



"A Golden Retriever Can Change Your Life!"™

February 2025

Golden GRRROWL

A registered non-profit 501(c)(3)
charitable organization

Belle

by Debbie Stratton

When Golden Retriever Margie arrived at GRRR via animal control, no one knew she was pregnant. But on December 26, 2018, she gave birth to nine precious puppies. One of those pups, Belle, went on to change lives in incredible ways.



In February 2019, Eric Lundberg was invited to a meet-and-greet with the puppies. He brought along his current dogs: Murphy, his service dog, and Luna, a Great Pyrenees. The introduction went smoothly, and Eric took home a pup, naming her Belle.

Eric, a retired police officer and veteran, had endured a serious on-duty motorcycle accident that left him with limited mobility following a knee replacement that his body rejected. Murphy was his lifeline, helping him with balance, navigating stairs, and even assisting him in getting back up if he fell. If Murphy couldn't help, she would seek assistance.

Shortly after adopting Belle, Murphy was diagnosed with pancreatitis and had to retire from service. Recognizing Belle's potential, Eric began training her himself, drawing on his experience from teaching puppies during his law enforcement career.



A New Chapter in Florida

After retiring, Eric moved to Florida and sought a professional organization to advance Belle's training as a service dog. He discovered Paws4Liberty, a nonprofit dedicated to training service dogs for veterans. At just over a year old, Belle began an intensive training program, or "boot camp," where she learned advanced skills and tasks.

Belle's trainer, Oscar, was immediately impressed by her intelligence, energy, and ability to focus. Following her training at Paws4Liberty, Belle and Eric spent an additional year refining their teamwork and perfecting her service skills. Belle earned her certifications, and undergoes reevaluations every two years to ensure she remains at the top of her game.

A Perfect Match

Not every dog is cut out to be a service dog, but Belle proved to be exceptional. Her natural intelligence, focus, and willingness to learn made her an ideal match for Eric. She also had help from Eric's other dogs—Murphy, who passed down her knowledge, and Luna, who provided maternal guidance and aided with obedience training.

Belle is trained in a variety of tasks, from retrieving dropped objects to fetching water bottles, mail, and more. She even wears a specialized harness that acts as a support cane, helping Eric navigate stairs and providing balance. While Eric doesn't have PTSD, Belle is trained as a PTSD service

Continued on next page

dog, and can respond to distress signals by applying pressure with her paws to his thighs and refocusing his attention.

Belle's intuition is remarkable. Eric is diabetic, and Belle can detect his blood sugar drops before he does. While Eric uses a sensor to monitor his levels, Belle's alerts are often faster. She signals him with a blank stare, and if he dismisses her with an "I'm ok" signal but she senses otherwise, Belle applies pressure to his legs and gets in his face to ensure he takes action. Eric admits he sometimes ignores his body's warning signs, but Belle doesn't let up. She's incredibly in tune with his needs and persistent when it matters most.

Belle accompanies Eric to the VA, where her abilities continue to amaze. She has a remarkable sense for people's emotions and physical conditions, connecting effortlessly with autistic individuals and those in wheelchairs. Despite these connections, her primary focus remains on Eric, whom she watches over constantly to ensure his well-being. Belle thrives on being task-oriented, a natural trait of her field Golden Retriever lineage. If she's not engaged in a task, boredom quickly sets in!

One memorable incident highlighted Belle's dedication. A few years ago, Eric was doing some home remodeling and lost a tool in the garage. Frustrated and yelling, he struggled to retrieve it from behind a toolbox. Belle heard Eric but was inside the house and couldn't get to him, so she ran to get a contractor working in the house to check on Eric. Belle's instincts and dedication to her "job" are exceptional—she's always ready to step in and help, no matter the scenario.

A Life of Connection and Travel

Belle accompanies Eric everywhere, including frequent trips to Walt Disney World and on Disney Cruise Line and other cruise adventures. On their first Disney cruise, Eric was strict about not letting others pet Belle while she was working. He wanted to

evaluate her to see how she did. She did fine, so by their second cruise, he allowed it when people asked politely, realizing how much joy she brought to others. She has a special harness that says "Service Dog - Ask to Pet."

Belle meets a lot of people while traveling, and has a knack for calming others in distress, such as children having meltdowns or people experiencing anxiety attacks. She looks to Eric for permission before helping, then uses her training to soothe them.



During one trip, Belle formed a special bond with a woman using a walker, inspiring her to seek a service dog back home in Belgium. Her heartwarming clip of Belle meeting Disney's Princess Belle went viral on her Facebook page. ABC's *Good Morning America* saw it and even featured it on their "FurBabies" page!

Belle's impact goes beyond her work as a service dog. She has a dedicated Facebook page (search for Belle Lundberg, Personal Assistant) where fans follow her adventures, especially her Disney escapades. Eric really loves the heartwarming comments.

A Grateful Heart

Eric is so grateful to have found the perfect pup to be his service dog and constant companion. Together, they volunteer for Paws4Liberty, spreading awareness about the incredible role service dogs play in improving lives.

