



SUMMER 2013

GRRoM Newsletter

Christofer Michaels, Publisher
Paulette Lerman, Asst. Editor
Lyn Baumann, Asst. Editor

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Amy Hernandez

Hello GRRoM Friends,
I am so pleased to announce a new addition to the GRRoM Board of Directors, Lisa Sollish. Lisa came to us first as an adopter in 2009 and then helped us as a foster. In working with Lisa as a foster, the Board was very impressed with Lisa's passion for our cause, as well as her professionalism. This along with her legal background makes her a great addition to our Board. I will let Lisa tell you in her own words below how she feels about this opportunity.

From Lisa...

In 2009, my husband and I adopted our beautiful dog, Jake, from Golden Retriever Rescue of Michigan. We found the people involved with GRRoM to be very dedicated, professional, helpful and knowledgeable. Wanting to give back to the organization that gave us our wonderful dog, my husband and I began fostering. The board members and interviewers of GRRoM were with us every step of the way, providing a wonderful support system for us. Our fosters were adopted and we found the process to be very rewarding and heartwarming. Recently, I was fortunate enough to be invited to sit on the Board for GRRoM and have accepted the invitation with pleasure. It is my sincerest hope that I can be as much of an asset to GRRoM as all of the people who have been and continue to be involved with the organization. Thank you for this opportunity to serve others and to help the many dogs that need our attention.

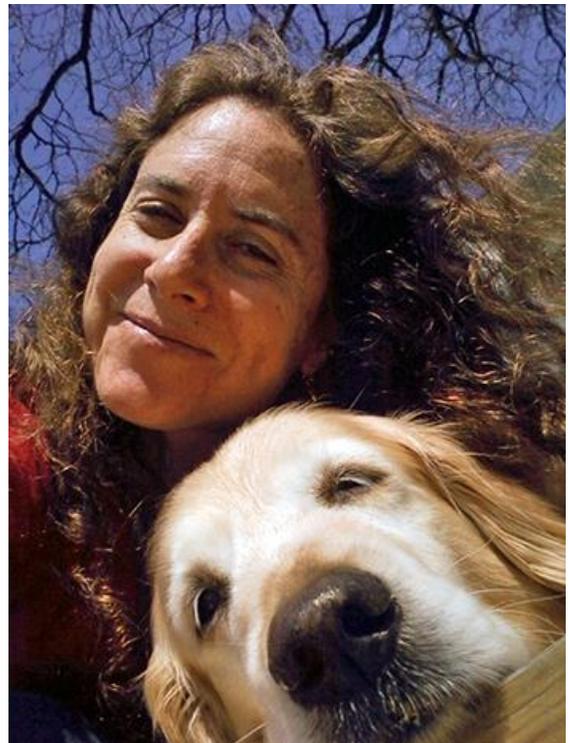
MEET ONE OF THE GRRoM VOLUNTEERS SPOTLIGHT ON KAREN VINEBERG –

GRRoM Foster & Volunteer

By Lyn Baumann

GRRoM is continually blessed to have many dedicated and caring fosters and Karen Vineberg is most certainly one of them. Sadly, Karen's most recent foster, Shamus became a "golden angel" this past May, having never made it to the adoption list. Karen's dedication to Shamus was remarkable – from her late night trips across town from her home near Ann Arbor to Wilson's Veterinary Clinic in Romeo, to her willingness to do whatever else Shamus needed – Karen most certainly went the distance for him. How lucky Shamus was to have such tender love and care in his final days.

Karen has also offered to coordinate the Pet Fest event in August this year.



Karen & Mattie

When asked how she became “hooked on Golden’s” and what motivated her to become a GRRoM foster, this is what she wrote:

“As long as I can remember, I wanted a Golden in my life. I grew up with a mutt; he was a great dog. He lived to be about 17yrs old. I loved him and couldn't imagine life with a different dog, but every time I saw a Golden anywhere, my heart would jump. I have always known, since childhood, that Golden’s owned my heart. With their beautiful looks and Golden personalities, Golden’s always seemed special. It wasn't until my daughter was 6 that I got my Mattie. Mattie was the best dog ever, with a totally sweet Golden personality. She touched the heart of everyone she met. Even non-dog friends told me that to their surprise, they actually really liked Mattie. She was trained as a therapy dog and she could read people extremely well. She helped me through any and everything I needed help with in life. She has spent more time with me than anyone else in my adult life... my constant and devoted companion.



Karen & Annabel

A few years ago there were 2 sisters abandoned at a park and ride, Kiley and Kasey. A friend of mine who is also a Golden lover, was on GRRoM's list to adopt and told me about these two. They were about the same age as Mattie, and they looked like they could have been her littermates. When I saw their photos I got weak in the knees. I actually filled out the paperwork to volunteer with GRRoM, but by this time Mattie was old

enough that she decided she didn't need to share me with anyone. Others could visit, but they couldn't own me. So I decided to give a donation and wait before sending in the volunteer paperwork.

After more than 12 years of constant companionship, I said goodbye to Mattie last October. Thanksgiving without a dog was unbearable. I wasn't ready for another dog, but fostering seemed like a good idea to me so I sent the paperwork in. Annabelle came to me just before Christmas; Shamus came to me in February. Each with totally different personalities, but each definitely Golden.”

