

Creature Comforts ~ Rescue!

By Victoria K. Guerrero

After working at Creatures pet store in Vernonia these past few months, it's obvious that our little community is full of large hearted animal lovers, who are more than willing to open their heart and home to help out an animal in need. From saving baby kittens born wild in a wood pile, to lending a helping hand to an old mule in need, the stories are plentiful, as is the need for help.

It is obvious by seeing the news stories from time to time regarding hoarding cases that there is a serious need for help. In the past twelve months, Oregon rescues have taken in hundreds of dogs and cats from our own state, and Chihuahuas and small breed dogs from California. It seems there has been an over load of Chihuahuas in shelters and rescue organizations, due to over breeding and popularity of the breed. Many of

the dogs are in good health, and friendly, although some have been neglected emotionally and are in some cases, needing a gentle hand to train and teach to love.

This is where fostering comes in very handy. Knowledgeable people with the time and resources are able to connect with rescues, and after applying and being approved, can open their home to animals in need. Often times, as mentioned above, the animals have not had a lot of human contact, and are hard to find homes for. A foster teaches the pet all about being a part of a healthy family and home, and that it's alright to trust people. Coming from experience, it's ever so rewarding to teach a pet that humans are safe and loving, yet it's ever so difficult to say good bye! Many people including myself start out with the very best intentions, but in the end, adopt the pet they intended to only help out for a short time.

Aside from fostering there are many other avenues to helping animals in need. Local shelters as well as rescue groups often rally for volunteers to help out. In a

few minutes by doing a simple Internet search, thousands upon thousands of rescue groups can be found.

Locally we have several options starting with Columbia County Humane Society--a no kill shelter doing a great job in our county to help out homeless animals. Columbia Humane Society offers low cost rabies clinics, low cost pet food, and discount spay and neuter coupons. Through generous volunteer donations they now have a wonderful fenced in exercise area for the dogs, as well as covered outside runs to protect the big dogs in the rain! Columbia Humane Society can be reached at 503-397-4353, or look for them on the Internet.

Although they are not a rescue group, Columbia County Animal Control can be helpful also. There have been severe budget cuts but county Officer Roger Kadell does a wonderful job at covering the needs of our county. If a stray or injured animal is found, Officer Kadell will do his best to come assist the animal to get needed help. Columbia County Animal Control can be reached at 503-397-3935.

Indigo Rescue is also a wonderful organization made up of a series of fosters and volunteers. As many of you know Indigo now owns property near the Vernonia Airport, better known as Indigo Ranch, a cage free boarding fa-

cility created to support the needs of the rescue. Indigo has several yearly activities that anyone can join in to support the rescue's efforts in helping animals in need. For more information, check out www.indigorescue.org, or leave a message at 503-626-7222.

Displaced Pets opened about two years ago in Vernonia. They focus mainly on 'petite breed' dogs and have done many transformations over the past few years, and helped out many dogs in need as well as families. A lot of the dogs that end up at Displaced Pets Rescue have been at different shelters in our area, and get brought to the rescue due to not doing well in the shelter environment. You can locate DP on the Internet at www.displacedpetsrescue.com, or call 503-703-2923.

One last way you can help--there is always a great need for financial support. Not only to offset the cost of feed and veterinary expenses, but the rising cost of gas. Even though the dollar doesn't go as far as it used to, it still adds up, and the animals appreciate the help so much.

Many will agree when considering the rescues they have supported in one way or another, it is better to give than to receive. But when the rescues end up staying the real question is, who rescued who?

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Vernonia Resident Fights Kidney Disease *continued from front page*

continue to work full time.

According to Laura there are only a handful of people that know about Ryan's condition. "He is a proud man and doesn't like for people to feel sorry

for him," Laura explains.

"There are times when I feel so drained and I just don't want to get up, but I have to, I just have to keep on going" says Ryan. "It's rough but I'm the kind of person who always tries to figure out my own problems. But with this we're just having a hard time."

Ryan has continued to work to the amazement of all his doctors. Because of his condition sometimes he is unable to work and has to be off for weeks at a time. "As you can imagine this is very hard on our finances," says Laura. "I work full time but I don't make enough to keep us going by myself. Also when Ryan is off work for very long we have to come up with our insurance premiums."

Ryan works in Portland as an above-ground miner; Laura works in Beaverton in accounts receivable for a software development company.

Ryan's condition is getting worse. He says he is tired a lot of the time and he is always sick. He throws up now almost on a daily basis and he

gets muscle cramps that are paralyzing and his leg muscles twitch almost nightly. He gets little sleep due to all of this but he still gets up at 4:00 AM to go to work to help his family as much as he can. After a full day of work, Ryan then heads to 185th Street three days a week for his five hour dialysis treatment.

The doctors say they need to remove both of Ryan's kidneys. "He has to have both kidneys taken out because they are so large and filled with cysts that there will be no room to place a new kidney if he were to have one," says Laura. This will place him higher on the donor list as his need will be greater. This will also mean a 6-8 week recovery period where at least one of those weeks he will need to have someone at home to help him as this is a very painful procedure. "That means time off for me and I am not sure I will have the vacation time built up at that time," says Laura.

"I want to get a new kidney so I can go on with my life like it was before," says Ryan. "It makes it hard to go fishing or hunting or camping

because I have to be back in a day or two for dialysis. It's hard but I've been dealing with it and just keep on going—I have to try to support my family."

A donation account has been set up at US Bank—"The Ryan Roberts Medical Fund." The family has set up a Facebook page with the same name so people can follow Ryan's progress. Laura's daughter Brianna, an eighth grade student at Vernonia Middle School, with the help of her Leadership Class, is also organizing some fundraising activities.

"I'm hoping if people know about him they will come together and try to help us in whatever way they feel is right; whether it be financially or to be tested to donate a kidney to him," says Laura. "I have seen the community over the years pull together and help others that were in need. We just didn't know how to ask."

"I am just hoping to get this all behind me, get our lives back and go back to doing what we used to do," says Ryan.

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