Goldens are great at many things, and we at GRRR are glad they were such a perfect match.

"She's been a blessing that's for sure! She brings so much joy to so many people," says Eric. "She's not just my service dog; she's a connection to the world." 🐾



Recent Rescues

Bruin

Hello GRRR;

I adopted Bruin last year. He was originally called Bru and I lengthened it to Bruin since I am a Boston Bruins fan. Bruin loves to run around with his older brother, Bo, and makes friends wherever he goes. He is one of the biggest pain-in-the-butt dogs I have ever had, but also one of the snuggliest I have ever had. I wouldn't trade him for anything.

Bru has a neighbor dog, Charlie, who comes over and plays almost every day, and two stepsisters, Athena and Peaches, also Goldens. He and Athena love to play when they visit. He also got to meet my friends' two Husky puppies and had so much fun. He was such a good boy with them. The puppies come over every so often for play dates and they chase Bruin around and beat him up (in a good way, of course).

Bruin is like an old man in a puppy's body. He just rolls over and takes whatever anyone wants to do to him. It is really fun to watch. Bruin loves to eat, play, sleep, and get belly rubs – just like a typical Golden Retriever. He's very vocal when he's not getting what he wants.

Bruin is doing great, and I absolutely love him. He sleeps on the bed with me and his brother Bo, and he snuggles with me in the morning when it's time to get up. Bruin is still just a puppy but enjoying the best life. He will be two in January and has grown up to be such a handsome boy. Bruin loves camping and digging for ground squirrels, and chasing rabbits around the yard.

Thank you,

Martha McKee



Dear GRRR:

Our sweet Allie has made incredible progress in the past two years. This former mill momma just huddled in the corner for the first few months, but she has been so brave and absolutely loves her daddy and her brother



Boris. She's still not a typical dog and refuses to do many things, but she is so sweet, and I think she really enjoys making some choices for herself.

We give thanks to GRRR for bringing this special girl into our lives. Thank you!

Julie Foster

Allie

Dear GRRR:

Ho Ho Ho, my name is Lilly and I was Rescued by GRRR and found my forever home with my new mommy and daddy. I had heartworm but with the help and support of GRRR and my new family, I am getting all the love and support (and cheese) that I need.

Thank you so much GRRR for taking me in and finding me my new home.

John Taylor
(Thank you so much for this beautiful lady.)

Lilly



Hi GRRR:

Happy New Year! Cannoli (formerly Peyton) is such an amazing boy, so polite, so smart and so happy. Thank you for choosing us to be his family! He plays with his brother Tango so well; they have similar energy and are fast besties! In fact, they sit together even when they're not playing. Cannoli loves going on walks and is an expert at "heel"! It's been a busy holiday season so he's met a lot of new people as well as visiting restaurants and stores. Health wise he's doing much better; he's put on a little over 10 pounds since being here, and his fur is getting soft and much longer. And his ear infection is almost clear.

Cannoli is still settling in but has started to cuddle with us a bit, which we are guessing by his awkwardness at it, he hasn't done before. The picture is after opening his presents on Christmas morning! Look at that smile!

He's such a great boy. We feel so lucky for him to have joined our pack!

Lisa Wright

Cannoli



Hi GRRR!

It is almost one year since we adopted Gus (formerly Grizz). On Christmas Eve of 2023, we filled out an adoption application with GRRR and figured it would be several months before we heard anything. Fortunately, we were very wrong. GRRR called us on December 26th to tell us they had a 10-month-old Golden who they would like us to meet. We did not see any pictures prior to meeting him, but as soon as he was brought out to meet us and we saw his beautiful red coat and playful, loving personality, we knew in that instant that he was perfect.

Over the past year Gus graduated from basic obedience class at Terroux Dog Training, traveled across Colorado (meeting lots of new friends), and became a staple of the BPRunCo run club. He's made every part of our lives better. The dog that was "never" going to be allowed on the furniture now has his own chair and sleeps in the middle of the bed every night. He makes every day better, and we are thankful to GRRR for helping us find him.

Andrew Bainbridge

Gus



Hello Friends at GRRR:

I just wanted to drop a note to let you know that our beloved OX is doing so well. He is settled in nicely with us and we love him so much

Thank you for sharing OX with us and making him such a special part of our home.

