

THE heart



MAY 2024 / VOL 25, ISSUE 2

HOMEWARD BOUND GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE AND SANCTUARY, INC.

What's Inside

When fate intervenes, pay attention. That's the genesis of Dusty's life-changing story – our front-page feature.

The shy dog journey is one of patience, determination, and love. Read how two of our fearful dogs are being transformed on page 7.

Obesity - in dogs and humans – creates a chronic, inflammatory condition that can lead to a wide range of potentially deadly outcomes. Learn how to recognize if your dog is headed in the wrong direction and what to do about it on page 10.

Gizmo - once an overly energetic, long-waiting dog at Homeward Bound - is now a Search Dog Foundation graduate! Read his story on page 11.

May marks the halfway point in our Double the Gold Challenge. Your gifts – no matter the size – are matched by a waiting Fund of Love. We need your help to capture every matching dollar! All gifts support the medical needs of the hundreds of dogs that will come into our program this year and many more that we support in permanent foster. Read about the Challenge on page 4. THANK YOU!

PLEASE PASS ALONG!

You can help us to expand our reach by sharing our newsletter with friends, family, and co-workers! Thank you!



When Fate Intervenes

By: Audrey Farrington

The place you are right now, God circled on a map for you. ~ Hāfez

I've never given fate much thought – until now. In late January, fourteen of the 15 puppies in our merged litters found their way to new homes. One, Dusty, came home with me. Our 72nd foster puppy had an ever-present wet bottom. The little leaky girl had been diagnosed with one kidney. Still, other tests were inconclusive about the cause of her piddle and puddles. Our house was transformed to accommodate her. Solid surfaces, baby gates, and endless baths, laundry, and floor mopping. She traveled with me back and forth for two months to Homeward Bound while we waited on various vet appointments. She hung out in the puppy yard with her foster brother, Skye, while I did my work there.

Continued on page 3



Our Mission

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue & Sanctuary, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization which rescues and heals displaced, abandoned, and homeless Golden Retrievers and Golden mixes, regardless of their age or health. Homeward Bound secures safe, loving homes through a comprehensive adoption program, and also provides lifetime sanctuary for Golden Retrievers that cannot be adopted.

Homeward Bound also provides education on proper animal care and on the benefits of, and need for, rescue and sanctuary. In the event of a disaster, Homeward Bound will provide assistance to other rescue groups and the families of dogs impacted by the disaster.

Homeward Bound will continue to serve as a model rescue organization, addressing animal welfare needs throughout California and neighboring states, and strives to be a national leader in rescue, sanctuary and education.

DOGS RESCUED TO DATE 2024
203

VET EXPENSES TO DATE 2024
\$104,600



A Message from Our President

Oh, my dog! If we thought last year was a big lift for dogs in need, this one will well exceed it. We are currently averaging two intakes per day. If it continues, we will support 700+ dogs this year. As I write, we have just birthed yet another litter at Homeward Bound. The nine tiny Golden mix pups of our featured Double the Gold mom, Annie, arrived safely. You can read her story within. We are also welcoming at least 26 dogs this week from a California puppy mill that is shutting down. You would think that our Golden State would have progressed beyond puppy mills. We are so happy to work with other rescues to give the many dogs on that property a much better life.

Fosters play a critical role in our ability to help so many dogs. Over the past three years, our network has vastly expanded thanks to the relentless efforts of our lead coordinators, Joanna Hook and Jennifer Bercutt. Both are members of a new initiative: the Homeward Bound Leadership Team. This new initiative was established to train a new generation in how to run a nonprofit organization, and Homeward Bound in particular. The "Class of 2024" is enrolled in online, written, and hands-on training in all areas of our operation and nonprofit management. Against all expectations, we survived the passing of our founders, Jody and Mike Jones, and flourished. Preparing for the future is our obligation.

Part of that future includes a newly remodeled office space to make way for a medical ward for the dogs. Work is underway at a feverish pitch, and we could not be more excited for the peace and quiet it will bring to recovering dogs.

You make all this possible. We are halfway through our spring campaign, which supports the dogs' medical costs throughout the year. Our Fund of Love donors stand ready to match up to \$165,000 in donations made during this Double the Gold Challenge. No gift is too small, and all help us to reach our goal!

Thank you all for your generous hearts.

