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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.



ABOVE: Dr. Sara's vision made RehabVet into Singapore's first full-fledged animal rehabilitation centre.

RIGHT: RehabVet's team has experience with animals of various temperaments, shapes and sizes.



A LITTLE EXTRA SUPPORT TO SENIOR RESCUES

PHYSIOTHERAPY SESSIONS ARE OFFSET THROUGH "BLESSED" SESSIONS

On Serangoon Road, about a half hour drive from MercyLight, is RehabVet - Singapore's first full-fledged animal rehabilitation clinic. For the rescues of MercyLight, the trip can be described as a trip from one shelter to another, with RehabVet providing shelter and care from ailments such as injuries or age-related pains. We spoke with Dr. Sara from RehabVet to learn more about their work helping animals live a pain-free life.

When clients purchase a session package, they can opt to donate unused sessions to local rescues should their family relocate or their animal pass away. "When we match the donated sessions with a rescue, we share a photo with the family," said Dr. Sara. "The families often express joy to see their late pet helping another." Such arrangements have allowed MercyLight dogs to kickstart any needed treatment by offsetting the full costs.

Those dogs who have benefitted from various treatments at RehabVet include several senior dogs such as Noble, Alpha, Jay Jay and Shepherd. The donated rehabilitation sessions help these senior dogs to initiate preventive treatments without the financial commitment of a full treatment plan.

Dr. Sara, the founder of RehabVet, is a pet owner herself. She trained at the University of Sydney and has worked with animals extensively in both Australia and Singapore. Dr. Lam and her team have experience spanning not only dogs and cats but also horses and birds.

The team takes a comprehensive view towards treatment. "First we treat any deviations and reduce pain, then we work on flexibility and motion, then move onto things like strength," said Dr. Sara.

REHABILITATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When patients first arrive at RehabVet, they can expect a well-rounded approach towards assessments. Patients' weight, their weight distribution, reflexes and even limb circumferences are analysed and any deviations are flagged. Patients are then observed lifting limbs, walking, running and moving around. Dr. Lam and her team can often spot issues within a few seconds. After the initial evaluation the issues are reviewed and a treatment plan is formulated.

Some clients seek RehabVet's services for prevention, while others face more common issues such as a luxating patella, where a dog's kneecap moves out of its normal position impacting their hips, spine and in severe cases, their shoulders.

Common issues that afflict Singapore Specials include arthritis, spinal degeneration, bone spurs, and nerve rubbing. Dr Sara notes that MercyLight's Singapore Specials are known to be easy-going and non-fussy, and are able to complete assessments and undergo treatments smoothly.



MercyLight visiting RehabVet for physiotherapy sessions. MercyLight dogs live in "packs" and often venture in groups, providing emotional and calming support to each other. RehabVet is one of their favourite outings because of the staff who connect well with dogs and deliver treatments efficiently.

With its comprehensive approach, RehabVet strives to treat the source of issues in order to improve the animal's overall quality of life. Treatments can include anything from targeted range of motion exercises, stretching, hydro-treadmill, electrical muscle stimulation, acupuncture and hydrotherapy - all under one roof! 🐾

FUN FACT!

RehabVet is home to Asia's only medical-grade hyperbaric oxygen therapy that accelerates wound healing by delivering a high concentration of oxygen in a non-invasive, painless way that supports the body's natural healing abilities. A few dogs from MercyLight have received this treatment.



Such therapy is often used with humans in cases involving burns, cancer, open wounds and crush injuries.



Hydrotherapy uses water to ease stress on the joints. Benefits include increased range of motion and strength.

>> Check out RehabVet at 513 Serangoon Road and on Instagram at @rehabvet_sg



MEET THE ADOPTER: ZANE

SWEET ZANE FINDS HIS HOME WITH A VOLUNTEER AND HER DOG OLLIE

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

I've been volunteering at MercyLight for over three years now, and I've formed a strong bond with many of the dogs there during my weekly sessions, including Zane. After walking and feeding him weekly, taking him out for outings with my team and bringing him home with me on several staycations, I fell in love with his sweet personality. He always makes me laugh with his goofy antics. I was considering the idea of adopting him for over a year, but I wasn't sure if I was ready or able to give him the best home he deserves.