With best wishes for a healthy 2025,

Elizabeth Shelov and family

OX



Recent Rescues



Dear GRRR:

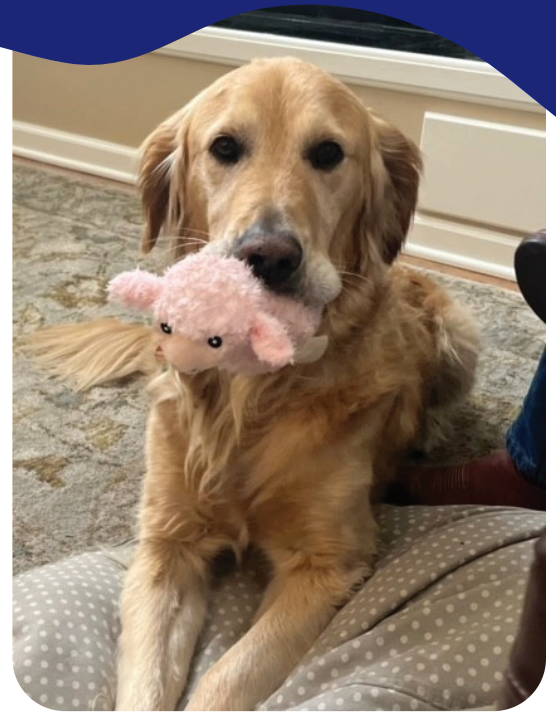
Since it's her 3rd birthday, I thought I'd send this picture. Luna actually sat for the photo! She's still got a lot of puppy in her, in all the best ways!

I hope her seven siblings are doing just as well as Luna.

Thanks,
Carol Lovseth

Luna

Dear GRRR:
We have had Gus for just over a year now. He is the sweetest guy, and we love him so very much. Gus loves walks, loves to fetch, loves his stuffed toys and, most of all, loves everybody he meets. He is happy. We are happy. Thanks, GRRR.
Jeff and Dezi Kappes



Gus



Dear GRRR:

Sharing gratitude to GRRR for matching me with little Miss Lindy (a 30-pound Goldendoodle). I adopted 8-year-old Lindy on November 7, 2024.

She came sad and quite skittish, understandable given her past as a breeding mama from an Iowa puppy mill. Almost right away, Lindy walked well on a leash. After only a few days, she snuggled up in bed with me.

Her name, Lindy, means tender and sweet, both of which suit her well. Of course, she is also known as "Sweetie Pie," "Pumpkin Head," and "Miss Priss Pot," among other pet names!

She is getting to know her two female (rescued) pupper cousins: 4 and a half year old mini lab mix, Huxley, and Charlie, a 10-year-old Poodle mix.

As I shared with my friend that Lindy might think she's been adopted by a peculiar lady, my friend commented that Lindy and I are a perfect match, since Lindy's a bit peculiar herself, with her sketchy puppy mill background!

Thanks (again!), GRRR!

Lora Michael



Lindy



Poppy

Poppy waits patiently to be invited into our bed in the morning and you can

always find her inches away ready for an ear scratch.

Poppy is forever getting into trouble and rarely embarrassed about her shenanigans.

She fills our home with lots of joy!

Amy Abernathy

Dear GRRR:

Poppy has officially lived with our family for an entire year! She is full of mischief, sweetness and zoomies! She has a new (human) baby brother, but that doesn't stop her from thinking she's the baby of the family.

Dear GRRR:

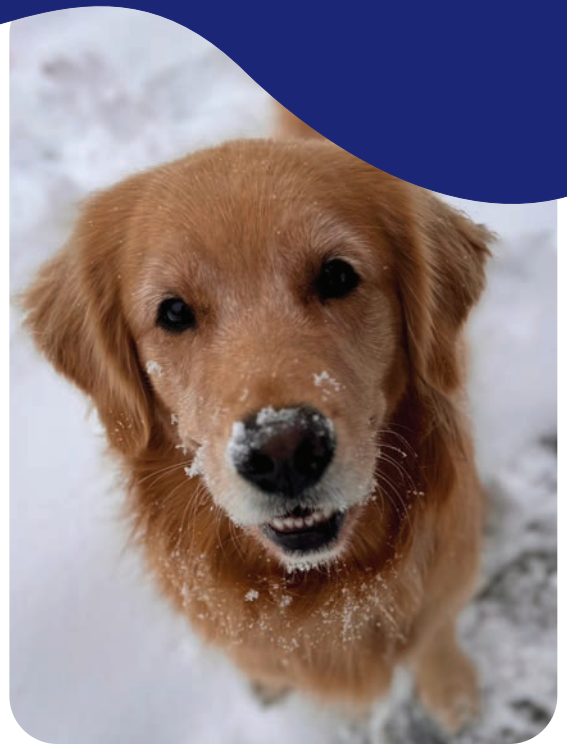
Cella has been settling in to our routine beautifully, adapting to our active and social lifestyle with curiosity and joy.

Over the summer Cella built-up stamina and has become quite the runner. She discovered that she loves the outdoors as

much as we do, including hiking, camping and gondola rides, regardless of the weather. She also maintains squirrel patrol duty with confidence and ease. Yesterday she discovered snow and was an absolute thrill to watch as she bounded around the yard!

Cella is without a doubt the perfect dog for us and we are so grateful she's part of our lives every day.

All the best,
Jordan & Juli



Cella

Dear GRRR:

We adopted Sir Chubbo last October. He's been an amazing addition to our family. He loves to hike, play with other doggies, and swim at the beach! He's a great dog paddler!



At the end of the day after a hearty meal he just LOVES to cuddle up!

We love him so much and appreciate all the work that you do to help Golden retrievers find homes.