TALES OF GOLDEN TAILS & MORE

A PAW TOUCHES A SOUL

By Danielle Buhrlé, 1st Grade Teacher, Lincoln International Studies School; Nicholas Meier, West Michigan Therapy Dogs, Inc. and Julia Meier, West Michigan Therapy Dogs, Inc. With special thanks to Katie Lynn and Jett, Animal Assisted Activity Dogs

Katie Lynn is a “tripod” that was adopted in 2008 from GRRoM & Jett is a retired leader dog.

Danielle

This year started out as most usually do with lots of kids dropping and adding. Late in September, I got a notice that I would be getting a new student who was transferring from another local school. When he showed up, I was sure that the secretary had made a mistake and that my new student was definitely a kindergartener. I made this assumption because of his small stature and quiet nature. She rechecked all of his paperwork and, sure enough, he was a 1st grader.

My intern and I made it a point to try and get to know “Charlie” (not his real name) a little better as he was so quiet and our class rapport had been established by the time he came to us. As we tried to have conversations and find out about him, he

remained quiet and quite reserved.

By this time in the year, Katie Lynn and Jett had become quite the attraction each week when they joined us for our reading hour. Tuesdays became known to the 18 children in the class as "dog day" and the energy in the room was electric as they all

vied to get the chance to read to either Katie Lynn or Jett for a few minutes. As I watched Charlie, I quickly noticed his very apparent fear of dogs. Every week I tried and tried to give "Charlie" the chance to read with either dog, but each week he declined. In fact he would actually go out of his way to avoid the dogs and stay as far from them as he could.

Nick

For five months Julia and I had been taking Katie Lynn and Jett to Ms. Buhrlé's 1st grade each week so the kids can read to them. Each Tuesday when we would arrive, all the children would be excited and would hope that they would be the ones that Ms. Buhrlé would select to read to the dogs. All, that is, except one small boy. When we'd come to the classroom he would withdraw to a corner far away from the dogs. He would not get near to either of them, let alone read to them. He never smiled; he never talked. Until one recent afternoon.

As I sat on the floor with Katie while one of the children read to her, I noticed Charlie sitting nearby working on a math game. He would look at Katie Lynn and me from time to time and then go back to his game. It was the nearest he'd ever come to

Katie or Jett. When my first student was done, I looked up at Charlie and he looked back at me. I asked, "Charlie, would you like to read to Katie?" Without hesitation, he said, "Yes." He got a book and sat down on my right while Katie was lying on my left with her head on my lap as she looked at Charlie. This quiet, withdrawn little boy opened "The Gingerbread Man" and began to read (a book at least on the 2nd or 3rd grade level).

When he was done, he gently patted Katie on her head and returned to his seat. He never smiled and remained stoic throughout our time together. I looked over at him and gave him a "thumbs up." His expression never changed, but he did return my "thumbs up." Katie Lynn had touched his soul.

Danielle

In the weeks since, I've seen the excitement on Charlie's face, a face that had once been so blank and full of fear, never engaging either my intern or me in conversation and we had yet to learn much about him. Since the day he chose to read to Katie, Charlie has been lively, talkative and has a constant smile on his face. He's gone out of his way to engage me in conversation and tell me a bit about himself.

These therapy dogs that came into my children's lives have been an absolute blessing. The changes in my children's growth have been a joy to watch unfold. I can truly attest to the power that this program has not only in my classroom but in the

confidence of my students. This is a wonderful opportunity, and I am so glad to have had the chance to make reading that much more fun for my struggling readers.

SUMMER SWIMMING FUN

By Debra Ball Johnson

We all know how Goldens love the water! While my gal Amber does not fetch a stick on land, throw it in the water and watch her go! She brings it back, and immediately turns to see where you threw it again, and again, and again... But I noticed as she was swimming, she was also whining a little. Amber is an old gal, fourteen years of age, and she has arthritis in her left elbow and wrist. I thought that though she loves to swim, it must hurt her to do so.

My solution? I bought her a life vest! It gives her some extra buoyancy so she does not have to swim as hard, making it easier on her wrist and

elbow. I also wade in the water with her and keep her on a lead, so I can limit the amount of swimming and walking from me to the beach. This maximizes the swimming and fetching activity, though she still never wants to stop!

I also put the vest on her when she goes in a boat. A friend of mine told me how this saved his dog's life when the dog went overboard. Not that the dog could not swim. He physically able to, but the vest handle on the top allowed my friend to lift the dog back into the boat. Otherwise, it would have been quite an ordeal to lift him up while treading water.



So consider a life vest for your golden. You can see how sporty Amber looks in hers!

BRODIE LIKES BAGELS

By Ann Williams

You know, you just can't leave your bagel on a plate and walk out of the room with me sitting here. It's just not my job to make sure your food is safe while you're gone for 5 seconds. What was I supposed to do? I thought you were finished? What? You only had one bite? Well, last time I saw my food bowl full was at 7:15 this morning.

