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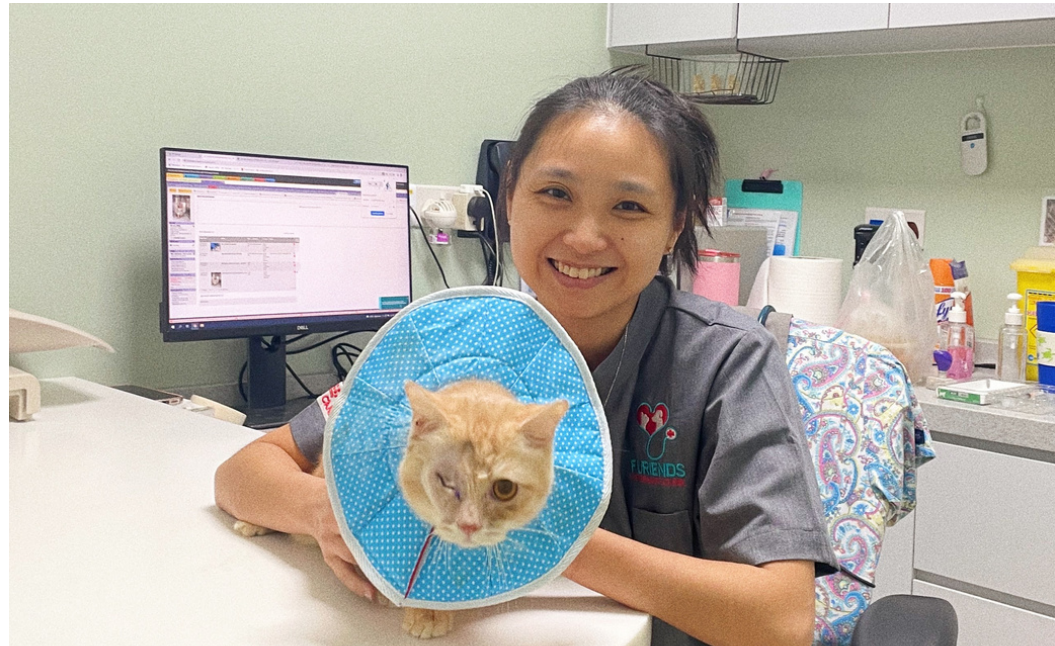
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Our mission is to improve the quality of lives of stray dogs through rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing them; to increase public awareness and acceptance of stray dogs as companion animals and that they deserved to be treated with compassion and kindness.



MEET DR. KITTY: THE VETERINARIAN WHO OVERSEES THE HEALTH OF THE BLESSINGS AT MERCYLIGHT

For nearly a decade, Dr. Kitty's expertise and care has supported the MercyLight family. Dr. Kitty shares more on her journey and how her mum's love of animals inspired her to care for strays.

Share a bit about yourself and what you do!

Hi, I'm Dr Kitty and I am the veterinarian at Furiends Veterinary Clinic. I graduated in 2008 from a veterinary science course in Perth and I've been working as a vet in Singapore ever since. I first met Kelly when I was working at Mount Pleasant Mandai about 9 years ago and we've built a strong working relationship ever since.

I'm essentially the GP for MercyLight - if any dog is unwell or exhibits any symptoms that Kelly is unsure about, I am the one Kelly consults. I am in charge of the regular blood tests, health checkups and vaccinations for all the dogs at MercyLight. If there are any serious conditions beyond my capabilities and that require major surgeries or hospitalization, I will assist with the referral as well.

How did you get into veterinary medicine?

Growing up, I had not much interest in most subjects in school. After secondary school, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do and I did not get into a JC, hence I went on to study biomedical science in polytechnic. One semester later, my mum went to an educational fair for overseas study and proposed the idea of studying veterinary science in Australia. I immediately agreed and decided to study in Perth since it was the closest to home.

When did you start helping stray cats/dogs? What drives your passion to help stray cats/dogs on top of your already stressful profession as a vet?