With gratitude,
Diane Murphy

Sir Chubbo

Hi GRRR,

I wanted to update you on two dogs, Zoe and Lola, we brought home last April. They are doing great, living large. Thank you for helping us adopt these great dogs.

Jill Baron

Zoe & Lola



Recent Rescues

Dear GRRR:

We adopted Sissy in September 2024. This was our first time rescuing, as our 8-year-old dog had passed away a few months earlier and our 8-year-old Golden Retriever, Cooper, seemed lonely. When we met Sissy, a 9-year-old, we thought it could be a great match.

We had read about the 3-3-3 rule for rescue dogs and it held true for Sissy. She has been a good dog from the moment we brought her home, but once we hit that three-month mark, we saw her relax and settle in even more. She got used to the noises in our house, the antics of our other dog, and we could tell she was fully trusting us. Sissy has been a great companion for Cooper, and for a 9-year-old, she still has a lot of energy! We live on acreage, so she enjoys the daily walks around our property and loves to hunt for mice on our walks. She and Cooper usually have a daily chase session around the yard as well. We know she came from a loving home and the transition had to be hard on her, but she is very loved. We like to think she is very happy in her new retirement home.

Sissy loves carrying a stuffie around! Thank you for all you do to place these dogs in loving homes! We have now experienced the reward of rescuing and plan to rescue again in the future.

Kelli Huber



Sissy

Dear GRRR:

Sunny wants you to know that she is sending a little holiday love to you all; please expect a donation, it's coming !

She wants to thank you for helping her find a forever home! We absolutely love her and she makes our home complete! Thank you for what you do!

Marie and Todd Hauer

Sunny



Hi GRRR:

Wilson has settled in very nicely with our other two dogs and has become best friends with our Pointer, Beau. We frequently find them snuggling together! Wilson has come out of his shell and is a very funny guy! He loves to stare at himself in the mirror, paw anyone for pets, and carry his favorite toy, pumpkin man, around.

Wilson has brought us so much joy and laughter, and we are so thankful we adopted him! He is the perfect addition to our family.

Savanna Oliver

Wilson

Dear GRRR:

In August 2023, after a year and a half without a dog in our home, I had a “weak moment” and sent an application to GRRR hoping to adopt a Golden Retriever. We weren’t planning on a puppy, but when the opportunity presented itself, I pretended to consider what a puppy would mean (chewing, midnight potty breaks, etc.), while in my heart, I was shouting with excitement.

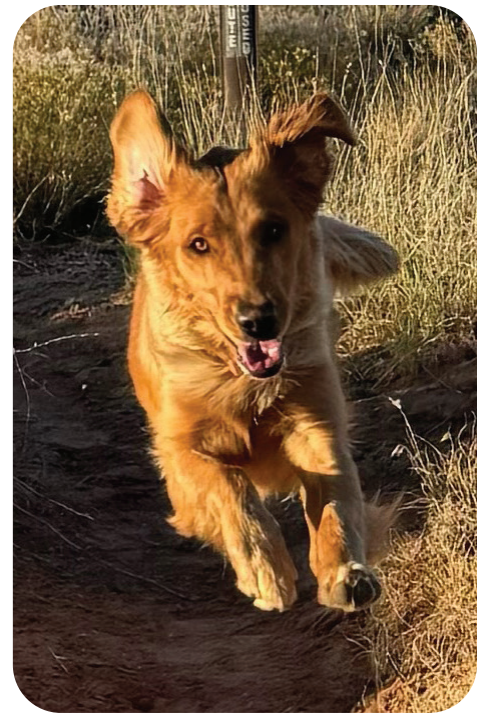
Two weeks later we met the puppies and two weeks after that, we brought home Skyler; adorable, curious, and afraid of everything. She has gotten braver every day since and has grown into a beautiful girl. Her favorite toy is not a tennis ball but a squeaky rubber chicken. For our first year, I would walk into a room, see her and want to pinch myself to make sure she was really part of our pack.

Skyler’s life with us includes exploring the woods and creek where we live, joining me at my office with the other office dogs, going on road trips to the desert, and swimming and camping. She is a perfect hiking buddy and absolutely loves running at top speed, but her favorite thing to do is play with her dog friends.

Super-Skye is a mostly good canine citizen who walks past deer without wanting to chase them, has a consistently enthusiastic recall, and makes friends wherever she goes. Nobody is perfect, however, and we all have things we’re working on. Excitement over seeing a two-legged friend sometimes ends up with her jumping on them. She’s not too sure about little people. And the dog door. I remember reading about another GRRR adoptee whose family described a “negotiation” that was taking place regarding the dog door. That’s familiar to us. Skyler will go through it but really prefers that I go outside first and have a treat ready for when she comes through. Maybe she just has me well trained.

Yes, Skyler has both my husband and me wrapped around her little paw, but she brings us so much joy, we are truly the lucky ones. She’s a scrunchable snuggle bug who is always game for an adventure. Thank you, GRRR, for the opportunity! She’s wonderful!