As cheesy as this sounds, one night I randomly had a dream that he was playing happily at my place, and I woke up feeling the strong urge to bring him home, which prompted me to start a conversation with Kelly about adopting Zane.

Can you run us through your decision making process when you decided to adopt Zane?

I have another Singapore Special named Ollie, adopted 7 years ago. One of my main considerations was whether they would get along, and whether I could cope with handling, walking and feeding two dogs instead of one. I also wanted to make sure that they had enough space at home to run around and live comfortably. Since I just moved into a bigger place at the start of the year, I felt that there was ample space to accommodate two dogs.

Another issue I had to consider was Zane's extremely picky eating habits. I was usually in charge of feeding him at the shelter so I was already quite accustomed to it, but I was also wary of how time consuming and challenging it could be at times. I had to ask myself if I was able to put in the time and effort that was necessary for him to finish all his meals so that he could continue gaining weight to reach a healthy level.

What was the adoption process like for you?

I had lengthy conversations with Kelly about both of our concerns about Zane and how I could manage them, before formally submitting the adoption form for Zane on the website. She wanted to make sure that I had thought everything through and I was ready for it, which I appreciated and am grateful for. We then proceeded with a one month home trial, during which I observed how he settled into my place and how he got along with Ollie. Sure enough, the first few weeks were challenging and it took me an average of 30-60 minutes to coax him to eat his meals.



Isabel is a volunteer at MercyLight. After much thought (and even a dream with Zane in it) she chose to adopt Zane (left).

I think he was nervous about the new environment and being away from his friends at the shelter. I updated Kelly daily about his food intake and progress, and also received a lot of useful tips and advice from her. After the month-long trial, Kelly came over for a home visit and we officially signed the adoption papers on 7 May!

How has Zane been settling into your family? How has adopting Zane changed your daily lives?

I am so proud of him for the progress he's made with regard to his eating habits - on most days, he can finish his meals on his own and I no longer need to coax him, sit next to him or add treats to his food. He seems to be more comfortable and at ease now. He loves to lounge on the sofa and snuggle up to me when I read or watch television. He also enjoys going on runs with us and going for outings to the beach or dog run with his buddy Xander (also adopted at the same time by my cousins, YAY!). I love that Ollie now has a playmate, and I feel more at ease knowing that they have each other when I'm not at home with them.

There are definitely still challenges to overcome and more room for improvement, but I am excited to work with him and tackle them together. Zane is a very intelligent and sensitive dog and he can pick up on things very quickly. For example, he knows how to communicate with me when he's urgent to go potty by whining to get my attention, followed by sitting down next to the front door. Overall, he is such a joy to have around and a lovely addition to my family. I feel extremely lucky and privileged to have the opportunity to be his mom.

" I fell in love with his sweet personality. He always makes me laugh with his goofy antics. "

MEET THE ADOPTER: ZANE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Do you have any advice for others who are considering adoption? Any other tips you would like to share?

I think it's normal for the process to be bumpy at the start - as much as you need time to adjust to having a new pet at home, your pet also needs time to adjust to their new surroundings and build a bond with you. Celebrate all the small wins and victories because that's still progress!

One thing I've learnt from being a dog mom is that every pet has their quirks and bad habits, but it is never their fault because they are like little children who don't know better and don't mean any harm - it is up to us owners to handle, manage and correct them with love and patience, A LOT of patience! No two dogs are the same, and finding out what motivates your dogs can also be helpful when teaching them new things or correcting them - for example, Ollie is treat motivated whereas Zane is more praise motivated. This means that my approach when training both of them are completely different.

Lastly, adopt, don't shop! There are so many more sweet and lovable dogs at MercyLight that deserve a forever home. By adopting, you're not only saving one dog but also creating space for another stray dog to receive shelter and rehabilitation at MercyLight. The experience will also change your life and bring such a profound positive impact to you. 🐾



Zane (left) and Ollie (right) - "By adopting, you're not only saving one dog but also creating space for another stray dog to receive shelter and rehabilitation at MercyLight."

SPOTLIGHT ON: CHOCO



Choco is a happy and confident dog who loves to be stroked and is HDB approved.

Choco walks very, very well on a leash. When she is taken somewhere new on a walk, she has a peculiar way of walking with an extra sway and bounce in her step.