Judy Kent
President



One Saturday, with my shift done, I was headed to the puppy yard to collect Dusty and Skye. By chance, another volunteer was touring friends, a recently approved couple. They asked me to come in and say hello. While it was well past Dusty's lunch hour, and she and Skye were clearly exhausted from play, I stayed to chat. I relayed everything known about Dusty's medical condition so far, her tests at the VCA Referral Center, her single kidney, her upcoming appointment at UC Davis, and the medication we had just begun. Don't tell my husband, but I was preparing for Dusty to remain with us. Pee girls seldom get adopted outside our volunteer ranks, and we had already wrapped our hearts around her.

The couple listened intently, with Dusty in their laps the entire time. They asked intelligent questions and seemed to know much more than you would expect. And then it was revealed: the woman, Colleen, was a veterinarian—a UC Davis graduate specializing in dentistry and working for VCA. While we dove deeper into Dusty's condition, the results so far, and my hopes for her future—without any real expectation of her going anywhere—Colleen and her husband Alex were both falling fast in love.

They shared information about their search for a new family member and their detailed list of desired characteristics. Nowhere on that list was a pee girl, I'm sure. "We're not looking for a major medical...like a serious heart condition. But a little urinary stuff...that's nothing." What?? We exchanged information. We parted. And they asked that I keep them updated on her progress.

Had they stopped by a few minutes later, had I not stopped to chat, and had we not been exactly in the place that had been circled for us, the rest of this story would not have been written.

Within a couple of days, Colleen and Alex asked to learn more about a foster-to-adopt option. Homeward Bound would, of course, cover all of Dusty's medical care.



The medication was partially effective but not entirely, and a physical abnormality could not be ruled out without further tests at UC Davis. Colleen and Alex were undeterred. Pushing forward, we insisted on a short at-home trial. We wanted them to fully experience Dusty's reality.

In mid-March, they collected her for an extended weekend stay. Within one day, they reached out. They didn't want to foster-to-adopt; they wanted to adopt. Madly in love, well-equipped with knowledge and resources, and eyes wide open, they wanted to fully manage Dusty's care and see her through a journey I thought no one would take on.

Given Dusty's age and size, she had been started on a lower dosage of the incontinence medication. With her growth and the dosage raised to the typical level, the progress we hoped for kicked in. A complete workup and

scoping procedure at UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine revealed a couple of congenital abnormalities in her urethra that were unlikely to significantly impact her incontinence. Instead, they found a deep infection and inflammation within her bladder wall from chronic urinary tract infections. The hope is that a new and more extended course of antibiotics and the incontinence medication will be all she needs.

Now named Wren, the much-loved girl could not have a better family or advocates for her care. "We just love her so much and are happy she has joined our family!" We at Homeward Bound are forever grateful for her new family and the life she will live in their care. "We feel lucky to have her," Colleen and Alex said. "And we're grateful we have the means to get her excellent care. She deserves it!"

Here's Your Opportunity to Double The Gold!

Each year, in early spring, a small group of donors step up to build a fund for the medical care of the dogs. Now, we turn to you. This is where the smaller donations of the many add up to a lot because every dollar raised through the Double the Gold Challenge will be matched by their waiting Fund of Love – doubling the impact of every gift.

Last year, 573 dogs came through our doors...a 43% increase over 2022. Although our per-dog cost was down, vet expenses surpassed \$500,000. This year, we are on pace to top that by another 50%. At roughly two intakes a day this year, that would put us at over 700. We hope it slows, but so far, there is no end in sight. We continue to see dogs abandoned by breeders, but the greatest number are being surrendered by owners. Some are facing legitimate financial and housing struggles, but too many are simply moving on – treating their dogs as if they are disposable when they have lost interest or failed them in training.

Now – more than ever – your support is needed to capture every penny of the waiting Fund of Love match. No gift is too small. Together, we can get there and ensure that we can still say “yes” to every dog in need.



Here are just a few of the hundreds of transformations you will help make possible this year:

ANNIE (CALLIE)



Annie is yet another dog dumped in the Central Valley. At approximately three years of age, it was clear she had been a mom before. She was likely used for breeding until she was of no further use. She was found by a good Samaritan and brought to the local shelter. We scooped her up right away – but apparently not soon enough! All our female dogs are checked with our portable ultrasound machine for possible pregnancies.