Rebecca Dickenson



Skyler



Hi GRRR:

Wanted to give you an update on the sweetest dog ever! Oh my goodness, we don’t know how this boy could be a better dog. Wilbert has fit in perfectly to our home. His purple bear stuffie is still his favorite to carry around. He likes to steal our belongings, as you can see in the picture: boots, shirts, jammies – never wrecking them, just wanting us to notice how naughty he’s being. He sleeps in bed with me all night which is heaven. He’s learning to walk on a leash and to go for car rides. He has bad leash manners (I don’t really care), but we’re working on it. And car rides make him super nervous, so we go on little trips to fun places for him. Otherwise, he’s hanging out in the house with us while we’re doing puzzles, watching the dog show on TV, visiting neighbors, and keeping me company in the kitchen. I think he gets invited to more places than we do, and the neighbor kids frequently ask to come over for some Wilbert time. He’s really good with kids and is getting used to the neighborhood cats who stop by for a snack.



We can’t thank GRRR enough for allowing us to adopt another one of their dogs.

We’re so grateful and every day say how much we love our Wilbert. I can barely stand how cute he is. We’re obsessed

Marsi Rettberg

Wilbert

Recent Rescues

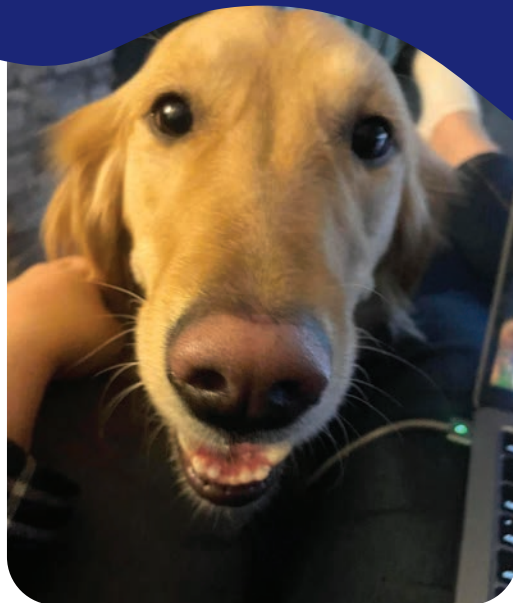
Dear GRRR:

Happy Gotcha Day Hope! One year ago we adopted Skye, who we renamed Hope. We loved her instantly and did our best to be patient with her as she overcame her fears. She's come a long way. She trusts us (unless we move too fast!), and after 8 months she now goes for walks with us! She loves people and is good with our grandkids – she just takes her time getting used to them. Her favorite snack is popcorn. She has filled in nicely and her hair has grown in so pretty!

Thank you to everyone at GRRR for rescuing her and letting us adopt her!

Jenni Mason

Hope



Dear GRRR;

Wanted to send a sweet update about our rescue Maggie, adopted on September 27, 2023. She is the light of our life and has become the most important family member. She even had the honor of signing our marriage certificate this past September.

Since we have gotten her, she has traveled to the oceans of California and a lake in upstate New York. She loves the water and swimming, and loves to snuggle up on the couch with her parents.

We are forever grateful for your rescue for bringing Maggie into our lives!

Meredith Cushman

Maggie



Hi Guys!

Riley is doing fantastic! He is such a blessing for us! Everyone he meets says he is something special - even others with their own dogs (and Golden retrievers).

Thank you a ton! We so appreciate what you guys do!

Golden Love,

Desiree and Karl Krummenacher

Riley



President's Report

by Judi Servoss, President

I'm writing this at the beginning of the New Year and reflecting on how much GRRR and all of us have to be grateful for. Personally, I enjoyed the holidays with kids and grandkids. We had fun with a backyard sledding hill, snowshoes, skiing and, of course, our Golden Retriever Perry!

It was also rewarding to see so many loyal donors contributing to GRRR for Colorado Gives Day, helping us finish out the year in good financial shape. Knowing we can give our Golden Retrievers the care they need is a critical part of being able to plan for 2025. Thank you to all who continue to make this dream a reality.

And, yes, we are still working our way through the Jefferson County rezoning process to be able to build our new little house at Phoebe's Place. I can't believe it has taken this long, but on the positive side, it has been an education in county government for those of us who have been involved. I hope to have news of progress in the near future. 💙



Phoebe's Place Update

by Francie Rakiec, Executive Director



2024 Wrap-up and News for 2025

2024 was another incredible year for GRRR! We welcomed and found forever homes for 291 dogs, including our long-time resident Fig (pictured), also known as Tucker. Fig is an amazing dog, but his preference for being the only dog in the household made his adoption journey a bit longer.

We hosted our gala at a new venue, Social Capitol in Arvada, which was a huge success. The space was ample, and the food was fantastic! Additionally, we raised nearly \$175,000 on Colorado Gives Day. The generosity and support from the GRRR community are truly remarkable, and we couldn't achieve these milestones without our wonderful volunteers, members, donors, and adopters.