Choco is mentioned on the next page since she accompanied Xander on his home trial.

MEET THE ADOPTERS: XANDER

COMMITTED TO GIVING A SHELTER DOG A HOME

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

We both love dogs. Back when we were dating, we had decided that our family would be complete with a dog in our lives. Adoption was something that came quite naturally. We don't subscribe to the idea of buying dogs, especially when there are already so many precious dogs in shelters looking for a forever home. We also hear these heartwarming and at times, heartbreaking stories from family and friends who volunteer at shelters. Our cousin volunteers weekly at MercyLight and we both think that the shelter is doing an amazing job caring for these dogs. So the moment we felt ready to have a dog, we went directly and only to MercyLight.

Can you run us through your decision making process when you decided to adopt Xander?

We wanted a healthy puppy to love and spoil for many years to come. We wanted one with energy to be active and play with us at times, but also generally well-mannered and able to chill with us. Apart from these, we live in a HDB flat and after some research, we knew we had to abide by certain key criteria of the Project ADORE (i.e., size and age).

What was the adoption process like for you?

We had lots of guidance throughout from Kelly, our cousin Isabel (who adopted Zane!), and sometimes the other volunteers we met at the shelter. The adoption process for Xander took about 2 months, from our first visit to the shelter to the day we adopted our boy. It is mainly broken down into two phases, the duration of each depending on your progress with your pup.



Grace and Vinny on an outing with Xander

During the first phase, we visited the shelter on a weekly basis for a month, sometimes twice a week if our schedule allowed. The 2-3 hours we spent there were for bonding with Xander (and other shelter dogs too) - we would interact, feed, walk, and shower him. We also brought him on car rides. Kelly would observe, assess us and Xander's comfort level, and give us useful pointers when needed.

The second phase was the home trial. Xander was a 7 month old puppy then. Coupled with his shy and apprehensive (but very sweet) personality, Kelly suggested we begin with a two day and one night staycation with Choco as a buddy, another sweet and calm shelter dog. The subsequent week, we began his supposed 3-week long home trial that hasn't ended till today. We officially adopted him on 6 May!

How has Xander been settling into your family?

Xander is the sweetest, most perfect addition to our family. We are super obsessed with Xander. We think (hope) he is with us too. Our relationship definitely progressed massively and he has warmed up to us a lot compared to the start of the home trial. Initially, he would be very stand-offish and suspicious of everything we were doing. Some mornings felt as if his mind had erased all progress made the previous few days. We also had a bit of trouble during mealtimes - he would refuse to finish his food and it would take us 15 to 30 minutes of us following him around and trying to get him to eat.



MEET THE ADOPTERS: XANDER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Walking was also challenging as he would be reluctant to follow us around.

The turning point was not gradual at all. Xander woke up one morning, and it was like a switch flipped - instead of being his usual aloof or cautious self, he was suddenly super comfortable and extremely happy to see us. This was about two weeks into the home trial. We always joke that he came to a sudden realization that he was gonna be stuck with us forever so he decided to love us back.

Now, he gets excited to see us (even if we are gone for merely 30 seconds), sad when we leave him for work (we feel the same too), eager to work for his meals and treats, and goofy almost all the time. He's still the same "nua" and chill dog, sometimes cautious with new experiences and new faces, apprehensive with car rides, but more definitely fully comfortable and expressive with us.

Do you have any advice for others who are considering adoption?

All dogs have different characters, preferences, dislikes and experiences, just like people. Some dogs may be easier or tougher to handle than others. Our boy doesn't have any aggression but he definitely is more cautious and apprehensive compared to the average dog, especially when he's around strangers (both humans and dogs alike), and also when he's exposed to a new environment or experience. Lots of time and patience are required in trying to build up his confidence, and at the same time ensuring that others are aware of his spatial needs. It's not always easy but it's so heartwarming and encouraging when we witness his progress and gradual growth in confidence.

Project A.D.O.R.E is a program that allows medium to large dogs from Animal Welfare Groups to be adopted into families staying in HDBs.



Xander during his home trial, featured with his supportive packmate Choco (who is up for adoption!)