Nothing showed up on Annie, so she went home as foster-to-adopt while we waited for her spay appointment. The waitlist for vet appointments these days is long! When that appointment finally arrived, a routine check confirmed...puppies! Counting backwards, the “date” clearly occurred at the shelter. Annie came back to us to birth and whelp yet another litter at Homeward Bound. Now known as Callie to her family, she gave birth to nine healthy Golden mix puppies on April Fool's Day...no joke!

CASANOVA



At approximately 12 years of age, Casanova was found wandering the streets of Oakland. He was picked up by animal control and quickly made his way to Homeward Bound. While sugar-faced, he has no idea he is a senior boy. He is quite active and can pull much more on a leash than you would imagine for his build. Wherever he came from, it was obvious he had not received care in years. His teeth were terrible, he had layers of filth in his ears, and his skin was bad due to a flea infestation. All of these were fixable, but the mass in his mouth and on his bum were not. Tests have determined that his cancer has already metastasized. Casanova doesn't

HOW TO HELP US “DOUBLE THE GOLD!”

Donate securely online by credit card, PayPal, or simply mail a check.

Visit our website at:
www.homewardboundgoldens.org and click on “Double the Gold Challenge” for the link and mailing information.

know he has cancer, and we're not telling him. Casanova has gone home as a permanent foster and the first recipient of our new Compassionate Care hospice program, ensuring that he receives the palliative care he needs until his day arrives.



SCARLETT

Scarlett was part of a group of three dogs surrendered by a large-volume backyard breeder when the puppy market went soft. She had no medical records of any kind and went into heat before she could be spayed. We sent her home as a foster-to-adopt until she was medically ready for her procedure. At home, Scarlett apparently consumed something she was not supposed to and ended up in the ICU with aspiration pneumonia. This type of lung infection can develop if a dog inhales foreign material, such as food, liquid, or stomach contents, causing inflammation of the lung tissue that can lead to infection. Scarlett quickly became a \$2,500 dog! But thanks to a fast-acting and attentive future adopter, we were able to get her the care she urgently needed.



KINGSTON

Kingston, a tiny three-year-old Golden, was surrendered when his owners learned he would not be allowed in their new residence. He was quickly adopted by a loving family, but suspected kennel cough turned out to be something more sinister. Kingston has been diagnosed with a likely fungal infection. It's an opportunistic pathogen that typically affects animals with weakened immune systems. It can be confused with kennel cough or allergies but is more persistent. The most severe types enter the body through the respiratory tract and travel to other organs via the bloodstream. Left untreated, it can be fatal. Although Kingston was adopted, his symptoms became evident in our care. Thus, our commitment extends to his current family. Treatment has begun and may require two courses. All told, the bill may exceed \$7,000. We can keep our commitment because good people like you stand by us.

Thanks to your support, we can be there when dogs arrive with significant medical needs. In addition, we provide ongoing medical support to a revolving list of 60-80 dogs in our Permanent Foster Program, dogs like Madeline.



MADELINE

Madeline was picked up as a stray by animal control. She was covered in maggots on her tail and lady parts and had a severe flea infestation. Anemic and in critical condition, Madeline was rushed into our care. She had a blood count so low we thought we would lose her in the first few days. By banishing the maggots and fleas, increasing her iron, and giving her rest and care, we

were able to save her. She was sporting a mass, which we had removed when she was well enough, but one thing we could not cure: Madeline has an atonic bladder. She may sense that she needs to urinate, but her muscles do not contract on their own. Left unattended, her bladder spills over. This condition and her beautiful disposition meant that our president was immediately drawn to her. To manage her care, Madeline's bladder must be manually expressed throughout the day. She receives daily medications and is still highly susceptible to ongoing UTIs requiring regular urinalysis and treatment...not to mention a mountain of pee pads and daily cleanings. At 11 years of age, is she worth it? Just look at that face!

Homeward Bound has been able to support all these dogs thanks to your generous gifts.

We know that these are extraordinary times for many. Anything you can contribute during the *Double the Gold Challenge* will not only help – it will go TWICE AS FAR as your gift is matched by a waiting *Fund of Love*.

Let's not leave even a dollar of that Fund of Love match behind! We simply cannot do it without you.

HOW TO HELP

Donate securely online on our website at hbgr.org - or by check mailed to:

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue
7495 Natomas Rd.
Elverta, CA 95626

On behalf of the Golden and golden-hearted dogs that will benefit from your generosity, our heartfelt thanks.