Looking ahead to 2025, GRRR will once again participate in Golden Retrievers in Golden. If you haven't attended before, it's a must-see event with countless Golden Retrievers taking over downtown Golden! This event is scheduled for February 8, 2025.

Mark your calendars for our annual gala on June 14, 2025. Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald is our speaker. We hope to see you all there! 💙

Volunteer Spotlights

Cindy Charles

I have the very best volunteer job ever! I'm the puppy lady. I've been volunteering at GRRR for about 11 years. I started there as a way to honor the memory of a friend who had been on the GRRR Board, Joyce Morganfield. At first I did some office work and general dog socialization. Within a couple of years it morphed into my current role.

Whenever a litter of puppies is born at (or transferred to) GRRR, my work begins. Early on, when the puppies are still tiny and helpless, I go in every day and bond with the mama dog and let her get used to my smell and presence.

As the puppies grow, I start gently handling them and letting them get used to me. I weigh them weekly and keep the pen and whelping area clean and sanitized. By week four or five the real cleaning work begins on a daily basis. I pick up poop inside and out of the puppy room (lots and lots of poop), do laundry to keep the bedding clean, mop and sanitize floors, and lay out fresh papers. I help with deworming and make a point to handle and cuddle the puppies every day. I put my fingers in their ears and mouths, play with their feet, pull their tails gently, trim their nails, etc., to get them used to being handled.

Some puppies need lessons on using the dog door while others just naturally start running in and out. They are not actually house trained; they are simply able to use the door flap. By weeks six to seven they are all razor teeth and sharp nails as they leap up, grab clothing, untie shoes, chew on pant legs, play growl, and vocalize. They get into and pull down anything and everything they can reach. Cleaning now is a challenge as every movement is a big "chase and grab" game. Who needs toys when there are mops, brooms, and fresh newspapers? Their charm occasionally wears thin, until they lie down, exhausted, to sleep. A quick cuddle reminds me why I love this job. At eight weeks I'm happy to turn them over to their new forever homes (thanks to Roberta's never-ending efforts). Another 4-6 days of deep cleaning and sanitizing the area and we're ready for the next litter!

P.S. Most days I also try to take Mary's and Francie's dogs, Molly, Logan, Jezebel, Ivy, and the new mama (I call them the house dogs) out for a short romp. I occasionally meet up with my husband, Ed Tanner, who is frequently there walking the kennel dogs and we all get a little exercise walking around the WOOF area. It's been a fulfilling and joyful experience for both of us. 💙



Ed Tanner

My association with GRRR began about eleven years ago. My wife and I had friends who were involved with GRRR and we liked the thought of helping. I started walking dogs a few times a week as part of the VIP team, or in some cases, they were walking me. There is not a single day when I do not get a laugh when I am with them. Who can't laugh at Tucker sliding through the snow trying to get the tennis ball, or Mookie carrying three balls back to the kennel wishing he could have been able to keep the fourth, or Molly making snow angels while scratching her back. I also enjoy socializing the dogs, just spending time petting them while they rest their head on my lap and drool on my jeans – who wouldn't enjoy that? It is also very rewarding to see the dogs change from being very shy and timid to becoming engaged and happy. Many of them adapt so quickly to their new world; it is great to see and be part of the change.

In addition to walking dogs on site, I have transported dogs being surrendered by owners, transported from shelters to GRRR, and met other transporters halfway and brought the dogs to GRRR. Also, I have taken some dogs to vet appointments in Ft. Collins, Colorado Springs, and Denver. I enjoy being part of the team giving these Golden Retrievers (and Doodles, Pyrenees, Newfies, and Labs) a great chance to improve their health and to find a forever home. The ultimate reward for me is to arrive at the kennels for my day of walking, see that my favorite dog is no longer there, and learn that they have found a forever home.

While most of my focus is on the dogs, I have been involved with other projects around Phoebe's Place: simple things like pulling weeds, helping on cleanup days, securing tarps to provide shade for the puppies, trimming tree branches and loading them in the dumpster, or securing a fence that has been damaged by wind.

On a more personal level, we were very fortunate to adopt our Chocolate Labrador (Owen) almost eight years ago from GRRR. He was transported to GRRR with a Golden Retriever and spent several months at Phoebe's Place. He was always the first dog I walked; I needed all the energy I had, as he was a strong puller. Cindy and I decided to foster him after a request from GRRR when the kennels were full. Well, you know how that ended – we failed at fostering after three short days and gave him his forever home, and us a great deal of pleasure and challenge. Owen is growing older with us and providing much joy daily. Thank you for allowing me to share my joy and appreciation for all that GRRR and the volunteers do. 💙



FAST Report: Brooklyn

by Laura Cunningham

In the May 2024 issue, our cover article detailed GRRR's new FAST program to rehab shy and fearful dogs coming from puppy mills. Here is an amazing success story about Brooklyn.

Brooklyn was rescued from a mill dog operation and brought to GRRR on March 20, 2024. This beautiful cream Golden was very shy and huddled in the outside part of her kennel. Her soulful eyes and sweet nature tugged at our heartstrings immediately.