So, this is what happened. You moved a muscle away from that bagel and that told my brain that you were finished. You could not take one single bite more and I felt it was my duty to eat that bagel as fast as I could so it would not go to waste. I felt so good when I did that and I felt

like I was doing a service to you. You do not even have to wash that dish. I licked it clean as one of those things you blow into and it makes a high sound that only I can hear. That's right, just put that dish in that high cabinet. It is really clean. You should be so happy.

Oh, you're not? I'm really, really sorry. About what? What are you talking about? I'm not going to get sick. No, I'm not allergic to bagels? Are you crazy? Bagels are the best. They are delicious! No, they don't make me itchy! They make me feel really full for a few minutes. It looks like you're going to make another one! Oh, I hope that is for me! Another one would be awesome. Let's face it, I could eat the whole bag! I don't know how you can just eat one every day. I feel that I'm a bagel connoisseur!



Plain, toasted, sliced in half. I'll take it any style! What? I can't believe you are going to eat the whole thing right in front of me. I'm sitting here so patiently just to get a morsel. No morsel? Not one? I can't even lick the plate? That is the best part. Oh, well. I'm gonna go lay down but let's

face it, I always will be hungry around the clock. I will never be "full." That is why I make a big "sigh" sound at night after you are having your third meal or umpteenth scobie snack.

CODY

By Bob & Carla Hannemann

In March we received Cody from his foster home in St. Claire Shores, MI. He had been fostered with Bob and Jean. He is 2 years old, and needed a home where he would get a lot of attention, and his family would be home a lot of the time. He had been crated for long hours and had worn away his teeth trying to chew his way out of the crate. We had sold our crate on a garage sale, because our previous golden didn't need it. She had only used it as a safe, quiet place with the door never closed.

At first, when we would leave, we had Cody fenced in our bedroom where he could lay anywhere he wanted; on his bed or on our bed. Recently he has had full use of the house while we are gone. He has never ruined anything since we got him. He is a well-behaved boy with the exuberance of a two-year-old puppy.



Cody gets two walks a day and will go in the back yard either on a cord or loose, but he doesn't venture far from the deck and the back door. He had 4 private training sessions with the trainer from our vet clinic. It seemed like he would need these lessons, but he has been so good and anxiety separation attacks never occurred.

Cody does great with our grandkids, 14, 12 & 9 and the neighbor boy age 6. Recently we took a 10 days bus trip to New England arranged through Senior Centers, so Cody was in the kennel for 12 days. He did great and knew us when we came back to pick him up. Cody has settled in, is doing well, and we are thrilled to have him. Thanks to GRRoM for their assistance in finding a golden rescue.

DUTCHESS

By Abby & Brian Briggs

This story chronicles the saga of a dog name Dutchess. It describes the unique, interactive life journeys of one canine and many humans. They are marked by vacillation: between autonomy and dependence; sadness and joy; giving care and being cared for; and ultimately, grand beginnings and profound loss. Mostly, it is a story of selfless love. It illustrates how poignant and complicated and joyful the phenomenon of adoption can be. An injunction for care does not get more definitive than this: it reads like a legal document and declares it official and binding. Abby is now solely responsible for the life and care of Dutchess, a one-year-old Golden Retriever puppy. Paws With A Cause has renounced all responsibility and bestows it clearly and unequivocally on Abby. March 13, 1995 legally and emotionally begins the saga. Dutchess has been adopted.

Most adoptions are planned and longed for by the parents. Some happen as a result of other external circumstances and this, for sure is an example of the latter. Abby was living in small town in Michigan and was already the single parent of Zach, a sweet, huge 3-year-old Golden Retriever. An article in her local newspaper caught her attention and that random reading foreshadowed the first of many beginnings.

Paws With A Cause was featured as the helpful resource for a wheelchair - bound man, suffering a spinal cord injury, who lived in a nearby community. He was being given Buggy, a chocolate Labrador Retriever, trained and certified as an aid dog to help him negotiate his home, his place of employment and his

navigation of the outside world which included shopping malls, churches, restaurants, theatres and modes of transportation such as buses, trains and airplanes. Such access for these certified dogs is assured by state and federal law as a provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A shaded insert in the article was titled “Think about donating money and your home.” Abby responded to the proclaimed foremost need of the organization which was, even more than money, “foster homes for puppies – Golden and Labrador Retrievers – that will one day be aides for humans. There is a critical need for people to raise the puppies until they are 15 – 16 months old, at which time they would be turned over for training.”

One thing did not necessarily lead to another and on a beginning-of-spring March day, in 1994, Dutchess arrived at Abby’s home to join the family, temporarily, as a foster dog. The directive from Paws With A Cause emphasized temporary, but there is already at this initial part of the saga, a contradiction and a foreshadowing: no relationship is temporary. Once formed, a relationship exists forever, no matter to what degree it is tended. As well, an existing relationship is affected by the addition of another. Hence, Dutchess entering the dyad of Abby and Zach would impact all three.



Abby L & Zach R

Abby knew nothing of the history of this adorable, rambunctious 12 week-old puppy and still, to this day, Dutchess’s origins and heritage remain a mystery. The task was to raise and train Dutchess as any other puppy. The arrival

and integration of Dutchess into daily life went relatively smoothly for all three. Zach was already mellow of temperament at his early age and was occasionally annoyed by the new addition but never really angry or traumatized, as evidenced by his continued good behavior. The nine months went by, in a word, unremarkably. A bit chaotic, perhaps, but not exceptionally problematic.