My mum was a huge animal lover and a regular stray cat feeder. As a teenager, I would tag along and help her with the feeding of stray cats, and that's how my love for animals developed. *continued on the next page...*

LEFT The caring, vibrant team at Furiends Veterinary Clinic



MEET THE VETERINARIAN: DR. KITTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I still remember an incident from my teenage years where we found a litter of kittens in a rubbish chute while stray feeding and rescued them. We tried our best to nurse them back to health. That was also my first visit to a vet clinic, which sparked my interest. I understood the importance of vet science as the visit made me realize that we were doing a lot of things wrong while caring for the kittens such as using the wrong method to bottle feed the kittens.

I don't actively stray feed anymore as such "field work" is usually done at night, and I have too many commitments including my day job as a vet and taking care of my children. However, when I chance upon strays, I will try my best to assist in a different way, by trapping, neutering and rehoming them.

“ I remain driven by my love for these animals, and I feel that this is my calling in life. Animals can't speak for themselves, and it compels me to want to do something to help them. I cannot imagine doing anything else besides this. ”

How do you cope with marriage, children, being a vet, active cat rescuer and rehomer, and setting aside time to help other rescuers like us?

Now that I have my own clinic, my staff are also actively involved in the rehoming process, which includes answering enquiries and screening potential adopters. This definitely helps to take a load off my shoulders, and I am grateful for my team.

I try my best to manage my time and prioritize my commitments based on urgency. I feel like as long as I earn enough to live comfortably and support my family, the rest of my time outside of my day job can be used to help stray animals in any way I can. On my off days or when a locum vet (temporary vet) comes into the clinic, I will spend my time doing shelter work with organizations like MercyLight.

Do you ever feel discouraged? What keeps you going in those instances?

Honestly, it is very tiring to cope with all these commitments and there are points in time where I feel like giving up. It is a 24/7 job for me, and I am constantly worried about the animals staying overnight. I worry in the clinic and even after I step out after work. Sometimes I make mistakes as well, and they make me question myself and think about what I could've done better. I guess growing up in Singapore's fast paced and stressful environment has taught me how to be more resilient and deal with the stress.



Dr. Kitty's love of animals, particularly strays, was inspired by her mother who was a regular stray cat feeder.

I remain driven by my love for these animals, and I feel that this is my calling in life. Animals can't speak for themselves, and it compels me to want to do something to help them. I cannot imagine doing anything else besides this.

Lastly, I have very strong support from my family. My husband provides a good listening ear when I'm feeling stressed or burnt out. My eldest boy is also an animal lover and helps to take care of our pets at home.

Is there anything you wish to convey to other vets?

Every vet goes through different challenges and has different mindsets, but the one thing we all have in common is our love for animals. There are so many stray animals that need help and sometimes we must acknowledge that the problem is beyond us. If we all try within our means and abilities to save as many animals as we can, that is the most important.

Is there any advice you wish to convey to other rescuers/shelters?

I've worked with several shelters and my advice is to work within financial means and understand not all stray animals can be saved. In some instances where the quality of an animal's life cannot be changed significantly, sadly, euthanasia should be considered in order to cease the animal's suffering and avoid raking up the medical bills.

Limits and boundaries should be discussed and set beforehand. Resources should be spent fruitfully and with care, otherwise carers can be struck with bad debt which hurts. 🐾

MEET THE ADOPTERS: BLESSING

A SENIOR DOG WITH A BIG PERSONALITY FINDS HER FOREVER HOME

We chatted with adopters Evona and Justin on their decision to bring Blessing into their family. Prior to her adoption, Blessing spent time with a quasi-foster family who set up a fun, vibrant Instagram page for her.

Why did you decide to adopt a dog from a shelter and from MercyLight specifically?

Justin: Our adoption journey started off with Evona wanting a dog. She did most of the research online to find out more about adoption drives etc., so we became more drawn to adoption as a result. It took us one and a half years to finally decide on adopting. We also didn't want to pay for a dog and wanted to adopt from a shelter instead, so it was also coming from a cost perspective. I also said no puppies – they are too frantic! I wanted some zen.

