



BROOKLINE LABRADOR RETRIEVER RESCUE, INC.

LABRADOR LEDGER

Spring/Summer 2007
Anniversary Edition

TEN YEARS AND STILL GROWING STRONG

by Marie Krout, a BLRR Senior Volunteer

Our Rescue celebrates its 10 year anniversary this year and while I wasn't a part of the Rescue when it first began, I did join a couple of years after its inception. The growth of the Rescue over the past 10 years has been enormous!

When I began with the Rescue, there were only 4 or 5 volunteers that covered areas in New Jersey, Maryland and most of Pennsylvania. Prior to my joining, the Founder of the Rescue was traveling from Roaring Spring (near Altoona) to the Philadelphia area and beyond to place labs in need of good homes. Even after I joined the Rescue and several other volunteers joined as well, we were still driving 1-1/2 to 2 hours each way to evaluate a dog or conduct a home visit. Now, we have over 70 volunteers and while most of our coverage areas are in Pennsylvania, we have volunteers in New Jersey and Delaware and cover parts of those states as well as a small part of Maryland. Because of the number of volunteers involved in the Rescue, those day trips to evaluate a dog or do a home visit are a thing of the past – thank goodness!

Conducting a dog evaluation or a home visit was a new experience for me and there were no other volunteers in my area to train me so I learned through trial and error. Today, I'm proud to say our Rescue has numerous evaluation forms, attorney approved contracts and training programs in place for all new volunteers. We even have specialized training for our shelter evaluators. While we socialized at an annual picnic for years, we also learned that educating our volunteers is just as important and now hold an annual Training Session which is always well attended by our volunteers.

Fundraising when our Rescue began consisted of one (or if you were lucky, two) volunteers going to any event they could and spending the day trying to raise money for the labs. Our inventory of sale items at these events was small but people's generosity helped us to continue helping the labs. Now, we have a Fundraising committee with volunteers who attend these events in shifts and numerous items for sale at our booth. We even have our own fundraisers such as the Paws Across PA Walkathon, which

started at one site and has now expanded to three walk locations. We also raise funds through quilt raffles, yard sales and an annual mail campaign.

The number of dogs we place each year has increased substantially as our volunteer base has increased. It's amazing to think that in the first couple of years with the Rescue, we were probably placing 15 to 25 dogs a year while now we are placing at least a 100. Think of all the labs we've helped find their forever homes in our 10 years of operation!

We went from having two people running our Rescue and making all decisions to a Board of Directors and Officers making the important decisions for our Rescue. The Brookline Approval Committee approves the applicants to adopt and the dogs that we place. We have other committees, in addition to the Fundraising committee mentioned above, as well. All of which help the Rescue run more efficiently.

Our growth has been tremendous and I'm proud that I have been able to watch the Rescue grow and see so many labs find their forever home! I hope our founders, Nicole and Mike Soyster, look at our Rescue and are proud of their accomplishments in starting the Rescue and proud of the volunteers who continue the wonderful work they started.

Until there are none, rescue one.....

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PAWS ACROSS PA FOOD, FUN AND FUR FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!!



Brookline Labrador Retriever Rescue (BLRR) is gearing up for its 5th Annual Paws Across PA Pet Fair and Walkathon in June 2007. The first Paws Across PA event started small and was held in only one location, in a suburb of Philadelphia. As the rescue has grown consistently through volunteer and public support, BLRR will now be offering 3 walk sites located in Pennsylvania. Each walk site will have pet related vendors to shop for your pets, demonstrations by dog related groups, non-profit animal groups, and a raffle of donated items. All participants who raise \$75 and over will receive a Paws Across PA T-shirt. Grand Prizes will be awarded to the participants who collect the most pledges in two categories: Adult (18 & older) & Youth (under 18). Adult Grand Prize will include a signed original print by Adrienne Vesce, created especially for the event, and framed by Allegheny Art. Youth Grand Prize will include a \$100 gift card to Best Buy. This event allows BLRR to raise much needed funds to continue to help labs in need. The walkathon is for the whole family including your pet so there is definitely something for everyone in the family!!

One of BLRR's Paws Across PA events will be held at the Norristown Farm Park on Saturday, June 9th from 10am-1pm. Doggy Demonstrations include two time world champion Frisbee Dogs presented by Theresa Musi and Peaceful Paws Massage presented by Carol McCoy. An animal communicator may also be on the schedule for the day's event and the kids section hosts a variety of games and crafts for the little ones. The Secret Spot is making a second appearance to provide food for the day which includes everything from hot sandwiches to water ice. For more information on the Norristown walk site please contact Nicole McBride at 610-222-8097 or rotmlab@verizon.net.