The raising and training during that time included involvement with Pause With A Cause: obedience training with their trainers, fund raising walks with other trainee dogs and supervised visits to shopping malls. With the exception of hating to be crated, there were no clues that any behavioral issues would preclude Dutchess’s acceptance into the service dog training program.

In December, 1994, Abby and Dutchess went to Children’s Hospital in Detroit where they, and other prospective trainees, were to interact with delighted young patients. One of the activities was to switch the dogs with other foster parents. Dutchess promptly sat down in the hallway with her assigned foster parent and refused to move. Later in the day, captive in the elevator with other working dogs, Dutchess stood on her hind legs and every hair on her body went vertical. This, plus her frequent refusal to go into her crate, guaranteed that Dutchess would be rejected for training as a service dog. They told Abby that same day that Dutchess was not accepted.

The last paragraph of the insert in the newspaper article read, “If the puppy becomes one of the two percent of their dogs who don’t work out in the care field, the foster parent has first rights to take the dog back.” Abby is now at two percent.

While the other 98 percent of foster parents knew from the outset that they would be giving their dogs up, their ambivalence or sadness could be offset by the assurance that the dogs were moving on to be of service to another master and would be well valued and loved. Abby, in comparison, had a choice: she could give

Dutchess back to Paws With A Cause and hope they would find a welcoming home for her, or she could keep in her own.

Family and friends all surmised, when first hearing of the arrival of Dutchess, that it would be difficult, but possible, for Abby to part with her when she had to do so. Now she not only did not have to, but she thought it would be unfair to Dutchess to do so. Her own emotional attachment aside, she was concerned about Dutchess's "behavioral issues" and how they would affect her ability to adjust in a new environment. Not even Abby could have predicted how those issues would play out years later, but that is jumping ahead in the story. Many transitions were to occur before that time.

The triad is no longer transitional. Abby, Zach and Dutchess are now a family. The addition of Dutchess also marks the loss of the solitary bond that had been, for three years, the defining quality between Zach and Abby. This, then, is both the first loss and the first beginning.

The integration of Dutchess went relatively smoothly: always energetic and eager to engage Zach in play and mischief, Dutchess brought a new level of activity and energy into the home. She gradually became the alpha dog.

Two years later in the quiet, lazy days of August 1997, Abby met Brian. They started dating and amongst a host of other things they had in common was a love of Golden Retrievers. Brian had his own two year old, Buddy.

As the relationship grew so did the menagerie. Throughout the fall and winter Brian entered Abby's life and heart and home, accompanied by Buddy, who did the same. Initially Zach was irritated at Buddy's arrival and would growl randomly and arbitrarily. Dutchess essentially ignored the new visitor, well assured that she was in charge and the newcomer posed no threat. But very soon they were a threesome and when Brian went to his own home Buddy preferred to stay at Abby's. Not difficult to understand: much more fun and mischief available with two cohorts than by oneself. They

called Buddy the referee because when Zach and Dutchess would roll around and wrestle, as described above, Buddy would circle them and watch just like a referee. An accommodation had gradually taken place.



Zach, Dutchess & Buddy

Essentially the dogs went everywhere Brian and Abby did and much of life, outside of jobs, revolved around them. It was full and hectic and noisy much of the time and five years elapsed this way.

January opened what was to be the emotional roller coaster year of 2003 with an unexpected and sudden loss. Buddy died. Diagnosed just a couple of months before, he succumbed to liver cancer. The referee was retired. Of note was the role Dutchess played in the short time of Buddy's illness. They describe Dutchess as being the nurse and caregiver to Buddy: hovering over him, nuzzling him with affection and kindness. Being of good service to another of her own species, if not a human, as originally intended.

Abby reports that Zach and Dutchess noticed Buddy's absence but that their behavior did not change significantly. For this loss the grief was more profound for the humans. Buddy had been with Brian for all of his eight years of life. He was his sole companion for two of them and still acknowledged Brian as his master no matter what the family configuration had grown to be. Brian mourned the loss of his Buddy in keeping with his personality: quietly and deeply and

stoically carrying on with the tasks of living and caring for the family that was still with him.

In April of 2003, Brian and Abby were married and began searching for a new home. The normal excitement of marriage and house hunting was overshadowed the end of May 2003. Zach suddenly began having seizures approximately every twelve hours. The cause was never determined and, after several days, when he essentially never recovered from a final seizure, they knew they had to put Zach to rest.

The loss of Zach marked the beginning of unalterable change for Dutchess. While she noted the absence of Buddy, she completely grieved the loss of Zach. She had never known life in the house without him. His sudden disappearance had to have been a mystery and a sadness that she did not understand. Her behavior changed dramatically as an expression of that. She began furiously digging holes in the back yard to escape under the fence. She chewed doorknobs. She dug and scratched the carpeting. One does not have to be that psychologically astute to surmise that this behavior signified attempts to find her beloved Zach.