Evona: We adopted our first dog Rain a few years back. Justin became charmed by her, and we had no more arguments against getting a dog. Unfortunately, Rain was diagnosed with skin cancer in March last year and passed on within 6 to 9 months. Following that, Blessing's Instagram profile caught my attention, and she had some resemblance to Rain in terms of appearance and mannerisms. We decided to go meet her.

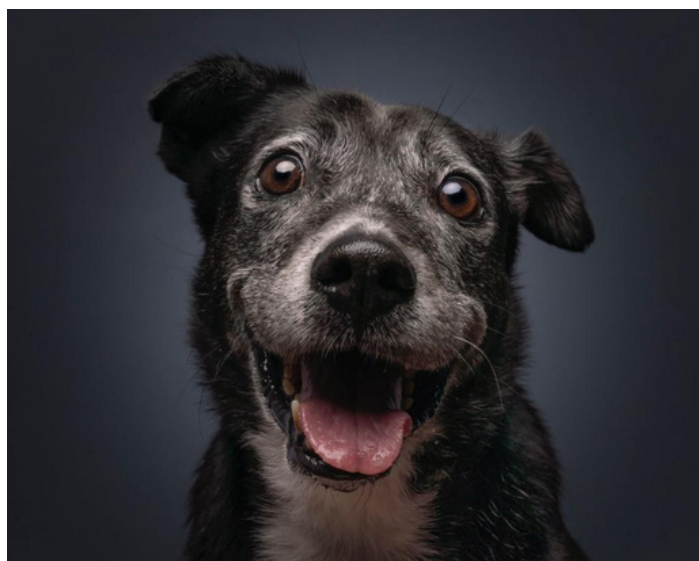
What was the adoption process like for you?

E: For me, it was quite straightforward. Everything that MercyLight needs before adoption is clearly stated on their website. We had to answer a few questions and made it clear why we were looking at adopting Blessing specifically. We were in touch with Kelly the whole time and were able to do weekend trials, along with an extended home trial from just after Christmas last year. During that trial, Blessing also got to meet Miso, and they got along well.

Why did you decide to adopt Blessing specifically? What caught your eye about her?

E: Apart from the similarities, it was about helping another senior dog because we feel like they tend to be overlooked. We understand where the preference for younger dogs comes from, but for us, it was important that we adopt a dog regardless of their age or health. Blessing has a very bright personality. Her extremely cheerful disposition enlivened the house while we were grieving, and motivated Miso a lot. Blessing was a companion to Miso, who sometimes was not her usual self and needed an ally to play with.

Since we have office jobs and would not be home as much, senior dogs were most suitable for us – they are calm, mild and need less sustained attention. Previously, our jobs also required us to travel a lot, so given our lifestyle and financial considerations and all, we only considered senior dogs – dogs that were okay with staying at home alone for a few hours on weekdays.



Age has not affected Blessing's cheerful, puppy-like personality. She loves food and familiar friends

How has Blessing been settling into your family? Have you seen any changes in her behaviour?

E: It has been very natural, and she is settling in very well. We knew about her greed for food, and there was a period when she would not eat her food unless coaxed, but her appetite gradually improved. She just needed the time and space to settle down. She slowly became more comfortable with being part of treat time, hovering around Miso to steal food, and sitting on my face while I am on the sofa. She still gets startled by certain noises, but we try our best to comfort her. Since we are also not first-time owners, nothing throws us off too much!

How has adopting Blessing changed your daily lives? Any fun episodes/anything you'd like to share?

E: We can no longer sleep in – we have a living alarm clock now, that is for sure. She has a very sharp bark in the morning, which wakes us up, and now she even nudges me every morning. Our morning routine involves getting their food ready and walking them. The floor also has a lot more drool, but we have gotten used to it. She loves to play with Miso and flip herself around on her back and has funny expressions/motions.