PAWS ACROSS PA 2006

Upper Allen Township's Friendship Park in Mechanicsburg will also be host to the event on Saturday, June 9th from 10am-1pm. Demonstrations include Frisbee Dog Demo presented by Appalachian Air Canines and Jake and Levi "The Incredible Wonder Dogs" - they can count and do math problems! There will also be a microchip and a rabies/distemper vaccine clinic offered in partnership with Central PA Animal Alliance and Dr. Karen Pittelli of Boiling Springs Animal Hospital. The AKC Canine Good Citizen test will also be conducted by Tracy Atkins, head trainer of Complete Canine Training. Food for the day will be provided by the Central PA Animal Alliance. For more information on the Mechanicsburg site and to sign up for the CGC test please contact Danny Snyder at 717-422-2255 or heinzfield86@comcast.net.

The 3rd site for the event will be held at Cedar Beach Parkway in Allentown on Saturday, June 16th from 10am-1pm. Demonstrations include dog agility by 3D Dog Training, LLC and Frisbee dogs by Yankee Flyers Frisbee Dogs. There will also be a joint blood drive between the Valley Central Animal Blood Bank and Miller/Keystone Blood Center. Animal blood donations will not be held on site but, you can register your animal at the Valley Central Pet Ambulance. To register to make your blood donation please contact Kellyanne Hagenbuch at 484-553-5741 or khagenbuch@hsc.org. Carousel Concessions will be making their debut to provide food for the day. For more information on the Allentown site please contact Rachel Stauffer at 610-737-3170 or r_stauffer2@yahoo.com.

To download your walk registration form, park location information and a list of our vendors please visit our website, www.brooklinelabrescue.org. Hope to see everyone there! If you are unable to attend you may participate by mail by following the directions on the registration form. Thanks in advance to all of BLRR's supporters!!

AN INTERVIEW WITH GAIL FOSTER—BROOKLINE'S FIRST FOSTER HOME

Q. Can you tell me how you became the first foster home for Brookline?

A. Back in the winter of 1998, a friend and I were talking about dogs and rescue. She got an e-mail from someone she knew and sent it on to me. Apparently, there was a black lab that needed a place to stay for a little while. I made a phone call to Nicole Soyster, the founder of BLRR, and found out that particular lab had just been placed in a home. I told her to keep my name and number "just in case she needed me in the future."

A few phone calls and days later, sight unseen, Nicole dropped Ben, our first foster, off at my work. Ben had literally eaten his way through two crates in two days at the shelter where he had been left. He was a very unhealthy 65 pounds and

had some serious claustrophobia issues; he "redecorated" our bathroom when we left him confined in there for two hours. He lived with us in our two-bedroom apartment for four months until going to his forever home, looking good at 90 pounds. He was a tall, sleek, beautiful boy full of love. Once in his real home, he learned to trust enough to walk into a crate and stay all on his own. *(Please see Ben's full story on page 3.)*

Back then, we worked by our "gut feelings" on a lot of evaluations of homes, volunteers, and dogs. Since we were new and small, there were very few forms to fill out or tests to take. It was just people loving dogs and trusting each other to do what was right and best for all involved. That part of BLRR hasn't changed a bit!

(cont. on next page)

AN INTERVIEW WITH BROOKLINE'S FIRST FOSTER HOME (cont.)

Q. How were dogs chosen to be brought into foster care when the Rescue first began?

A. Sometimes we'd receive a phone call from someone who had a dog to surrender. Sometimes an e-mail or just word-of-mouth. As we got a little more formal and organized, we tried to work with our local shelters, SPCAs, and Humane Societies to pull dogs that were in danger of being euthanized. Unfortunately, those relationships didn't always work out so well. Some SPCA's just didn't seem too interested in assisting a local, grass-roots rescue group in saving dogs.

We would often drive out to homes based on a single phone-call and take in emergency cases, like Ruffles, our second foster. Her people were moving and decided that BLRR had to "take her today or she'd be put down tomorrow." Nicole drove out and grabbed her, met me after work, and handed me her leash. Ruffles had been tied out for all of her five or so years and knew she was a bad girl just for being inside. This was one of our sweetest foster-pups and our luckiest. She met her forever family (with five kids and a bunny!) in State College. She still lives with them.

Q. What is your most rewarding experience fostering for the Rescue?

A. Oh my goodness! How could I choose? There have been so many wonderful stories, and we've met so many wonderful people and loved so many wonderful dogs. Each of our fosters has a special place in our memories, of course: Ben, our first; Ruffles, our sweetest; Sarge, our most serious; Noel/Nicki, our most scared; Onyx, our shyest, smallest, and amazing mother of 13; Kane, our blind girl; Buddy, our biggest at 107 pounds; Fiji, our youngest at seven months; Molly and Susie, the infamous "Spruce Creek girls;" and Brody, our wildest.

But, without a doubt, the most rewards have come from being a forever home to our own puppy, Lager. He was also an emergency case, one of those "take him today or we're putting him down" calls. So we took him in that very day. He was only 10 months old. When he fell asleep on my lap, within minutes of his arrival, I knew he was staying. Throughout the last seven years, he has been the most amazing dog. He has unselfishly shared his home, his beds, and his toys to help all of our fosters realize their own selves and taught them how to be family dogs, how to play, how to trust, and how to love back. He has also been incredible with our own child, completely content to be covered with blankets, laundry baskets, toys, necklaces, and more. She loves her "Lager-dogger" as much as we do. We sure lucked out with him. I hope he feels the same way.