We learned early on that Brooklyn had her own idea of when and how long she would leave her kennel and explore her surroundings. Brooklyn was one of our most notorious “pancakers.” She would walk on leash for a while, perhaps following her buddy Kayla (now Rosie), but then suddenly put on the brakes. Her prolific pancaking resulted in a developed technique and coined a phrase that we used to help her get from point A to point B, called the “Brooklyn Shuffle.” This entailed straddling her, picking her up underneath her front legs, then helping her shuffle along on her back legs. (Note to self: Consider a little ibuprofen and/or back brace when planning on working with Brooklyn.)

Brooklyn called her own shots, and her pancaking was somewhat arbitrary. Once when she was feeling particularly plucky, she actually led me through the gate to Woof (GRRR's off-leash area). To my amazement, she trotted across the bridge and on down the steps. A breakthrough to be sure! Alas, then she decided to pancake at the bottom of the stairs. There was nothing much else to do but proceed (with much huffing and puffing on my part) with the “Brooklyn Shuffle” all the way back to her kennel. (Note to self: don't stray too far from the kennel unless another FASTER is available to help!)

As time went on, we learned that if we kept a 15-20 foot lead on her, and just have her follow us, she would actually leave and return to her kennel on her own. Patience was of paramount importance when working with Brooklyn. If we had an idea to pick up her leash and hurry her along, for some reason she would often respond with one of her infamous “nothing-doing-pancakes!” (Note to self: Give yourself plenty of time when taking Brooklyn out, as a “hurry-up” option with Brooklyn is sketchy at best.)

Brooklyn's life changed forever on July 18, 2024. Wendy and Barney, of Lyons, Colorado, adopted dear Brooklyn. She is now called Tilly. Wendy has kept a daily diary of their experience with Tilly. They had to go through the process of gaining her trust, which required so much patience and creativity! She was pancaking, and they had a hard time getting her into the backyard. She wasn't even following their other dog. Wendy and Barney tried all sorts of ways to connect with Tilly and get her to go into the backyard, including peanut butter trails, sleeping on the main level with her, and they even redid their extensive (and costly!) landscaping in order to better accommodate Tilly!

A breakthrough moment happened in their lives when they were notified that they needed to evacuate due to the fires. Barney was loading the truck and thinking to himself, “How are we going to get Tilly into the truck,” when he saw Wendy leading Tilly around the house on leash! What a clear sign that Tilly knew she had a family who would keep her safe. (Last note to self: Witnessing a fearful and shy dog building trust with humans may be just about the greatest gift there is.)

Wendy and Barney still have challenges with sweet Tilly, though she has made such good progress. And one thing for certain... Tilly is HOME! 💙



Golden Angel: Hank

by Katie Bates

A Golden Retriever with a Heart of Gold

Hank's journey with GRRR began in a way no puppy should have to face. At just eight weeks old, Hank arrived at GRRR with a serious spinal cord injury. Despite his challenges, it was clear from the start that Hank was a fighter. With a heart full of determination and a playful spirit that refused to be dimmed, this little pup quickly captured the hearts of everyone he met.

Hank's injury required special care and ongoing physical therapy to help him grow stronger and learn how to adapt to his unique circumstances. That's where GRRR's incredible network of volunteers and supporters stepped in. With their dedication, Hank began his journey to recovery.

Today, Hank is thriving at the K9 Body Shop, where he receives specialized therapy to build his strength and mobility. His weekly routine alternates between walking on the underwater treadmill and swimming in the pool. Recently, Hank achieved an exciting milestone—he started being able to swim without his life jacket! And boy, it sure is fun to watch him go! Not only does Hank enjoy his time in the water, but he also loves carrying a toy in his mouth as he paddles. It's as if he knows how far he's come and is embracing every moment. His sessions on the underwater treadmill are equally successful, providing crucial support as he continues to improve.

While Hank's progress has been remarkable, his personality is just as unforgettable. This sweet boy is bursting with energy and charm, but he's



also a bit of a handful. Having been thoroughly spoiled, Hank has developed some mischievous habits and lacks a few manners. Soon, he'll be starting lessons at Terroux Training, where Ted Terroux will teach Hank the skills he needs to become a well-

mannered companion. In the meantime, Hank has already begun picking up some basic commands and is showing great potential!

Now, after just turning one, Hank is a testament to the power of compassion and the impact of such a generous community. His playful personality, wagging tail, and gentle nature are like a secret weapon against the struggles he's overcome.

Hank's story is a reminder of the incredible work GRRR does every day and the role of members like you in making it all possible. Your generosity provides dogs like Hank with the second chances they deserve and helps them thrive in ways they might never have imagined.

Thank you for being a part of Hank's journey and helping GRRR change lives—one Golden at a time! 💙



Hank doing water therapy



To help dogs like Hank, please send donations to: GRRR, 15350 W. 72nd Avenue, Arvada, CO 80007
(make check payable to GRRR with "Golden Angel Fund" in the memo) or donate at goldenrescue.com/golden-angel-fund.
Thank you!