The Diagnosis We Never Want

May is National Dog Cancer Awareness Month. Cancer is something we hope never to encounter in our dog's life, but the reality is that cancer affects one in four dogs at some stage of their lives. As they age, the risk grows. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), almost half of dogs over the age of 10 will develop some form of cancer.

While there is no single cause of cancer in dogs, several risk factors can contribute to its development. These include breed and genetics, diet, obesity, hormone imbalances, viral infections, chronic inflammation, sedentary lifestyles, sun exposure for dogs with thin or light-colored coats, environmental exposure to harmful substances, and age.

Cancer in dogs can take many forms. The most common cancers in dogs include:

- **Lymphoma/Lymphosarcoma** – Originates in the lymphatic system, affecting the body's infection-fighting network.
- **Mast Cell Tumor** – Originates from mast cells, which are part of the immune system and can be found in various tissues throughout the body.
- **Melanoma** – A type of skin cancer that develops from melanocytes, the cells that produce pigment in the skin.
- **Osteosarcoma** – A type of bone cancer that originates in the cells that form new bone tissue, commonly affecting the long bones of the arms or legs.
- **Hemangiosarcoma** – A rapidly progressing and aggressive cancer that arises from the cells lining blood vessels, often found in the spleen, liver, or heart.
- **Fibrosarcoma** – A malignant tumor that develops from fibrous tissue, typically found in bones or soft tissues, and is characterized by the uncontrolled growth of fibroblast cells.



Early warning signs can look like other conditions, so it is essential to stay alert. They include lumps and lesions, lymph node swelling, lameness, loss of appetite, weight loss, lethargy, excessive odor, loss of normal functions, bleeding or discharge, and labored breathing.

Prevention and early detection are key, given the expense and invasiveness of cancer treatment. Regular veterinary care, a balanced diet, exercise, and minimizing exposure to environmental hazards can help reduce the risk of cancer in dogs. A monthly full body check of your dog can help spot cancer before it is too late. If you are starting with a young dog, a body check will also prepare them for their future vet wellness visits.

The National Canine Cancer Foundation (wearethecure.org) recommends setting aside one day every month for a comprehensive check. Their website walks you through the steps of an overall body check from nose to tail. You'll want to look over the nose, eyes, mouth, ears, jawline, skin, torso, legs and feet, underbelly, and yes...even the anus.

Depending on the cancer, the fight can be long and expensive. Sometimes, the cure can be as difficult on your dog as the cause. It's natural to turn to Dr. Google for as much information as you can find, but information overload can also lead to confusion and poor decisions. You will

want to make fully informed decisions with your vet or veterinary oncologist, keeping the dog's age and health in mind.

Cancer is a journey we hope your beloved companion never has to travel. Prevention is the best way to ensure a happy and long life. When that's not enough, keeping your dog in its best physical condition will go a long way in helping it win its battle.

Sources:

American Veterinary Medical Association
vetcancersociety.org
National Canine Cancer Foundation
(www.wearethecure.org)



The Shy Dog Journey

By: Gail Westrup

Beverly came to Homeward Bound last June after two years as a breeder mom in an Ohio puppy mill. She was frightened, shut down, and had severe digestive issues. About that same time, Homeward Bound volunteer Linda Sekany lost her beloved 14-year-old Golden Retriever, Trapper. Trapper was a Canine Companion for Independence hearing assist dog for Linda. He did pet therapy volunteer work with Linda and was truly her closest friend. When Linda met Beverly (top), she sensed that focusing on her rehabilitation could help her through her grief.

Renamed Marshmallow, she came to her new home afraid of everything. Marshmallow stayed in a crate in one bedroom, which she considered safe. Linda brought her food and leashed her to go out for potty breaks. It took weeks for her to explore the house, one room at a time. On walks outside, it wasn't unusual for her to freeze in place.

Marshmallow eventually began interacting with Linda's two male Goldens but remained very afraid of people. Trainer Kathryn Baines says puppy mill dogs are often more comfortable with dogs than humans due to their lack of socialization. To help with the process, Linda took Marshmallow to Kathryn's Shy Dog class at Homeward Bound, where, as expected, she stayed to herself, only slightly interested in dogs but very afraid of humans. The unexpected twist came when Marshmallow refused to be leashed at the end of class; she wouldn't come to Linda or anyone else. The frightened girl was left alone in the fenced yard to wear herself out. At the day's end, Marshmallow was successfully leashed and headed home with an equally drained Linda.