Simultaneously, after much searching and planning that had long been in place, Abby and Brian sold both of their respective homes and bought a new one in another town in Michigan, moving in April of 2004. Dutchess, right along with them, lived through the stress and chaos of packing, moving, unpacking and getting settled in their new home. It is safe to say that this final disruption to her life, in combination with the other losses she had suffered, caused her to experience separation anxiety of an extreme magnitude. What ensued in the next months was nothing short of a nightmare for Dutchess, and for Abby and Brian, as they struggled desperately to help her.

Dutchess was completely disoriented in the new house and her behavior escalated out of control and became dangerous: while Abby and Brian were away she ripped through the 12 x 12 chain link pen with her teeth and paws; she destroyed window sills and door handles; she scratched

newly refinished floors and tore up new carpeting.

The most dramatic and frightening event happened on a weekday in September. Abby arrived home from work and driving up her driveway noticed that a second story window screen was lying on the ground. Having just cleaned the windows, she thought they had not put the screen back securely and that it had fallen out. As she entered the house Dutchess was not by the door as she usually was, Abby ran through the house, calling for Dutchess, with no response. She then ran outside, calling for Dutchess, with no response. Eventually she saw Dutchess pop her head up from her favorite spot under a lilac tree. It became painfully clear that Dutchess had jumped out of the second story window.

Abby scooped her up and put her in the car and called the veterinarian to say they were on the way. By the time they arrived, Dutchess was standing up on all four legs with her head in its usual position, half out the window, hair blowing in the wind.

The vet technician who met them at the door was in disbelief. She said that they had a stretcher and oxygen ready. Apparently it was unnecessary. X-rayed and checked thoroughly, Dutchess had no broken bones or internal bleeding. She was pronounced fine to go home. Abby and the veterinary staff proclaimed it a miracle.

Separation anxiety is well documented in the literature of canine behavior. It is not a function of projection of human behavior onto the dog. It is a psychological condition of experienced stress and anxiety brought on by the leaving (actual or anticipated) of the dog's primary care taker. It is a manifestation of the dog's distress. All veterinary writing emphasizes that separation anxiety is not the result of disobedience, or lack of training, nor is it an attempt by the dog to punish or seek revenge on her owner for leaving her alone. It is a true panic response to loss.

There is variation in both the symptoms and the

causes of separation anxiety. Triggers for the disorder to occur are a traumatic event or disruption in the dog's lifestyle:

- Change in the family composition
- Death or the addition of another pet
- Move to a new home
- Being boarded or hospitalized for a period of time (The ASPCA notes that purebreds are more likely to suffer from the disorder than mixed breeds and adult dogs who have been re-homed are especially at risk.)

How sad and uncanny that Dutchess experienced all of these.

The attempts to help Dutchess and treat the anxiety disorder since moving to their new home had been three pronged: Abby and Brian had changed their behavior significantly, taking Dutchess to work and having her stay in the car or actually be in their offices, essentially never leaving her alone. The veterinarian prescribed anti-anxiety medication, which did help calm her down to some extent, some of the time. The veterinarian had also recommended working with an animal behaviorist. The behaviorist suggested several behavior modifications such as leaving for a minute and returning or picking up car keys and walking through the house instead of actually leaving. These are examples of changing the clues that dogs pick up on that the owner is leaving. These three loosely connected approaches were not working effectively and could not be sustained indefinitely. A solution emerged by a random chance visit. The course of Dutchess's journey was about to change yet again.

Early in November of 2004 Abby called on a friend in an assisted living home in a nearby city. Abby was surprised to be welcomed at the entrance, not by a person, but by a four-legged host with long, golden hair, sporting a bandanna around his neck. The greeter was the senior living facility's housedog: a Golden Retriever who was a permanent resident. Abby's first thought was that this would be a perfect situation for Dutchess: around dotting people 24/7, receiving constant attention, and probably providing entertainment and comfort to senior

citizens who would cherish both. A brief conversation with the receptionist, as she was leaving, confirmed that all the facilities of this particular corporation had their own housedog or cat. Abby's second thought was how could they ever part with Dutchess.

Only two months later, in January of 2005, Abby and Brian were going on vacation and had to board Dutchess. They were extremely worried and distressed about having to do that but thought that since they were using a kennel that the behaviorist had recommended it would be their best option. This proved not to be the case.

The kennel, being quite a distance from their home, offered a pickup/delivery service to and from the behaviorist's office. The driver, inexplicably, dropped Dutchess off unattended. She immediately destroyed the behavior therapist's office. While there might well be some irony in this event, it was, arguably, the straw that broke the camel's back (a rather expensive and traumatic straw at that). Brian and Abby conceded that the relationship with Dutchess was extremely unhealthy for them all: unfair for them to have to be with her at all times and unfair for her to be under such extreme stress and fear of being alone.

Abby began calling assisted senior living facilities within the corporation she had learned of just months before and the second home she contacted had, indeed, been on a waiting list for a Golden Retriever. Abby told the story of hers and they did a "meet and greet" that same day. One week later Dutchess became their housedog.

Although Abby imagined never seeing Dutchess again, she did not have to wait long before that proved not to be the case. The activities director of the assisted living home called early on to apprise them of Dutchess's adjustment, which turned out to be both rapid and successful. She was adored by the residents and instantly proved to be helpful to them by providing abundant affection, entertainment and amusement. Ironically she was thus fulfilling her original injunction: being of service to humans in need. Just a different capacity than originally

envisioned.