Angel Update

Ashton Update

by Pat & Scott Rogers

Ashton has done a remarkable job on his hip replacement recovery. The initial X-rays revealed that both hips needed replacement, but the surgeon decided to do the worst one first, then do a “wait-and-see” approach on the other one. We did many sessions of aqua therapy after the surgery, which proved very helpful in strengthening both hips. Plus, we did many home exercises prescribed by his physical therapist. We will see the surgeon soon, as it has almost been a year since the surgery. He will check the other leg and advise what he thinks should be done.

Ashton has become a very happy and athletic 2-year-old Golden. We will follow whatever the surgeon suggests next. Ashton has so many good years ahead of him. He seems to smile and thank us daily for his new hip.

Thanks to everyone who donated to the Golden Angel Fund for Ashton and other dogs like him. And thank you, GRRR, for letting us first foster Ashton, then adopt him and be his caregivers after the surgery. We love him so much. 💙



Goldens in Golden



Saturday, February 8, 11 AM – 1 PM

Washington Avenue, Downtown Golden

Stop by the GRRR booth for fun, fur, and fabulous Golden Retrievers! This event has gotten bigger and bigger every year and the streets are very crowded. It's a fun event, but if your dog is at all skittish, this might not be a good event for them as it can be pretty overwhelming.

<https://www.visitgolden.com/events/annual-events/goldens-in-golden/>



Annual Member Meeting

Sunday, March 2, 2025, 1-3pm

NEW LOCATION: Belmar Library – Belmar Meeting Room

555 S. Allison Pkwy, Lakewood, CO 80226

You are all invited! Join fellow volunteers for an afternoon of connection, updates, and a shared love for Goldens. 💙

You Made a Difference!

Colorado Gives Day

Woohoo, another spectacular Colorado Gives Day! We raised nearly \$175,000 (up from \$150,000 in 2023) from 415 donors. Thanks to all who give to this big fundraiser for GRRR! 💙💙

Non-Event mailing

Our annual “non-event” Stay postcard received \$12,285 in donations for our Golden Angels! Thank you! 💙💙



King Soopers Rewards

366 households raised \$3,434.54 last quarter, up from 309 and \$2,670.76 the prior quarter...thank you! If you're not a Community Rewards Member yet, use the QR code to sign up at no cost to you! 💙💙



Calendar Photo Contest Tips

The 2026 calendar will be the 19th annual GRRR calendar! We consistently have 500 entries each year so thank you for keeping this calendar project rolling!

The contest will run from May through sometime in July so you have time to take many photos of your adorable dogs! Here's a few tips:

- Horizontal photos only to fit the calendar layout. Turn that phone 90°!
- Get down on the dog's level so you're not pointing down at them from a standing position.
- Judges are looking for dogs with personality...photos of your goofy happy dog with his tongue hanging out that make you smile.
- Action shots are great too - Goldens doing what Goldens like to do.
- The judges do love beautiful Colorado shots!
- Generally outdoor photos work best but if taking indoors, be aware of stuff in the background...trash cans, old chewed up toys, messy beds.
- We like to see the dog taking up a large percentage of the photo.
- Lighting is really important. Early morning and late afternoon shots have much better lighting than harsh afternoon summer sun.
- And if you haven't gotten your 2024 calendars yet, they are still available on our website: www.goldenrescue.com/grrr-calendar/ 💙💙



H O R I Z O N T A L !



GRRR Stats

January 1 - Dec 31, 2024

Number of Dogs Placed: 291
\$ Spent on Medical Needs: \$ 113,195

Newsletter Submissions

We all love reading about your Goldens and we'd like to hear from you! If you'd like to submit a letter AND photo of your GRRR rescue, email the letter and digital photo to debbie.davis@goldenrescue.com.

Deadline for the May 2024 issue is April 7, 2025.
Thanks!

Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies

**15350 W. 72nd Avenue
Arvada, CO 80007**

Goldens in Golden

Saturday, February 8, 11 AM – 1 PM

hotline: 303/279-2400
info@goldenrescue.com
www.goldenrescue.com
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“A Golden Retriever Can Change Your Life!”®

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies is dedicated to rescue, placement and public awareness, to ensure that Golden Retrievers are adopted by people who are able to provide a safe, loving home.

Applications to adopt a Golden are available on our website: goldenrescue.com

Please accept my Membership in GRRR (includes quarterly newsletter plus free attendance at all events and reunions)

I would like to receive my newsletter:

☐ via mail (black & white print) or

☐ via email (color PDF...save GRRR postage/printing costs!)

\$50 year \$ _____

Please accept my additional tax deductible donation to help Goldens where needed most:

☐ \$250+ Golden Champion ☐ \$100 Golden Hero ☐ \$50 Golden Star

\$ _____

Interested in volunteering? Go to www.goldenrescue.com to fill out the volunteer application. Thanks!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Please mail to: Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies • 15350 W. 72nd Ave. • Arvada, CO 80007

Thank you for your support!
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