

Rocky Mountain Collie & Sheltie Rescue

By William Given

Rocky Mountain Collie and Sheltie Rescue is rare among dog rescue organizations here in the United States in that it was founded long ago. That is, “long ago” in rescue standards, as the burnout rate can indeed be high. The first variation of a collie rescue in Colorado started in the late 1960s with volunteers from the Pueblo Humane Society. Key members were Bill and Barbara Skinder and Jerry Litvack.

Later, Harry and Dawn Amick, who lived near Pueblo in the small mountain town of Beulah got involved. “Dawn’s thing was always collies. Dawn and I were married in 1979 and that was the time she and I started working together placing dogs and doing collie rescue, just the two of us,” Harry said. From these small beginnings in 1979 came Pueblo Collie/Sheltie Rescue (PCSR).

A transition slowly came to PCSR when Hope and Doug Hemperly of Pueblo met Harry. They were wanting to adopt a rescue collie. Hope began helping Harry with rescue efforts and found herself becoming more and more involved. She eventually took over the reins of PCSR. She fostered most of the dogs herself, with a handful of other fosters. It became the standard for each dog to have thorough vet care, including a spay or neuter, vaccinations, dental exams, heartworm tests, medication if necessary, and anything else required. An adoption fee was required to help defray medical expenses.

Another transition began in 2010 when the board officially recognized the greater geographic scope of the organization as it had evolved over the years. They formed a new non-profit 501(c)3 corporation, Rocky Mountain Collie and Sheltie Rescue, Inc., (RMCSR) which continues to operate solely through volunteer efforts. Hope’s full-time volunteer job as director includes coordination of incoming dogs, fostering and arranging for foster homes, updating the website, scheduling vet checks and treatments, reviewing adoption and foster applications and much more.

Numbers Demonstrate Success

In the first year of operation RMCSR took in 25 dogs and placed all of them in adoptive homes. Last year they rescued 141 dogs and found new forever homes for 108 of them. So far in 2012, they have rescued 99 dogs and have placed 72 in homes with 5 adoptions pending. A majority of incoming dogs are from shelters, although owner relinquishments due to the economy continue to increase.

A Need for Foster Families

RMCSR has 25 active foster homes. “We always need additional foster homes because the more foster homes we have available, the more collies and shelties we can take in,” said Kathy Downey, president of RMCSR.



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One of the most loving things you can do is provide a temporary home for a dog until a new forever home can be found. If you are interested in helping by fostering, please contact RMCSR by e-mail or phone. You will be contacted by a volunteer to discuss the application process. The rescue will cover all medical and associated expenses while a dog is in foster care. Plus, you have the knowledge that you are helping to save the life of a loving collie or sheltie.

Volunteers Are Needed

Volunteering is a great way to show your support for RMCSR. Even posting a flyer about the rescue at your place of work will help spread the word about the work and needs of the group. How about taking a dog for a walk and spending some time just loving on him? Some of the dogs stay temporarily in kennels until a foster or permanent home can be found. They would love to go for a long walk and get a good belly rub. A RMCSR volunteer would be happy to talk with you and share other ideas to help.

Would you like to become what the rescue communities refer to as an “angel on wheels?” You could help transport rescue dogs. If you live somewhere in Colorado or another state in the Rocky Mountain region, there will surely come a time when RMCSR could desperately use your help.

The Costs of Rescue

RMCSR’s expenses for veterinary care last year totaled \$46,404.

In the first eight months of this year they had already incurred almost \$27,424 in veterinary bills. The cost of providing medical care to the dogs is their single greatest expense. “Every now and then we take in a dog needing more medical care than expected. When you get a dog needing surgery or you have a few dogs that test positive for heartworms, it can really affect the bottom line,” Kathy said.

Rescue Needs

RMCSR operates entirely on monetary donations and adoption fees which are \$250.00 per dog. The adoption fees ensure that all dogs are spayed or neutered, receive their basic vaccinations and receive a dental cleaning or other veterinary care if needed before being adopted out. Like all rescue organizations, the cost of operation far exceeds adoption fees collected.

“The poor economy has affected non-profit rescue organizations nationwide. Donations are down but the number of dogs in need is going up,” Kathy said. RMCSR has an ongoing need for monetary contributions. Donations allow the rescue to meet their most immediate needs first based on priorities. If you are able to help, you can make a donation online or by mail. You can rest assured that 100 percent of your tax-deductible donation will be used for direct, hands-on care of the rescued dogs as they are prepared for a new forever home. There are also items for sale on their website including collie-themed wine which benefits the organization.

For those who would really like to help, but are not in a position to make a financial contribution, the rescue has a wish list of items that they are in great need of. The list includes baby gates, dog beds, dog crates and ramps, exercise kennels, outdoor kennels, premium dog food, toys and treats.

Pros of the Breeds

The most famous dog in the world is a collie and her pawprints are in Hollywood’s Walk of Fame. Remember Lassie? Collies and shelties make great family dogs. They are genuinely affectionate with children and are excellent with cats and other animals. These dogs are intelligent and learn basic commands quickly. Collies and Shelties are generally healthy dogs with an average life span of about 12 years.

Cons of the Breeds

Rough collies and shelties both have heavy double coats and require regular grooming. They shed continuously and twice a year the shedding will be profuse. Some suffer separation anxiety which will result in excessive barking while you are away. Anxious or bored collies, like most breeds, may exhibit destructive tendencies if left alone for long periods without attention. A small number of collies develop hip dysplasia as they get older and some shelties suffer from progressive retinal atrophy.

Special Needs Dogs

Like all rescue groups, RMCSR almost always has one or two dogs with special needs. They currently have a sheltie mix named Hopi available for adoption. Hopi came to the rescue through a municipal shelter. She had been removed from an Indian Reservation in the Four Corners region. When found, she was emaciated, weak and required several days in veterinary intensive care.

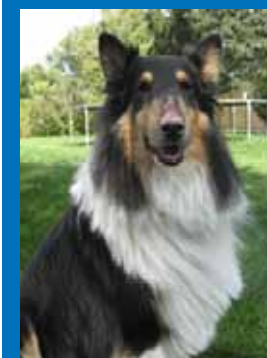
They also have a senior tri-colored female collie named Precious that came from a shelter. The owner had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and the care of Precious also suffered. She is hypothyroid, has urinary incontinence and is sad from years of neglect.

Thank You

Ms. Downey and all of the volunteers of Rocky Mountain Collie and Sheltie Rescue would like to express their sincere appreciation to the animal care professionals at the Pueblo Small Animal Clinic located in Pueblo, Freemont Veterinary Hospital in Cañon City, Franktown Animal Clinic, Arvada West Veterinary Hospital, Southern Colorado Veterinary Specialty Medicine in Colorado Springs, Veterinary Skin & Allergy Specialists in Englewood and the Pet Wellness Clinic in Fort Collins. They have all provided free or discounted services, thereby making RMCSR’s continued success possible.

If you would like more information on donating, fostering, adopting or volunteering, please call 719-547-4008 or visit www.colliesheltierescue.org. They would greatly appreciate your every effort to assist them in their mission.

Adoptable Dogs - These and other great dogs are looking for forever homes



Magic
5-year-old male



Drake
6-year-old male
(Drake & Precious are a bonded pair)



Precious
9-year-old female



Sophia
2.5-year-old female



Mandy (collie mix)
3-year-old female
Special Needs