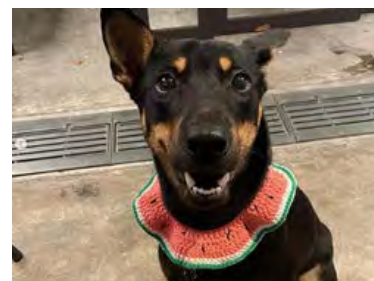
Having a fur-kid is a major life commitment - apart from monetary costs (recurring and one-time expenses), an important factor to consider is time. Only two of us live together and we both have full-time jobs that can sometimes be demanding in terms of hours. We thankfully have quite a bit of flexibility in that one of us has a 9-6 job (usually ending not later than 7-8pm) and the option to WFH 1-2 days a week, while the other is an entrepreneur.

But sometimes our work does get demanding (overtime/odd hours), and we struggle with scheduling on the weekdays such as who should be home to feed Xander his lunch/dinner and bring him for walks. A good solution we've found is doggy daycare. Xander has been to daycare once, and it is a service we probably will engage more often when we have busy conflicting days. We hope that he will gain more confidence around other dogs through this too. 🐾

KEEP UP WITH THOSE IN THIS NEWSLETTER



@ollieandsometimeszane



@xanderthedefender

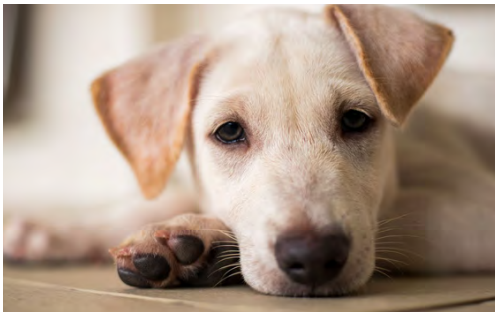
FRESH FACES AT THE SHELTER

SOME ARRIVALS WITH NEW CHAPTERS AHEAD AT MERCYLIGHT & BEYOND



EMERIE JR

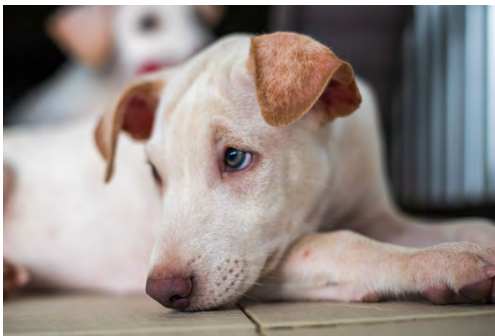
A female puppy, less than a year old and with a black and tan coat, was trapped by third parties in the Nanyang Circle area. She was noted to be fearful during her admission and physical examination at SPCA. MercyLight redeemed Emerie Jr Blessing on 5 June 2023, to spare her from the challenging process of relocation, where she would have to fend for herself in an unfamiliar environment. Since then, patient volunteers have started the careful task of introducing Emerie to life at the shelter and helping her regain trust in humans. She has shown remarkable progress and appears to be at ease among the other dogs in her group. 🐾



LILO JR & STITCH JR

Stitch Jr was saved on 12 June 2023. Four days later, on 16 June, Lilo Jr was also rescued. They were found with their mother near the TPE expressway, where it was dangerous for them to be.

The puppies were spotted following their mother across the road. However, they often separated from her because they were slow and cautious when crossing roads.



The rescuers from MercyLight acted quickly because they knew that if they didn't, the puppies could get hit by a car on the busy roads. Although several attempts to capture the mother were made, she is clever and hasn't been seen since. Both puppies are friendly and adjusting well to life at MercyLight. 🐾



ADOPTED!: HUGO

Hugo the malamute (originally named Sumo) was seized in October 2022 as a part of a smuggling operation. At only four months old, he was quick to demonstrate his friendly disposition to the officers in charge of his case, who noted an eager response to hugs and belly rubs. However, Hugo was also diagnosed with bilateral hock laxity, a condition which makes walking difficult or painful. Adopters would need to commit to his future needs such as time-consuming rehabilitation sessions and potentially costly treatment fees. After completing his quarantine period in May 2023, Hugo was ready for adoption. MercyLight reached out to our network of volunteers and current adopters to find potential adoptive families for him. Through these efforts, a compassionate family decided to adopt Hugo, providing him with a loving and caring home. 🐾

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.



Catch the next issue in October 2023!