Thankfully, Marshmallow was in a securely fenced area when this happened. Extremely fearful dogs can easily spook.



They tend to bolt if given the opportunity and are nearly impossible to catch because they are so frightened. While Linda had an anxious and long day, Homeward Bound foster Shauna Nguyen had TEN very long days last December. Her fearful foster dog, Millie (below), got out of her harness and collar while on a walk and ran off. Millie had



been feral, possibly an abandoned breeder dog, when she was initially caught, taken to a local shelter, and adopted. The family lacked the skills to support Millie, so they brought her to Homeward Bound late last year, and Shauna agreed to foster her.

After Millie ran off, Shauna and her dog, Honey, constantly patrolled the area, assisted by an engaged community and experienced trappers DeAnn Wren and Christina Sullivan. Ten days into the search, Shauna spotted Millie playing with a coyote in the field behind her home. The

trappers responded immediately, and shortly after setting the trap, Millie took the bait and was soon back with Shauna (below). Like Marshmallow, helping Millie was a labor of love. When she first came home with Shauna, it took her five hours to get



Millie out of the vehicle. For the first week, Millie wouldn't potty unless Shauna left the yard, and she refused to eat unless Shauna left the room. Millie engaged Shauna's two dogs but hid when people came to the house. When frightened on walks, she would try to bolt, get into a fetal position, or start shaking.

It took time and a great deal of patience. As Millie got more comfortable, she started checking out Shauna's visitors, and walks became less scary. Her most recent victory was staying with another Homeward Bound foster while Shauna traveled in March. Within 10 minutes of arriving, she played

Continued on page 9

Reunion Picnic!

Meet old friends and new! Adopters, alumni, and volunteers reunite for a casual day of fun and golden companionship and the food and drink are on us!

We are returning to Gibson Park Ranch House. It is close to Homeward Bound with a beautiful lawn shaded by old oak trees. Bonus: there are bathrooms and an indoor, air-conditioned space to prepare and layout food. Sorry...no dogs allowed inside. But bring a blanket, some lawn chairs, and your appetite!

All well-behaved HBGRR alumni and humans invited! Food! Festivities! Fun!

Saturday, June 22, 11A-2P
Gibson Park Ranch House
8556 Gibson Ranch Park Rd.
Elverta, CA 95626
Parking: \$6.00 - CARPOOL!

Our Wishlists

Big dogs have big needs. One simple way to help is to visit our Wish Lists for items of all budgets that are loved by our dogs and always needed by our hard-working volunteers.

We maintain two wishlists - one at Amazon and the other at Chewy. Both links are on our website. Just click on Donate on the navigation menu and scroll down. And don't forget to include a gift card so we know who to thank!



Foster Care Month Appreciation

May is National Foster Care month, and while it was created with children in mind, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to our incredible foster care network. These dedicated volunteers selflessly open their homes and hearts to dogs on their journeys to forever families. Some stay a few days, some stay weeks or months. Some, stay forever as Permanent Fosters. And yes...it's always hard to say 'farewell.' But fosters know that each dog they can help creates opportunity for another in need - allowing us to greatly expand the number of dogs we can serve. We are so grateful for your support. If you are interested in learning more about fostering, visit our website at hbgr.org.

Planned Giving: A Golden Legacy

Estate or planned gifts to Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue are excellent opportunities to create a legacy ensuring the rescue's permanence and that more Golden lives are saved. Planned giving is an option for donors of all incomes and may allow you to make a larger gift in the future than you otherwise could from current assets. A planned gift can also help you reduce capital gains or estate taxes on your heirs.

Naming us in your will or trust is one of the easiest ways to ensure that future generations of Golden Retrievers in need will find a second chance at life. You'll find more information on our website under "Donate."