J: The walks have become more tiring than usual, haha! She often plays so much she forgets to relieve herself.

E: She is just a very cheerful, fun-loving girl. In the afternoon, she usually wants to be alone and stays in the master bedroom. When evening time comes, she will come out and play with Miso. We then have our evening walks, after which she eats and goes back to sleep. She is very easygoing. She went missing for about 3 hours one day, and that was quite a scare, but when she came back, she was just chilling and looked completely happy. *continued on the next page...*

[CONTINUED] MEET THE ADOPTERS: BLESSING

How is it adopting an older dog? Are there any upsides or challenges as compared to having a younger dog?

E: I think one of the upsides is that the dog is likely to already have a more fixed personality, so there won't be too many surprises. With senior dogs, though, you do have to know their history very well. They will be more prone to illnesses and physical degeneration, so you must be fully accepting of that. However, the loyalty and companionship that comes with a senior dog are great and so worth it.

J: I would say that first-time owners should get a senior dog. They are very loving. One thing to consider when adopting an older dog, though, is that you need to have a good understanding of yourself – the kind of lifestyle you want to lead, whether any major life decisions may arise in the next 10 years, etc.

Would you encourage others to consider adopting an older dog? What would you say to them?

E&J: We wouldn't discourage people from taking in senior dogs. Rain and the dogs that followed have definitely helped us become more intentional in the way we live our lives. Definitely go for it – dogs shouldn't be ignored just because they are above 7 years old or have pre-existing conditions. If you want an especially loving and affectionate animal, go for a senior dog! We have had no regrets with senior dogs. Although we must say it is very heartbreaking to deal with the grief. Adopting a senior dog is one of the most rewarding journeys one can experience.

For those who are struggling to get their parents to agree to a dog in the house, get a senior dog. My mum, who was afraid of dogs, no longer has that fear, because senior dogs tend to be calmer and could not care less. Take note though, it is important to really get to know the dog's personality – they may be older with a very jumpy personality. Weekend visits or extended stays may be helpful. The planning that goes into adopting an older dog cannot be understated. 🐾



Justin, Evona, Blessing and her new siblings

"LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST"

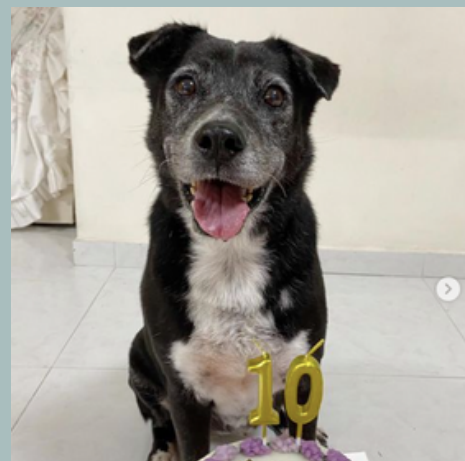
After several years in the shelter, Blessing had become a special friend of many volunteers and potential adopters.

One family with an adopted dog from Blessing's pack had Blessing stay at their home on occasion. The family set up an Instagram account to help showcase Blessing's playful personality with the intention of helping her get adopted.

"She is a precious girl with a big heart that is way too big for her (not so little) body.. even though she does things like snatching other dogs beds and stealing their food"

Her Instagram featured vibrant photos and videos that captured her playful, silly and "living life to the fullest" moments.

"[We] are so happy that Blessing found a warm and loving home that she deserves after everything that she went through before being rescued." 🐾



MEET THE ADOPTERS: ASHER

ASHER'S FAMILY SHARES MORE ON ADOPTION & THEIR NEXT CHAPTER TOGETHER

We sit down with Asher's family to learn more about his adoption and how he will join his family on their new chapter in Jacksonville, Florida, U.S.A.

Why did you decide to adopt Asher?

