

Finding A Forever Home



Every year thousands of pets are abandoned because their owners just can't handle them any longer.

Some are fortunate and make their way to shelters and find their forever home. And yet many others are left to the streets.

Yankton County is fortunate to have the Heartland Humane Society and a great group of volunteers to help their abandoned and neglected animals. The majority of them turn into happy stories, while others are not so fortunate.

Shiloh's Story

It was a hot summer evening in August 2010, when a caring woman found Shiloh at her grandfather's farm. The dog was so thin and hungry that she was trying to enter a chicken coop.

Knowing her grandfather would probably shoot the dog, the woman carefully approached and was able to get her on a leash. She fed the frightened, yet happy, dog as she made phone calls to find someone to take the dog. She was able to reach Nancy Teachout, wife of local vet Dr. Bruce Teachout. Nancy then called Gwen Steckler — she and her husband Mark had fostered dogs before for the Heartland Humane Society (HHS).

"That night I sat in my barn with her, shocked at her sad condition. We have fostered many dogs, but I had never seen such a skinny dog before," said Gwen. "Her ribs and hip bones stuck out severely, even under her long hair. Her hair was matted over much of her body, with dried mud on it. The bottom of all her paws had open sores on them, hurting her to walk. This poor girl must have been a stray for a long time."

Gwen says her heart went out to this poor puppy. That night, as they sat in the barn, the dog that would become known as Shiloh snuggled up next to her. Gwen lovingly brushed and trimmed the mats from the dog's coat, and talked to her gently.

"As I gave her a bath in my home that night, she sat so quietly for it, seeming relieved that someone was taking care of her."

Over the next few days, Shiloh received vet care, which was paid for by donations to the HHS. It was estimated that the golden retriever mix was about a year old. When she gained enough weight she was spayed.

Shiloh lived with the Stecklers for the next couple of months as she gained weight, recovered and received some training.

"We enjoyed watching her become healthy and beautiful, seeing her trust us, and seeing her personality come out," said Gwen.

Then the time came for Shiloh to meet her forever family — Jim and Judy Eisenmenger.



Shiloh overcame loneliness and abandonment before finding a caring foster home with Gwen and Mark Steckler, and then her "forever home" with Judy and Jim Eisenmenger (pictured above).



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