Inherently the caregiver, Abby later called and offered to take Dutchess to the vet for her routine checkups and care. That gesture became a precedent, which evolved to once a month visits. Hence a routine was established and proved workable for all. Dutchess was comfortable in the senior living setting and acknowledged Abby and Brian's arrivals but did not cling to them or clamor to leave with them. The staff was pleased with the addition of Dutchess for it helped and delighted the residents. Abby and Brian were relieved and comforted by the knowledge that Dutchess was safe and happy.

In the fall of 2005 Abby and Brian began the search for another dog. They registered with the Golden Retriever Rescue of Michigan, which has a protocol for becoming adoptive parents. A phone interview and four page detailed questionnaire are followed by visits with at least three dogs. Although people typically want the first dog they meet, the subsequent visits are mandatory. After visiting more than three dogs, a visit with Sampson, a one and a half year old very large, playful, sweet-of- disposition dog would prove to be their last.

And so it all went calmly and well for another year and a half. It was now February 2007, marking two years that Dutchess was in her safe place at the senior assisted living home and Abby and Brian began to think having another dog to keep Sampson company might be a good idea. Coincidentally a co-worker of Abby's called to say a friend had to give up her six month old female Golden Retriever. The "meet and greet" went well and in a relative instant Nikki became the newest addition to their household.

If Sampson was a big, wise, lovable lug of a dog, Nikki was the antithesis: small, full of energy and relentless in her pursuit of Sampson and all of the other neighborhood dogs. Initially she confounded Sampson, for sure, but even Abby and Brian with her hyper attention to every movement and nuance of each of them. Abby expected that within a week of arriving, Nikki

would mimic Sampson's good and predictable behavior. That, suffice it to say, never happened. It took almost a year for Nikki to bond with the people in her life, but she did so instantaneously with all the new dogs she was meeting.

Sam, one can only imagine, must have been as perplexed as Zach was when first Dutchess, and then Buddy appeared in his quiet life. But like Zach, and being somewhat of the same temperament, Sam is now as engaged and enamored as he can be.

In April of 2007, just two months after Nikki's incorporation into the family, another change occurred. Abby began to surmise, during her monthly visits, that Dutchess was perhaps becoming too high maintenance and expensive for the home. A call came one evening from an administrator saying that Dutchess had bit a staff member while in the elevator. It was mutually decided that, for the protection of the residents, it was best to have Dutchess leave.

Abby describes the anguish: "Brian and I were on our way to pick her up on a Friday afternoon. We felt like we were out of options. We had tried medication, a behaviorist and finally the assisted living facility. We had made plans to put her down. We walked into the assisted living facility and Dutchess did her usual bark, but once she realized who we were, started wagging her tail and jumping. We said our good-byes to the assisted living staff. Brian sat in the back seat with Dutchess lying in his lap. I was driving and we were having a conversation via the rear view mirror. He looked up and said, "I cannot put this dog down." We headed to the vet for our scheduled appointment and told them we were having second thoughts. Our veterinarian seemed so relieved and said, "I don't want to put this dog down. You have been through so much with her, take her home, let her meet your dogs and keep her for the weekend. If, on Monday, you still feel that she should be put down, then we will do so at that time." We did take her home and she and Sampson immediately got into a scrap over a tennis ball. Once we settled them down it was like she was 'home'. She was at peace and wandered to all her favorite spots

around the property. She was showing no signs of separation anxiety. We could not have been happier.”

She and Sampson struggled to be the alpha dog. Dutchess had always been that but Sampson thought he was because he was the first dog. Or so he thought. In any event they eventually worked all that out and, with the exception of a few scraps here and there, everyone had fallen into line.



Nikki L, Sampson C & Dutchess R

April 2007 Dutchess was 13. Still active and energized the three dogs enjoyed being together and settled into a routine of walks, playing fetch, and provided their humans with much laughter and love.

Over the course of the next few years, Dutchess became slower and lame, for certain, but her spirit was indomitable. She rallied to follow the crowd, albeit slowly, when Sam and Nikki rushed to exit for a walk or a ball game. She lagged behind, but she went. Inside the house she very occasionally joined in the random pestering and frolicking and nudging that the other two engaged in. She slept a lot. Brian carried her downstairs to his home office and she would stay with him all day. This was now her limited but very content life.

How far Abby and Brian had come from worrying about her safety or the condition of the house. Now their attention and efforts were focused solely on maintaining a healthy life style for her and insuring her comfort. They both

marveled at and respected her resiliency and they considered each day a bonus in the gift of her life.

Hers has been a remarkable journey marked by independence, strong will and steadfast loyalty to both dogs and humans, defined by profound sensitivity to the needs and emotions of both. She has been, in essence, a service dog throughout her long life but in ways unimagined from that first injunction from Paws With A Cause and her anticipated role in their mission.

Indeed, her “purpose” has been well fulfilled.

Epilogue

Still sharp as a tack, Dutchess’s body simply could not keep up with her mind. She passed away in August of 2012 at the age of 18. That in itself is remarkable, for a Golden Retriever to have that extended life span. But considering the unbelievable events in her life it is almost beyond comprehension that she had survived. And thrived.