We never considered buying a dog from a breeder, due to ethical concerns. There are enough dogs in the streets that we could save instead of importing one from the other side of the world. We looked around various shelters in Singapore for a puppy, even though we had no experience. We wanted a puppy, and MercyLight happened to have a litter of 7 puppies.

We were looking at another litter, one that was 3 months older, but we couldn't meet any of the dogs in person due to COVID. The week MercyLight opened to visitors, we were one of the first to visit.

We sat on the floor in the kennel, and Asher walked over and sat on our daughter's lap and never left her side. In a way, he chose us. There was no separating them.

You'll be relocating out of Singapore soon and traveling with Asher. Could you walk us through your decision making process to bring Asher with you?

Before adopting a dog, prepare for the worst. The thought of leaving him behind never crossed our mind, there was no way we were not taking him with us. Asher is part of our family. He is like our third child, and there was no question that we would take him with us.

For the move, how did you plan logistics? How will Asher move from Singapore to the U.S.?

We researched around for a pet transport company with good reviews, and found one, Shiloh Animal Express that does door-to-door. We picked the transit dates, measured Asher, and got a crate large enough for him to lay and stand up without any problems. We made sure he got all his vaccinations, including rabies vaccination. The company took care of everything, including all the export licenses, but there was still a lot of paperwork involved.



Audrey, Maxim, Chris and Asher

Relocating is a very complicated process, and we've said that the most complicated one in this move was Asher. His flight was \$15,000, more expensive than ours! Although our own commercial flight is 20 hours direct to New York – we couldn't consider keeping him as excess baggage for 20 hours. His travel plan was designed to offer the most humane experience possible.

Asher will be flying on a cargo flight with KLM, 12 hours to Frankfurt, and another 12 hours to Orlando. During transit in Frankfurt, he will have a break where he will be able to run around, and get checked by a vet. The good thing, is that dogs coming from Singapore, do not need to be quarantined in the United States. Upon arrival to Florida, he will be transported by car to our new home where we will be waiting for him after his long 2 day journey.

Anything to share on Asher and your family?

In a way, having Asher move with us has united us as a family. My daughter was apprehensive about the move, but was okay when we told her Asher would be coming with us. 🐾

