

# SPOTLIGHT ON RESCUE



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*This issue features the first in a series spotlighting rescues across the country, the work they do and ways GRCA members can help. This article was written by Amy Lubeck, one of the Central Region Representatives to the National Rescue Committee.*

by Amy Lubeck

This quarter the Spotlight shines on Heartland Rescue. Although based in Tennessee, Heartland also has volunteers in Alabama and Virginia.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Pauline Stevens, President and Founder of Heartland Rescue. Originally from England, Pauline came to the United States in 1971. In her delightful, yet somewhat Americanized, British accent she tells me that she had intended to stay only two years. Thirty-one years later she is still calling Tennessee home.

To understand Heartland it is important to understand Pauline. Longing for a Golden Retriever, Pauline saved her money and purchased her first Golden, "Penny" (Lindale a Trace of Penny Royal CDX) in 1977. Together, Pauline and Penny tried everything, including conformation, obedience, tracking and even a bit of fieldwork. Pauline's two daughters followed in their mother's footsteps, taking one of their Golden's, "Spring" (Acorn Ridge DeVoe Nova CDX) to Westminster.

Long before "Breed Rescue" became a household term, Pauline and friend Pat Vogel were rescuing and rehoming Golden Retrievers, beginning

in the mid-1980s. For the next 10 years Golden Retriever Rescue of Oak Ridge was run by this two-woman show, rescuing five to 10 Golden's per year. Funding for veterinary care and the dogs' basic needs came from what little Pauline earned teaching obedience classes. As the bills mounted, Pauline sought help from other friends; and Tennessee Valley Golden Retriever Rescue (TVGRR) was born, with Pauline as Co-Director.

In 1998, Pauline founded Heartland Rescue. "It's a small group," she tells me, composed of two officers and five board members, with about 10 volunteers and supporters. Pauline goes on to say, "Even though our numbers are not high, we are still fulfilling a need; and we do our part in rescue."

When asked, "What makes Heartland unique?" Pauline paused and humbly stated that she felt it was important to hear the views of not only the Board, but volunteers, as well, since most have been with Heartland from the beginning.

What was the group's response?

Christy Anderson, a Heartland volunteer, says, "The dogs come first. Each



*Pauline Stevens with (clockwise) Clover, the foster who stayed; Lillie and Sophie.*

of us does what we can and pitches in when something needs to be done." As Christy expounds on the routine tasks of rescue, no one boasts or takes personal credit for their work. Instead, Susie Stooksbury, another volunteer, clicks her heels together and says, "Well said, Christy!" Her reply says it all.

After thinking about their very short answer, and as a fan of the classic, *The Wizard Of Oz*; I sat at my computer with a dream-like scenario playing



*Sandee, on left, rescued by Heartland from a puppy mill, found a wonderful home with Stacy Gibbs and "sister" Bailey.*

out in my mind. I envisioned a group of caring people dressed as the Tin Man and wearing ruby slippers. A flight of fancy? Yes, but it became very clear to me that what makes Heartland unique is its volunteers. They are the "Heart" in Heartland Rescue.

Viewing Heartland's web site, which includes charming music, makes it clear that Heartland is devoted to helping all Golden Retrievers. However, Pauline admits they have a special place in their hearts and homes for senior and special need dogs. The love of "Old Gold" prompted Pauline to set up and maintain a special web page where she invites all rescues to list their senior and special need Golden Retrievers in hope of finding just the right homes for these hard-to-



*Poolside are two Heartland senior rescues, Victoria (on left) and Corey (on right).*

place Golden Retrievers.

Heartland has many success stories that touch the heart. One stand-out involves a little girl named Tricia and a rescued Golden Retriever named "Cody," formerly "Bentley." Tricia's mother contacted Heartland looking for a companion for her daughter who has spina bifida. Rather than being put off by all the equipment needed for Tricia, Cody instantly bonded to her like he had spent months training for the job. Tricia's mom tells Heartland that Cody rarely leaves Tricia's side, even when she's sleeping in her crib, and has become her constant shadow. His devotion to Tricia earned Heartland and Cody received an honorable mention at the G.R.A.C.E. awards at

the GRCA National Specialty in 2001 for significant and exceptional accomplishment by a rescued Golden. The full story can be found at [www.heartland-goldenrescue.org/trisha&cody.htm](http://www.heartland-goldenrescue.org/trisha&cody.htm).

Heartland places their rescued Golden Retrievers in homes throughout the country. When it comes to placing the right dog with the

perfect family, the amount of time, organization and assistance needed from other rescues doesn't phase Heartland's volunteers. They have found many groups more than willing to help with transport and home visits. Heartland's Golden Retrievers have found forever homes in Kentucky, New York, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Wisconsin, Vermont, Arizona, Washington, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, Michigan, New Hampshire, Iowa, Louisiana, Colorado, Florida, California, North Carolina and even Canada.

Why do they do it? Simple, they say: "The dogs come first."

Heartland, as with most rescue groups, is always in need of volunteers and donations. They tell me they would be grateful for collars with quick-release plastic clips, 6-foot cotton web leashes, 7-inch thick egg-crate beds for their Senior dogs, and Glycoflex 600 mg tablets.

Heartland is always looking for volunteers, especially foster homes. Monetary donations are also always welcome and gratefully received. ❖



*Heartland rescue, Cody, bonded instantly with his new mistress Tricia. He received an honorable mention in the GRACE awards at the 2001 National Specialty*

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