Sadly, and quite unexpectedly, just six months later Sampson passed away in February of 2013. As the family grieved the loss of Sam, Abby and Brian were extremely relieved that Nikki was not exhibiting signs of separation anxiety, just sadness.

To no surprise, Abby and Brian began the process of adopting another golden thru the Golden Retriever Rescue of Michigan. In June of 2013 a big red golden named Chance became a new member of their family. Chance seems comfortable and happy in his new surroundings. Nikki is embracing Chance and appears genuinely content with her new four-legged companion.

And so the cycle of profound loss and grand beginnings continues.



Chance

MOMO JOJO

By Beth & Jim Martin

We fostered and adopted Momo Jojo several years ago through GRRoM. He just heard me call his name and laid his big, Golden Retriever head by my leg, looking up at me expectantly with sad, brown eyes. Momo Jojo makes me very grateful to GRRoM for all those sweet looks and hugs and helping me feel better while a bat is flying around our living room! Momo stood there calmly and kindly while I wrapped my arms around him and waited for my husband, Jim, to get that bat out of the house.

Thanks GRRoM!

NASH

By Dave & Janet Kehr

After the passing of our 12-year-old retriever Bailey, we were not thinking about adopting another dog. We still had our 6-year-old Golden, Gillian Ruth [Jill], and she was doing her best to adjust to being an only 'child'. About six months

after Bailey passed, we received a phone call from our Vet

Nash was found wandering in a field in the thumb area of Michigan. He eventually made his way into the GRRoM organization and ended up at our wonderful veterinarian, Dr. S. Steep of Oxford. Dr. Steep and his staff contacted us regarding a young, male golden retriever. There was just one "slight issue" we needed to know: Nash is completely blind.



Dr. Steep and his staff forwarded a picture of Nash and asked if we were interested, and if so, they would let GRRoM know. We quickly called Dr. Steep after receiving the picture and asked him to inform GRRoM that we were interested. In the meantime, Nash was placed with a foster family who were addressing several minor medical issues.

We first visited with Nash several weeks later and quickly fell in love with him. His fosters had told us that it was difficult to notice that Nash was blind when first meeting him. They were right. Nash was fearless in moving around their house and he was extremely friendly and very excited to be meeting new people. After our initial meeting, we were convinced that we should adopt him. However, we wanted to make an informed decision before adopting a special needs dog. After researching several informative websites dealing with the needs of blind dogs, we made the decision to adopt Nash.

Nash came home with us in April 2012. It took him a couple of days to learn the layout our house. As the research predicted, Nash became more comfortable navigating our house as each day passed. Initially, we really were not sure how to play with Nash. At some point, soon after arriving home, he found a tennis ball. He has had a tennis ball in his mouth ever since. Much to our surprise, we found out that he likes to play fetch. We throw the ball up so that it makes a sound when it lands. Nash uses his hearing and smell to find the ball. He has become so good at playing fetch, it is sometimes hard to throw the ball past him.



Once the weather got warmer, Nash found a new hobby: swimming.



He loves to swim and play in the water. He will chase Jill around in the water, staying in for hours if we let him. To provide him was some independence, we tie Nash to a long water ski

rope while he plays in the water.

Lastly, Nash also likes to go for car rides and walks. He prefers to walk next to Jill and will frequently make contact with her to confirm that he is going in the right direction.

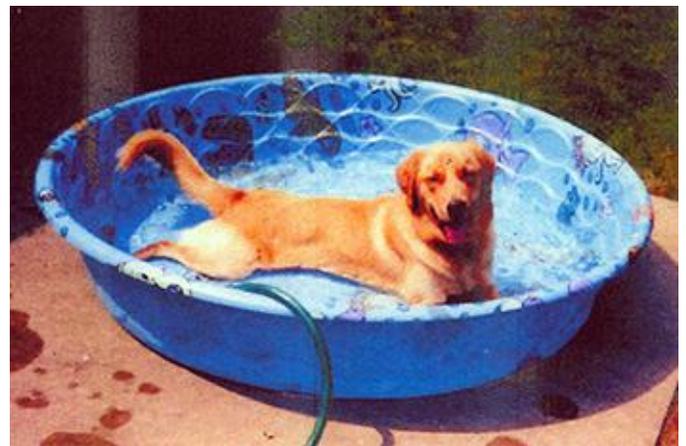
We feel very lucky and fortunate to have adopted Nash. He is an amazing dog who keeps surprising us with the way in which he adapts to daily activities.

ROCKY

By Felicia Ferguson

I rescued Rocky on March 31st 2002. He was a handful at first. I had to spend \$600 on dental work after he broke out of his crate. He preferred not to be crated. I tried doggie daycare for a while. Which was a joy for him, but a little costly for me. He was exhausted when I got him home, however. I found that blocking him in the kitchen area, which gave him access to the basement & the freedom to roam, worked perfectly.

I also discovered that he enjoyed laying in the kiddie pool while I was working in the yard. It was fun to watch! He was my loyal companion for a little over 11 years.



Unfortunately, on May 4th 2013 I had to say goodbye to my buddy. I believe he lived almost 13 yrs. My vet was wonderful during this difficult time. I miss him everyday. It's a big hole that I know I will fill again when the time is right.



