of her left front leg, seeming to come from nowhere. It was a Sunday and vets were closed. We went to the emergency hospital. A 'mast-cell' tumor, grade 2 was confirmed later by biopsy. They did their best to remove it surgically, but cautioned that more would probably recur, unpredictably.

And so they did, but not right away. Without going into details, most tumors responded well to cortisone shots, except for a large one in her left shoulder. Like the 'real trooper' she was, she refused to let this big growth bother her and continued to walk right up to the end, even when she needed help to get up into the car. Eventually she refused to eat anything, and we had to put her to sleep rather than let her starve.

And so passed Miranda, the best dog I've ever known. It was a real privilege to have given her a good last year of her life, but she gave me a wonderful year also—it works both ways. Adopt a twelve year old dog? I'd do it again—there must be more Mirandas out there!

— Robert



Skate *The dog nobody wanted*

In the spring, Pete drove to the East Bay to meet a man who was giving up Skate and Bo. The man said he'd had Skate since he was a puppy and he was eleven-years-old. He'd taken Bo, who was six, the previous year, when his friend could no longer keep him. Skate had been an outdoor dog all his life, sleeping at night in a kennel in the garage. From the looks of the massive calluses on his elbows, Skate probably didn't know what a blanket was. The man said good-bye to Skate and barely looked at Bo.

Soon after bringing them 'home', we gave them a much needed bath. They were both very sweet dogs. Bo saw Skate as his protector. Despite being the taller of the two, Bo clearly felt most secure following Skate everywhere, with his nose never more than a foot or two behind Skate's tail. Skate reminded us of 'Tramp' from the movie, 'Lady and the Tramp.' He was born to explore and patrol, and he took his job seriously in what turned out to be a nearly two and a half year mission to protect our backyard from the menacing threat of overhead hawks and neighborhood cats with an exploring notion.

Initially, both dogs were adopted and one Saturday, Pete and I headed off in opposite directions to take them each to their new homes. Bo was welcomed into a loving family and quickly wrapped his new family around his paws, sleeping on their son's bed and driving around town in the back seat of their convertible.

Skate wasn't so fortunate and we received a call two days later to come and get him. The family who adopted him didn't understand a 'young fellow's' need for exercise or

a good belly rub. One look at Skate's face when he saw Pete again, made Pete determined to find Skate the perfect forever home. Unfortunately, at eleven years, no one wanted to risk taking a chance on such an old guy and the months passed away. Skate, being the loving, forgiving guy he was, had forgotten his rough times and had made it his mission to let us know how much he loved us and appreciated that we had come back for him. After many months, we had to be sure that he would never be scared or sad again, so we made the decision to adopt him ourselves. It turned out to be one of the best decisions we ever made.

With the arrival of Skate's vet records came the good news that he was in fact only nine and a half! This didn't come as too much of a surprise to us, as old "Skater" had all along been trying to convince us he was only five! He turned out to be the most happy, loving, grateful dog from the moment he woke up in the morning until he fell asleep at night in his bed, right next to ours.

Skate was a dog who longed to see the world and everyone quickly learned that you had to shut the front door quickly. Fortunately for him, but unfortunately for our college basketball player son Michael, Skate had the strength and stamina of a young dog, which he demonstrated for Michael and the rest of Sonoma, one sunny afternoon. Michael opened the front door and Skate bolted out. Michael's long 6'4" legs took off after him, with our other ordinarily sedate chocolate Lab, Samson, in hot pursuit right behind them. The three of them provided much entertainment for the locals, as Skate led the 'tour de Sonoma' throughout the entire west side of town, followed by Michael, followed by Samson. A half hour later, Michael was able to corner Skate and catch him, walking him all the way home with only his belt for a leash.

Skate was so loving and appreciative and loved nothing more than having his head caressed as he fell asleep at night! He appreciated everything so much. His biggest gift to us was to accomplish something in three years, we had been unable to do. Samson, our five-year-old chocolate Lab, had been rescued three years earlier. He came to us the most frightened dog we'd ever seen. He was afraid of everything, from every rock, wall, and person he ever encountered, to leaving the house. Up to that point, we

took Samson on the same walk every day, or he would cower in fear and slink and dart with fright behind our legs. After a year of having Skate for a big brother, Samson was completely over all his fears, including his debilitating fear of all men. Skate's 'no-worry' approach to life had taught Samson not to worry and helped him come out of his shell. Eventually, every one of his fears disappeared!

Sadly, in October, we lost our Skater, after first surviving a difficult five-week battle with an abdominal wall infection, which followed a surgery to remove a spiny seed pod from his intestines. Two months later, he was diagnosed with lymphoma and passed away five days later.