TOGETHER Maxim and Lily with Asher

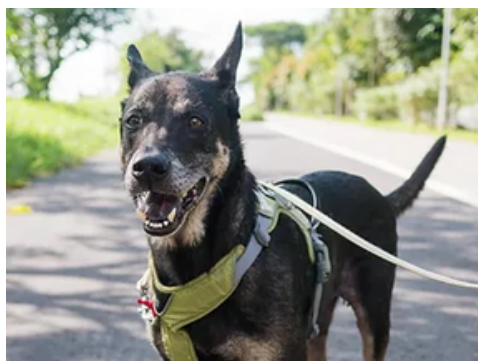


ASHER'S JOURNEY



FRESH FACES AT THE SHELTER

SOME ARRIVALS WITH NEW CHAPTERS AHEAD



JAY JAY

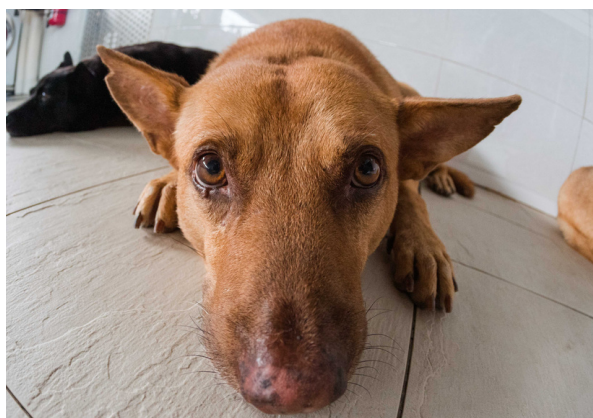
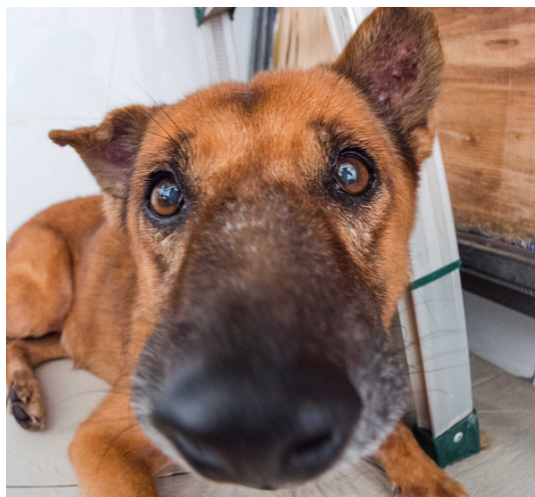
Jay Jay has a pleasant personality. A sweet boy with no character issues at all. Jay Jay was adopted in 2013 when he was a puppy. He was returned in 2022 when he just turned 9 years old. He was no longer given adequate attention or properly cared for. He was lacking clean water, baths, walks, annual vaccinations and monthly preventives. Marriage, sickness, newborns took place in the family and everyone got too busy to care for him properly. Jay Jay was pushed to the helper who wasn't keen to take care of him. 🐾



SAINT

Saint was adopted as a puppy and returned to us in February 2022 when he was 1 year old. When we took over Saint, he was underweight and had consistent loose stools. Even though we increased his feeding intervals, he never seemed to be full. After almost a month of trial and error, we finally discovered that he had EPI (exocrine pancreatic insufficiency) which explained why he couldn't put on any weight and was always hungry. He is now on enzymes medication to help manage his condition. 🐾

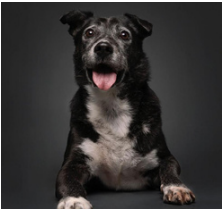
READY FOR A CLOSE UP SOME PICTURES FROM OUR TALENTED VOLUNTEERS 🐾



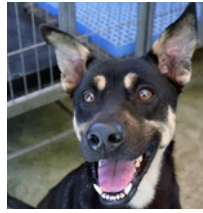
Mercylight is dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming stray dogs, so that they may get a second chance in life. Rescue efforts require a great amount of time, effort and manpower, but we believe that every single dog rescued makes it worthwhile.



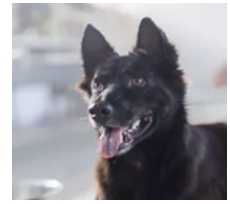
KEEP UP WITH THE BLESSINGS ADOPTED & IN THIS ISSUE 🐾



@blessingthesunshine

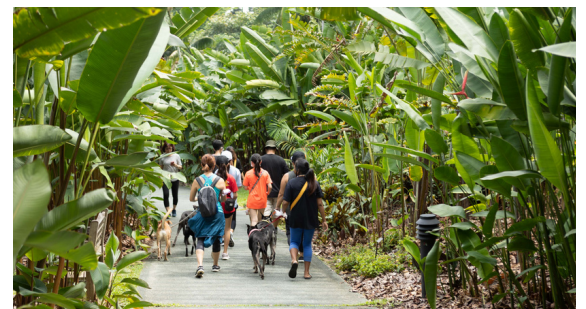


@coco_n_special



@royceblessing5

CATCHING UP WITH OUR MERCYLIGHT FAMILIES CHECK OUT WHAT EVERYPAWDY HAS BEEN UP TO...



EXCITING TIMES AHEAD MercyLight dogs, their families at Botanic Gardens and volunteers at Wag & Wild. As restrictions have eased, more meetups and reunions are ahead! 🐾



INKED! Earlier this year, Cairo became the muse for his adopters' latest ink.

"Cairo has been such a goofy sweetheart ever since he joined our family in 2020. Even with the addition of Jona (a Singapore Special) he's been a protective and caring brother. We really wanted his goofiness and handsome looks to be featured as tattoos, and we're so glad they turned out the way they have." 🐾



CATCH THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IN JULY 2022