Goldens are very special. I've owned 2 in my lifetime & I know there is room for more.

SKYLER

By Sherry DeBard

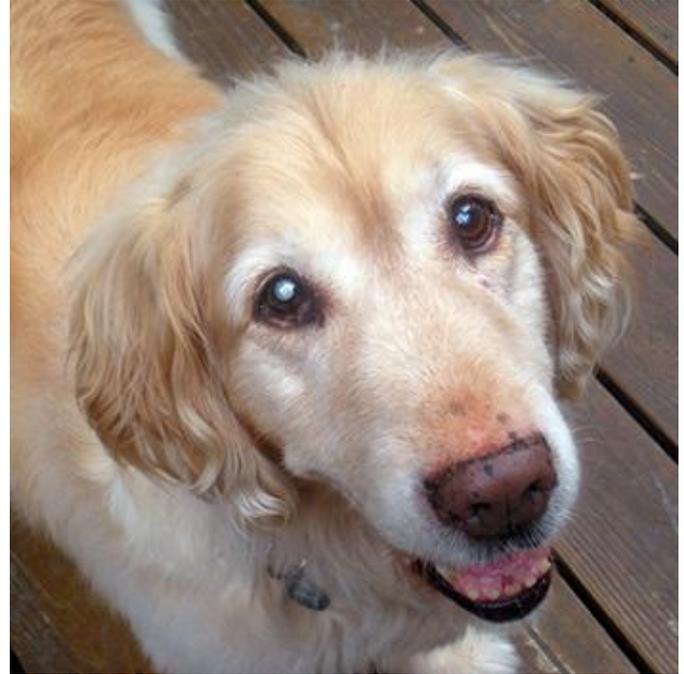
I already had two dogs, a golden and a cocker spaniel but something kept tugging at me. I thought about fostering and my friends and family, who were right, convinced me that I would never be able to let a dog go once it crossed my threshold so we decided to adopt. Of course I went to the Petfinder site and looked at all the sweet dogs there but there was one that spoke to me, his name was Skyler. We went thru the process with GRRROM and saw two other dogs before we were able to see Skyler who was an hour and a half drive from us. He was perfect for us and we were able to take him home that day.

Skyler was 9-1/2 when we got him, a senior, he had been taken to the vet to be put down because the owner no longer wanted him.

GRRROM was called and this wonderful boy was saved.

It appears that he had been chained up most of his life on concrete, his teeth were chipped and broken from chewing on a chain, he had very little musculature from being inactive in addition to arthritis. He also had callouses on his elbows the size of baseballs that he constantly licked because of the drainage from them. He was also

hearing impaired. Aside from these things he was perfect.



The first few weeks that we had him he seemed sad and never wagged his tail. His teeth were in pretty bad shape so we scheduled him to have them cleaned. His teeth were worse than we thought, they removed 4-abscessed teeth that were black down to the root. Upon bringing him home afterward he wagged his tail for the first time, he was finally pain free and we had no idea that he was suffering so much. It was a happy day for all of us and that tail never stopped wagging after that.

Within the first 6 months it became apparent that his cataracts were affecting his vision and he was having difficulty seeing. We wanted him to be able to see how wonderful his world had become and decided to have his cataracts removed. After being examined by the eye specialist it was determined that he had retinal atrophy in addition to the cataracts, and he was going blind and there was nothing we could do, I cried like a baby right in front of the doctor.

Skyler wasn't a good blind dog, he never adjusted well to it so we adjusted to him trying to make his life easier.

We had Skyler for 3 years before he could no longer get up by himself. With all of his issues, he was the most loving, gracious dog I have ever

had. He taught me patience and how to never give up. He gave us nothing but love and beyond the cataracts in his eyes we could see the undying gratitude for giving him the love and security that he deserved and should have had all of his life.

We lost Skyler September, 2012 and there is not a day that I do not miss that magnificent animal. Yes, he was perfect.

GRRoM LINKS

www.cafepress.com/grrom Get GRRoM clothing, hats, calendars, pins and more!

www.facebook.com Yessireebob, GRRoM has a Facebook page! Connect with other Michigan Golden lovers for laughs, great advice from others, hear about fundraisers to help GRRoM continue in its mission. Click on the link and search for Golden Retriever Rescue of Michigan.

www.grrom.com Our website offers deals that not only save you money but helps GRRoM in its mission, links to the GRRoM Petfinder page for Golden Retrievers looking for their forever homes, fundraising events, info on how to adopt a GRRoM Golden and more!



GRRoM WANTS YOUR DOG...stories

Be a contributing writer with the quarterly GRRoM Newsletter! Our readers' and supporters' input is what makes the GRRoM Newsletter what it is. We especially want articles & photos from the volunteers who attend and work the many events.

Please send via email to:

grromnewsletter@comcast.net no later than **August 31st** for the Fall 2013 GRRoM Newsletter due out around September 7, 2013. Articles can be emailed in any format. Photos can be dng, jpeg, tiff or psd and as large a size as your email program allows.

The following dates are the expected publishing

dates of the GRRoM Newsletter: September 1st, December 1st, March 1st and June 1st.