Notes from Home

“When our family met and adopted Cal (formerly Garth) in early February, we knew that he was pretty special and that he would enhance our lives, with his gentle soul and loving nature. To help welcome and transition Cal into our family and routines, Cal has been coming to school with me a couple of days a week. I teach in the second and third grade and have a dynamic class of students. The majority of my students are well adjusted and socially healthy; however, I do have a few students who need additional emotional support. The addition of Cal in my classroom has been wonderful. He offers a balance to all my students, especially when a student needs some extra love. Not only has Cal enhanced our family, but he has brought a love and comfort to my classroom that was so unexpected. We are so grateful to Homeward Bound for bringing Cal into our lives.” ~ Kelly E. and Family



Henry was one of our many post-holiday puppy surrenders, arriving at a time when our foster homes were filled to capacity. Potential adopters on our waiting puppy list



were called immediately. Those that could respond on a moment’s notice were the lucky recipients of darling four month old pups. Vanessa arrived as darkness fell and took young Cooper home. He attached to his canine brother, Cooper, and fit in instantly. As it turns out, he has special skills. Vanessa, Cooper and Henry were on a hike on the El Dorado Trail when they came upon a lady who had stopped to talk with an elderly man. The man had walked away from a senior residence a couple miles away. Confused, disoriented, and upset, he was having a hard time staying still, making it difficult for the woman to assist. Vanessa walked up with the dogs. It was just what was needed at the moment. The gentleman had a special love and trust of Golden Retrievers. While they waited over an hour for help, they learned all about the man, his life, his wife who had recently passed, and his Golden Retriever, Buckwheat. The whole time, Cooper and Henry sat at his legs calmly letting him pet them. Vanessa says that she learned never to doubt that she was in the right place at the right time, and... that it doesn’t hurt to take along a Golden Retriever puppy!

Don’t forget – the Reunion Picnic is a great opportunity for volunteers including fosters to reconnect with the dogs they have supported, and for families to share their tales. We hope to see you there!

Continued from page 7

with the other dog and did well during her stay. Shauna was proud and delighted: “It was a very successful slumber party!”

After Marshmallow’s daylong escapade, she was required to be on a 40-foot lead during class until Kathryn felt confident in Marshmallow’s recall. That day arrived seven months later. Now, Marshmallow is running with the pack, head raised and tail wagging, chasing a ball with a look of pleased anticipation as she approaches someone for a treat.

With dogs like Millie and Marshmallow, patience is more than a virtue; it’s a requirement. But it pays off in transformed lives. The adoption team is now looking for a permanent home for Millie. Shauna says Millie gains confidence every day, and she’s certain Millie will be a great dog for someone who understands her and gives her the love she deserves. Linda now gets to see Marshmallow “at home” in her home. She plays in the backyard, swims in the pool, and enjoys Linda’s companionship. The once petrified dog is wagging her tail and showing her personality. In Linda’s words, “I think she knows she is loved, and that makes it all worthwhile.”



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Dogs and Obesity

Truthfully, we have been caught referring to certain dogs as wide bodies or tabletops. Honestly, we are not into body shaming at Homeward Bound. But when dogs arrive morbidly obese, we do recognize a medical emergency in the making. Lately, we have seen a rash of dogs weighing in between 90-100 pounds...and beyond. These are not Mastiffs, Saint Bernards, Great Danes, or Newfies. These are Golden Retriever boys and girls whose body weight should normally range between 55-75 pounds.

Obesity shortens a dog's life and makes them more likely to develop disease. Even being moderately overweight can reduce a dog's life expectancy by nearly two years compared to their leaner counterparts, according to a large lifetime study of Labrador Retrievers.

As in humans, fat secretes inflammatory hormones and creates oxidative stress on the body's tissues, contributing to many diseases. Think of obesity as a chronic, low-level inflammatory condition that can lead to a host of issues in dogs, just as it does in people. Among them:

- Cancer
- Diabetes mellitus
- Heart disease
- Hypertension
- Osteoarthritis and faster degeneration of affected joints
- Urinary bladder stones
- Anesthetic complications

We've covered this ground before, but it begs repeating!

How do you know if your dog is overweight?

Start with the body condition scoring chart. Three is how a typical retriever looks at ideal weight. Assess your dog's body condition by checking how much fat they have covering their ribs. Compare that to



how the back of your hand feels. Feel the dog's ribs just behind their front legs.

- If the ribs feel like the back of your hand, your dog has an excellent body condition.
- If the ribs feel like your knuckles or stick out like knuckles, your dog is too thin.
- If the ribs feel like the palm of your hand, your dog is overweight.

How to get the pounds off?