Skate touched us in such a profound way, that we can't imagine not ever having him in our lives. We could NEVER have imagined how much a loving home could transform a scruffy, skinny, neglected dog into such a strong, healthy, handsome, loving guy!!! No one could believe he was a day over five-years-old—least of all Skate! It is hard to remember that Skate was the dog that nobody wanted. To everyone who has any doubts about adopting an older dog—don't! We wouldn't have given up those two years for anything. Yes, his vet bills replaced our vacation this year; however, the price was a bargain for how much happiness and love he brought into our lives!

— Betsy & Pete Adams

Buster

I wanted to give you an update on Buster, who we adopted in June 2011 after we lost our twelve-year-old Lab to cancer. He had a broken leg when we adopted him from GGLRR. Although it didn't heal perfectly and he has a slight limp, it doesn't slow him down. Buster has bonded very well with every member of our family, from our three- and five-year-old sons to our nine-year-old Lab/Great Dane, Zoey. He has taken to sleeping at the foot of our bed, all 105 pounds of him! My husband gets up early to walk him to the dog park to play ball. They both look forward to these early morning romps. Buster surprised us with his quick attachment to our family—even off leash, he does not stray far.

He is a wonderful dog—friendly, happy-go-lucky, without an aggressive bone in his body. Our three-year-old loves to feed him breakfast, and Buster will sit and follow his instructions. It is the cutest thing to watch. He wants to be with the boys at all times and supervises them in the yard. He has brought life back to Zoey, who had a very tough time when her friend died. She is playful again and plays tug with him. Buster joins me once a week at work



at the Alzheimer's Association and loves all of the attention. This past December, he joined our family tradition of heading to Half Moon Bay to cut down our Christmas tree. Off leash, he ran around with the boys and stayed close. He loved it!

Buster does have one bad habit. He lives for food and will eat any and all food he can get his paws on. We had one scary incident in November, when he broke into our pantry and ate a toxic amount of raisins. Luckily, we discovered this shortly after ingestion and were able to get him treated. After spending the night in the hospital and two additional days receiving

IV fluids, he recovered fully. We learned our lesson and don't allow him to be in the house unsupervised. He is now crate trained and we don't have to worry about what he is getting himself into!

We love Buster and are so happy he came into our life. He is the perfect addition to our family. Thank you to GGLRR for giving Buster a chance and for allowing our family to adopt him.

— Lisa Dowell & Family

We're older, wiser, and are now happily adopted

Sure, we might be a little bit older, but we all want to be in a home that's ready to accept our love and appreciation. We're all pretty easygoing, and we've all been around the block a few times (literally and figuratively.) A few of our former owners actually lost their homes and they had to give us up because the apartments they moved into wouldn't let us in. (Can you believe that!) We've all been to the vet, have been chipped, and are ready for our next chapter. If you have room in your home, and in your heart, won't you please consider an older or special-needs Lab?

"I'm Oso, and I'm thirteen. I'm so happy Lab Rescue saved me from being put down in the shelter. My old owner put me there because I didn't like their new puppy. 'Out with the old, in with the new,' I guess. My wonderful foster home kept me for three months before the best couple took me into their home, with their other Lab Rescue dog. I think we're all pretty happy."



"I'm Shadow. I'm twelve. For some reason, my old owner dumped me in a field to fend for myself. I still don't know what I did to deserve that. I guess I'll never know. My foster home has been wonderful, and my new owners love older dogs, so I won't ever have to worry about being dumped again."



"I'm Murphy, and I'm twelve. I might be small, but my love is big and I'm full of energy. My new family is the best. They let me ride in the golf cart, which I love. But they don't let me drive...yet"



"I'm Lulu. I'm ten, and I'm the best tennis ball retriever on the block. My new family lets me help check on the horses with them, and my new best friend is nine years old, so we get to play together a lot. I love her, my new family, and GGLRR for letting me prove that I still have a lot of love to give."



"I'm Frankie. I'm eleven, and I'm um, er, neutered. There, I said it. I've also been chipped and to the dentist, so I'm ready to go—to whoever will take me. My original owner lost his home, and then, so did I. It's so nice that my foster home lets me be inside where it's warm and dry. I'm well-behaved, I listen, know my commands, love to swim and go on short walks. Wouldn't you like to see this smile every day?"

Current Board:

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- Judy Kreger

More Thanks:

To all the fosters, dog transporters, Pet Fair Volunteers and many others—we would not be able to save as many dogs as we do without your help!

Animal Hospital of Sebastopol
Bishop Ranch Veterinary Hospital – San Ramon – Dr. Gillman
Carmel Holistic Veterinary Clinic – Carmel – Dr. Tom
Designer – Greg Flejtuch
Dog Boarding / Dog Training – K-9 Country Club – Petaluma
Dog Trainer – Barb Cartwright
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Sapir & Jane Weiss and Staff
Stevan Nordstrom – Photography
Todd Jurek – Dog Training
Whole Pet Vet Hospital & Wellness Center – Los Gatos

Get your 2013 GGLRR Calendar!

Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue 2013 calendar is here, featuring some of the gorgeous Labs adopted from us! We received hundreds of submissions of GGLRR Labs during our photo contest—and this year we included more than 100 great photos of these clearly well-loved dogs.

Our calendar also includes a **20% off coupon at Pet Food Express®!** Please visit www.labrescue.org/calendar to order your calendar showing these lucky Labs now enjoying California beaches, parks and other fabulous settings in and around their forever homes. Order one for everyone on your holiday list. You'll get a beautiful Lab calendar, support rescue efforts by helping raise much needed funds to save more Labs, and save 20% on your purchase at Pet Food Express. It's the perfect holiday gift for everyone on your list!

If you have any questions on ordering please email liz@jobshospf.com

**We Extend Our Thanks To You!**

Thank you to all of our wonderful donors. Without you, we would not be able to continue to help the Labs that need medical care and/or new homes. Your donations make it happen! (Donors listed through mid April 2012 – October 2012; we do our best to recognize all of our generous donors.)

\$5-\$50 "SHOTS & FIRST EXAM"

Allie Doyle
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United Way of the Wine Country
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Liz Frome, in memory of Chip
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Jenny Horst
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Natalie Silvester, in memory of Curtis Owen
Katrina Sorensen
Nandakumar Thiyagarajan
Liane Bender, in memory of Dennis Bender
Connie Holt
Gretchen Pehanick
Joseph de Victoria
Karen Hilliard
David King, Wells Fargo

Tana Lingvall, in loving memory of Dannielle Marie Pellegrin, who loved her Labs
Vanessa McDonnell
Patricia McGinley
Fumiko Peppin
Trevor Rifenburg, saved allowance for two years
Barbara Simboli
Susan Taheny

\$51-\$100 "LAB TESTS & BLOOD WORK"

CA State ECC- United Way Capital Region
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Daniel Crowley
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Teresa Gorecki
Edward Johnstone
Gary Kanter
Janice Krupp
Thomas Long
Deborah McFarland, thanks for bringing Jake into our lives
Diana Neebe, in loving memory of Ozzy
David Pirogowicz
Kelli & Mike Rantz, in loving memory of Dannielle Marie Pellegrin
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Jon & Sara Schroeder, in memory of Pongo
Andrew Skinner
Michael Soby
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Kerri Valadao
Betsy Webster

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Terry Mayes
Suzanne Haley, UBM LLC
Elaine Taylor, Genentech, in memory of Kevin Shumaker
Maureen McClain, thank you Lab Rescue
Frank & Anna Pope
The Allison Family, in honor of Buddy, who we adopted 12 years ago

\$501-\$1000 "SPECIAL SURGERY"

Jennifer Sims

\$1001+ "ORTHOPEDIC PROCEDURES"

Patrick Skovran, Wells Fargo
Liz & Jim Barnes

**LETTERS
to the
EDITOR**

**We welcome letters and pictures!**

Please send to:

GGLRR Editor, 268 Bush Street, #4322 San Francisco, CA 94104
or e-mail to: liz@labrescue.org

You may also use the above e-mail address to notify us of an address change or if you would no longer care to receive this newsletter.

About GGLRR, Inc.

Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue, Inc. (GGLRR) is organized under the California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation Law for charitable and educational purposes. We have been granted nonprofit tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. GGLRR is a private, nonprofit, all-volunteer organization.

GGLRR facilitates the placement of unwanted Labrador Retriever dogs into new homes. We are sought out by concerned individuals and humane organizations who come into contact with Labrador Retrievers. We have a spay-neuter requirement for all dogs that we place. Families residing within our Northern California service area who desire to adopt a Labrador Retriever complete an application form and are introduced to potential pets. Our purpose is solely to provide good homes for Labrador Retrievers who might otherwise be abandoned or euthanized by their previous owner.

Our service area is Northern California and covers seven telephone area codes: 408, 510, 650, 707, 831 and 925. GGLRR has more than 50 volunteers. None of our volunteers receive any form of compensation for their time and effort, other than the pure satisfaction of matching a displaced Lab with a loving family.

GGLRR relies upon placement and adoption donations, fundraising events and charitable donations for its funding. We suggest a minimum donation (currently \$350) for prospective families wishing to adopt from us.



If you prefer, you can also use PayPal to make a donation. Log onto www.labrescue.org/donate and click on the PayPal icon.



Foster Care Needed

We are always looking for short-term foster homes to care for our Labs until permanent families can be found to adopt them.

This is an extremely rewarding job, and a very important one.

For more information about fostering a dog, please contact: Liz Frome – liz@labrescue.org.

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