IN MEMORY OF BEN—BROOKLINE'S FIRST FOSTER DOG

by Donna Vozenilek, a former BLRR volunteer

It was around Memorial Day when I would finally meet Ben. There was really no choice because once I met Ben he adopted me. I'll start at the beginning but try to make it short. I had recently adopted a senior Golden Retriever and he was so wonderful I couldn't understand why everyone didn't want a senior rescue. I soon after joined a senior rescue list on the internet and found my Ben. It was so soon after I had adopted my Golden I hesitated but after talking to the foster mom I decided to bring him to my home for a try out to see if everyone got along. Ben never left my side after that first greeting.

I can't begin to tell you how wonderful he was. He was so wonderful it drove me to volunteer for rescue for the next few years. Ben showed me how wonderful a rescue dog can be. Ben was by far the most well behaved dog I have had sharing my life. Ben almost went right back to rescue at first. He would not stay in the fence if I was out of the fence. He insisted on jumping the fence to be with me. Well it turns out that is exactly what he did for the rest of his life he never left my side no matter what.

I feel very sorry for the family who didn't have the time or whatever it was that caused them to crate him for all day and night and finally give him up. What they missed is just astounding. This family did a wonderful thing though. They took him to a humane society who in turn could not keep him in a cage be-



BEN

cause he began to destroy himself trying to get out every night. The angels intervened and they called Brookline. He went in to foster care with Brookline and I am proud to say was Brookline's first foster dog.

The story for Ben only gets better from there. From that day on Ben was loved so much it made up for the first part of his life.

Ben was my shadow and my best buddy for the eight years he was here. Unfortunately, because of failing health and horrible hips, at the age of around 14 I had to let Ben go to the bridge to wait for me. I was a very lucky and blessed person for Ben choosing me to adopt. I enjoyed eight years with a wonderful friend. In turn, there is nothing more horrible than losing your shadow, sometimes I get lost without him and a picture of him sneaking a pear off of the tree in the backyard comes to my mind and I know that even now, waiting at the bridge, his hips are good enough again that he can sneak all the pears he wants while he is waiting for me to arrive. I still have dogs and as anyone knows that has dogs they are all different and special in their own way. My Ben left a void in my life that is indescribable and will never be filled again, that space is saved for only him.

Thank You Brookline!! You will never know how much you have enriched my life through Ben.



**BROOKLINE LABRADOR
RETRIEVER RESCUE, INC.**

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We had so many wonderful stories to share with you of our 10 years helping Labs find their fur-ever homes, we had no room to share our upcoming events with you. Please check out our website at www.brooklinelabrescue.org for the most up-to-date listing.

Brookline Labrador Retriever Rescue (BLRR) is a nonprofit volunteer organization that specializes in placing Labs and Lab mixes. Since 1997 we have placed about 400 Labs in their forever homes. We maintain a regularly updated list of available Labs that are being given up by their owners (but still living at home) and dogs pulled from shelters and placed in foster care with one of our volunteers. We evaluate both the dog and the prospective adopting home to help ensure a good fit for everyone. All dogs are vet checked and their shots updated before they are adopted. BLRR serves areas of Pennsylvania and New Jersey depending on the number and availability of our volunteers. Please see our website for links to other rescues serving locations beyond our coverage areas. For more information about adoption and for downloadable forms, go to www.brooklinelabrescue.org.

Please Donate

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization, we depend entirely on donations and fundraisers to operate. If you would like to help, please consider making a donation today. You can direct it to our *General Fund* that covers expenses such as general veterinary care and vaccinations or to our *Bright Horizons Fund* for our Labs with special needs. Contributions are tax deductible. You can donate through a link to PayPal on our website or complete the form to the right and send a check to the address below:

Brookline Labrador Retriever Rescue
P.O. Box 638
Warrington, PA 18976-0638
www.brooklinelabrescue.org



‘Snip and Send’ Donation/Order Form

I want to help! I am able to give:

\$10 (That’s only \$1 for each year we’ve been helping Labs!!)

\$20 (Could pay for one month of Frontline for two dogs)

\$30 (Could pay for leashes and collars for seven dogs)

\$50 (Could pay for a spay or neuter for one dog)

Other \$ _____

I’m interested in volunteering I’m interested in being a Foster Home

I can donate the following items (*leashes, collars, etc*): _____

I would like to order:

Cookbook; Qty. ___ @ \$10 ea.
(add \$3.95 S&H)

Dog Dork T-Shirt; Qty. ___ @ \$15ea.
(circle) S M L XL 2XL
(add \$3.95 S&H)

Got Labs? T-Shirt; Qty. ___ @ \$15ea.
(circle) S M L XL 2XL
(add \$3.95 S&H)

Name

Address

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Email address

Help us help our Labs!

Special thanks to all of our supporters this year!