Start with an honest assessment. Are you overfeeding your dog with table scraps, treats, puppuccinos, and burgers? Cutting those out is a good place to start. It is not appropriate to simply reduce the volume of twice daily normal sized meals. This will cause malnourishment over time. You may need a prescription diet, portion size, and meal frequency. Discuss this with your vet to ensure you feed a diet with a lower overall calorie density that maintains an appropriate nutrient balance. Unless your dog has existing exercise restrictions, incorporate moderate exercise. Go slow and build up very gradually over time. Obesity and heat can put your dog at risk of heat stroke.

What about puppies?

Meal quantities vary by breed, but for a typical Golden or Lab puppy, feed at least one cup three times a day. If your puppy gets normal amounts of exercise and puppy zoomies,

you can still incorporate training treats when it is young and very active. As it gets older, keep an eye on its body condition and scale back to twice-a-day feeding—typically around 8 months. Always feed puppies high-protein food for the first year for those growing bodies.

Avoid the Yo-Yo

Once your dog regains its waistline, don't let the hard work go to waste. Maintain your dog's new healthy physique for longevity and overall health.

Ask the Pros

And of course...consult with your veterinarian. Obesity may also be an indicator of diseases such as hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid gland) or Cushing's disease (overactive adrenal glands). Your vet can rule those out and recommend special foods, portions, and ideal weight before you begin your dog's weight loss journey.

Source: vcahospitals.com



Gizmo Graduates!

In May 2022, a young, exuberant Labrador Retriever was surrendered to Homeward Bound. Another untrained, post-pandemic juvenile whose energy was too much for his family. Labs are notoriously busy. They need daily opportunities to exercise their bodies and their minds. Without them, they can become bored, anxious, and even destructive. Tank was incredibly athletic, intelligent, and high-strung. Regular play would get him amped up, and he found it hard to settle. He was adopted, fostered, and returned. Tank needed something more: purpose. More than exercise and play were needed for Tank; he needed focused mental activity. He found that, and more, at Search Dog Foundation (SDF).

SDF recruits dogs from shelters and breed rescue groups, gives them professional training, and partners them with firefighters and other first responders to find those still alive and trapped in the wreckage following disasters. The traits that can make dogs unsuitable as family pets—intense energy and extreme drive—are precisely the qualities required in a Search dog. Through SDF, these amazing dogs find what they crave: a job.

Only dogs with extraordinary traits make the final cut to be accepted into SDF's program. Those that don't make it through



are promised homes through their adoption program. With his intelligence, perseverance, and boundless energy,

Tank made it through his 18-month program and graduated on March 31, 2024. Now named Gizmo, he will now be matched to a forever

handler. They will form an extraordinary bond through their lives together, ongoing training, and a life of service in times of disaster.



How to Reach Us

Your help and ideas are always welcome! Contact team leaders below if you are interested in helping in any of these areas:

Adoptions and Surrenders & Sanctuary Development
 Judy Kent, President
 7495 Natomas Road
 Elverta, CA 95626
 916-655-1410
judy@homewardboundgoldens.org

Foster Families
fostering@homewardboundgoldens.org

Placement Team
homevisits@homewardboundgoldens.org

Golden Taxi (Transport)
goldentaxi@homewardboundgoldens.org

Volunteering
volunteering@homewardboundgoldens.org

Newsletter & Marketing
audrey@homewardboundgoldens.org

Training
 Kathryn Baines, 916-300-9415
grdogtraining@gmail.com





**HOMeward
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Retriever
Rescue

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Rescue and Sanctuary, Inc.
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Dates to Remember

The Double the Gold Challenge runs through May!

Reunion Picnic, Saturday, June 22

Help Wanted

Volunteer Positions Currently in High Demand:

- **Feeders:** A dog's best friend and so rewarding!
- **Walkers:** Build bonds of trust through walking, playing, training, and grooming. Help prepare the dogs for their forever homes.
- **Fosters:** Be the bridge to a dog's forever home.

Our Golden Wish List

You can also shop our **Amazon Wish List**. You'll find the link on our website!

For Our Goldens:

Nature's Select Dog Food (donate with your online purchase)
Large Pill Pockets
Dog Cookies
Rubber-backed Rugs
Amazon Gift Cards

Office Supplies

Postage Stamps
Professional Printing Services

General Maintenance & Laundry

Paper Towels
Garbage Bags (heavy duty & extra heavy duty)
Pooper Scoopers

Facilities Supplies

Lowes or Home Depot Gift Cards

For Landscaping & Our Memorial Garden

Green Acres Nursery Gift Certificates
Shredded Cedar Bark/Mulch