



Pekingese



Pomeranian

Colorado Peke & Pom Rescue By Jennifer M. Brauns

In February of 2007, Connie Riddell went to the internet to find a local rescue where she could adopt a Pekingese dog. She was disappointed to learn that there was no such local rescue. She went on Petfinders.com and found that Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies (GRRR) had five Pekingese dogs which were available for adoption. She called and spoke to Pat Dinky, a volunteer at GRRR who told her about the Pekingese dogs they had. Connie went to see the dogs, two of which were the most beautiful 11- and 12-year-old female ex-show dogs she had ever seen. Connie asked Pat, “Why am I at GRRR for a Pekingese?” to which Pat explained that there was no local Pekingese rescue and that it was up to other local rescues to pick these dogs up from shelters or not. The two dogs which Connie was interested in had been surrendered by a family in Nebraska and fortunately GRRR was taking in both Pekingese and Pomeranians when they could.

Connie couldn’t bear the thought of all the Pekingese dogs that were surely sitting in shelters and told Pat that she seriously wanted to start a Pekingese rescue. Pat, who was quite fond of Pomeranians, agreed to join Connie to start a rescue for the two toy breeds which they named Colorado Peke & Pom Rescue (CPPR). They wasted no time and with the help of Mary Kenton, President of GRRR, they formed a corporation and began their rescue work the following month. Their website came online in June of that year by which time they had already taken in 180 dogs, the vast majority of which had come from Colorado shelters. They occasionally take in out-of-state dogs if transportation can be arranged. They work with Colorado Animal Rescue Express (C.A.R.E.) to bring dogs from Kansas and Arkansas to Colorado. By the end of 2007, having only been in existence since March, they had taken in 201 dogs and adopted out 181 of them. All of this was done by Connie, Pat and eight fosters with assistance from roughly eight volunteers. Add to this that both Connie and Pat were both working full-time jobs in addition to doing rescue work.

“We ran 24/7. Both Pat and I took many dogs into our own homes. We were also able to recruit good people who were able to foster multiple dogs. We used a local kennel a lot the first year that gave us a greatly discounted rate,” Connie recalls.

In these challenging economic times, CPPR is regularly taking in as many as four or five dogs per week. The average time a dog is in foster care before being adopted varies with the age of the dog. Younger dogs average less than a month in foster care, while dogs ranging in age from 5 to 15 can take four months or more to adopt out. They currently have one dog, Pip, a Papillon mix, who has been with them for two years waiting for the right home. Pip came from a puppy mill and had never been out of a cage or socialized in any way. “He had to learn how to be a dog,” Connie shared. Pip has been spending time in Doggie Pause Day Care in Englewood, in addition to his foster mom’s home, and due to all the special training, patience and attention the staff has given him, he is close to being fully socialized and is ready to be adopted.

About the Pekingese

The Pekingese is a quiet and introspective dog which makes a fabulous companion for someone in an apartment or a small place with no yard. They are great for seniors or anyone without small children. Pokes get very attached to their people and are not always friendly with everyone. They have an intolerance to heat and must be kept out of the sun and in air conditioning during the warmer months. Due to their small, delicate build they are prone to back injuries. Picking a Peke up the wrong way or allowing them to jump off the couch or even down a single stair can cause them to injure their backs. They have beautiful eyes, which are a result of extensive breeding to bring about this feature, but because their eyes protrude more than other breeds, their eyes can be easily damaged and are ultra sensitive.

Chinese art, starting with the Tang dynasty of the 8th century, is full of images of the Pekingese, which gets its name from the

ancient city of Peking, now called Beijing. Pekingese were held sacred in ancient China and could only be owned by royalty. At that time, the punishment for stealing a Pekingese was death. Pekingese came to Europe as a result of war. When the British overtook the Chinese Imperial Palace in 1860, they returned home with several of the dogs.

Pokes are extremely loving, sweet and loyal. “You won’t find any better,” Connie said. They are very cat-like. They can be stubborn when called with a “what’s in it for me?” attitude and choose not to respond to your request. Pokes are not suitable for small children due to their easily damaged backs and eyes. Their temperament does not tolerate being taunted or being played with roughly by small children. They are better suited for children over the age of eight who are more able to understand their needs.

Pekingese are prone to heart disease. During their five years in rescuing this breed, CPPR has had over 30 percent of their dogs diagnosed with a heart murmur, although a murmur does not necessarily mean that they will develop heart disease. A veterinarian will be able to detect heart murmurs and take an X-ray if necessary to check for heart health. They have had many Pokes live to be 16 years old with heart murmurs. Connie told me they had two retired show Pokes who came from New England, then went to Nebraska. The change in altitude was enough to trigger heart problems for these two dogs.

About the Pomeranian

Pomeranians are like little circus dogs. They have a fabulous personality, are precocious and always jumping up and down (literally on all fours) like a bouncing ball. They dance, twirl and smile a lot and are as cute as can be. The smaller Poms, down to around four pounds, can be easily hurt by jumping off of a couch. These smaller dogs are not recommended for children under age seven or eight. Some of the larger Poms, which are closer to eight pounds, can do well with smaller children.

The Pomeranian is a descendant of the sled dogs of Iceland and Lapland and is a relative of the Spitz. The breed was developed in areas of Germany and Poland, then known as Pomerania, which is where the breed gets its name. At that time, the breed was somewhat larger than it is today.

In the late 1800s, Queen Victoria of England owned a Pomeranian, resulting in a growth in popularity of the breed. It is believed that this is when the Pomeranian started being bred down to a smaller size.

One common health problem with Pomeranians is luxating patellas in which the kneecap (patella) doesn’t slide in its grooves the way it is intended. It can cause substantial pain and mobility problems. The condition can often be managed with reduced exercise and anti-inflammatory medication, but in some cases, surgery may be required which costs about \$1,900 per knee. Some dogs have a single luxating patella, while others have it in both knees. The percentage of dogs the rescue sees with at least one luxating patella is high, so adopting a Pomeranian might not be the best choice for someone on a limited budget, even though surgery is not usually required.

“Some Pomeranians are barkers and may not be suitable for apartment dwellers. Some are able to jump four-foot fences in the blink of an eye. They are very smart and if you don’t train them, they will train you,” Connie said. They can be left alone through a full work day if they have to, but their small bladders would do better if someone could check in on them after four to six hours if they don’t have access to a doggie door.

We were amazed at just how many dogs this rescue has managed to bring in and rehome given the small number of fosters and volunteers they have. They are clearly a very devoted group of passionate dog lovers. In 2010, the rescue took in 225 dogs and had medical bills of \$55,000. In 2011, they took in 245 dogs with medical expenses of about \$66,000 due to multiple surgeries. Some of the necessary funds come from private donors and they host fundraisers every other month. The next event scheduled is a bowling tournament on March 13th from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Fun City in Littleton. Please come out and support them if you can.

The rescue currently has 15 fosters and 25 volunteers to care for and rehome well over 200 dogs each year. As with all rescues, it is an ongoing struggle to keep fosters and volunteers. If you are interested in adopting, fostering, volunteering or donating to their cause, please visit their website at www.pekesandpoms.com.

Photos opposite page by Ammit (left) and Alexia Khruschev (right), Bigstock

Adoptable Pekingese & Pomeranians - These and other great dogs are looking for forever homes

Michika (no kids or cats) 6-year-old female
 Duggan 2 to 3-year-old male
 Elway 5-year-old male
 Martin (Pom mix, no kids) 7-year-old male
 Sport & Buttons (bonded pair) 5-year-old male & female