



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

CARING FOR

ARDON 1

THEODORE 5

ADOPTION STORIES

CASPER 2-3

GUARDIAN 6

BOWIE 7

LILO 8-9

RESCUES

COLBY 2

ASHER 2

RAINBOW 4

EMILIA 4

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

MORE ABOUT CATARACTS

Cataracts in dogs can be caused by various factors, including aging or genetic predisposition. As the lens becomes more opaque, it interferes with the passage of light into the eye, affecting the ability to see clearly.

Lens-induced uveitis: occurs when there is irritation or inflammation in the uvea (the middle layer of the eye) due to the presence of a cataract. This inflammation is typically caused by the leakage of lens proteins into the eye, leading to an immune response.



CARING FOR: ARDON'S SIGHT

Ardon, a kind-hearted rescue at MercyLight, maintained his vision with the help of the supportive network at MercyLight, consisting of attentive and patient volunteers, along with a compassionate veterinarian.

In August last year, our beloved shelter dog Ardon faced a daunting diagnosis - he was diagnosed with mature cataract and lens-induced uveitis in the right eye and an immature cataract in the left eye. It was discovered by volunteers Justin and Yeesin during their weekly volunteering session, when they noticed that his eyes were cloudy.

Following this discovery, Kelly acted swiftly to secure an appointment with eye specialist Dr. Gladys. It was deemed a highly urgent case as Ardon was already blind in his right eye, and was losing vision in his left eye. Despite her full schedule, Dr. Gladys managed to squeeze in a surgery slot for Ardon, where he underwent a procedure known as phacoemulsification and lens implant.

Treating his condition didn't just end there - plenty of follow up action and dedicated round-the-clock care was required from the MercyLight team to aid Ardon's recovery, such as the need to administer three different types of eye drops at 8 hour intervals during the initial weeks.

Post-operative complications loomed as a concern, particularly given the duration the cataracts had been present. Potential risks included glaucoma and retinal detachments. Despite these fears, Ardon's recovery exceeded expectations and he made a remarkable turnaround. Dr. Gladys reported a successful surgery, with Ardon's pre-operative inflammation in the right eye settling down post-surgery and restoration of his vision.

Ardon's story demonstrates the importance of early detection, swift action, and unwavering support from our shelter community. Thank you to everyone involved in Ardon's journey, from the volunteers who first noticed his condition to the medical professionals and dedicated caregivers who made his recovery possible. 🐾

MEET THE ADOPTERS: CASPER

HOW LOVE, PATIENCE, AND PERSEVERANCE HELPED HEDY AND KELVIN OVERCOME THE STRUGGLES OF ADOPTING A CHALLENGING DOG WITH BITING HABITS

How did you first come across Casper? Why did you decide to adopt Casper?

Hedy: After my old Shih Tzu passed away in 2021, the sight of dogs would get me very emotional. I told Kelvin that I had to have a dog.

Kelvin: However, Hedy was open to the idea, and we visited several pet shops to interact with different puppies. Despite our initial interest, we decided against purchasing any of them. While we had initially planned to adopt another dog, on the day of the pick-up, we were asked if we could foster the dog for a year instead. Concerned that we might become too attached to the dog within a year, we opted not to commit to fostering.

Hedy: I was on Facebook one day, and saw a post about Casper that really touched me. I decided to reach out to MercyLight to enquire about the possibility of adopting him.

Run us through your decision making process?

Kelvin: Kelly had mentioned that he had been passed around 4 or 5 times before and had bitten his previous fosterers. With five years of ingrained bad habits, correcting them would require considerable time and patience. Knowing he was a very insecure and unpredictable dog, we lacked confidence that we were the right fit. However, we decided to give it a try anyway



Casper at home with Kelvin and Hedy

How was the adoption process like for you?

Hedy and Kelvin: Kelly got back to us quite quickly, a day or so after our initial email. She mentioned that Casper had bitten his fosterer, and it was severe enough to require stitches. She also mentioned that it would not be good for Casper to go to the MercyLight shelter, as the shelter was full of Singapore Specials.

Kelly assessed our background and household, determining it was a good match since we were not first-time owners, and our home wasn't crowded with too many people or children. After visiting our place to ensure Casper would have a proper place to eat and sleep, Kelly expedited the adoption process. Casper joined our home within a week of our first contact, and Kelly suggested a trial period of about a month

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SPOTLIGHT ON: NEW RESCUES

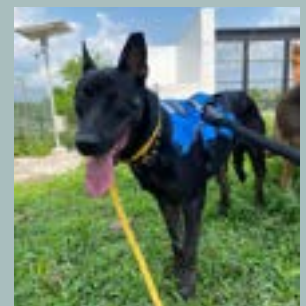


COLBY

The efforts of independent rescuers ensured that Colby, a sweet four-year-old dog with a coffee-brown coat and white fur behind his ears, was able to get a second chance at MercyLight. He has a gentle personality, and is largely easy-going. Colby is afraid of thunderstorms and will hide under structures like the sink or the doghouse, but has so far been commendably brave in confronting his fear. With a little more encouragement and support, Colby will definitely blossom into the role of a perfect household dog in an environment where he feels safe and sheltered.

ASHER

At less than a year old, Asher fell under NParks' Trap-Neuter-Rehome/Release-Manage (TNRM) program and was placed under observation. In the unfamiliar setting of the SPCA, Asher experienced anxiety and struggled to eat. His slow adjustment influenced the decision to label him 'unrehomeable,' leading to his release once vaccinations were completed. Recognising the slim chances of a young puppy adapting to another foreign and unpredictable environment, MercyLight, with the assistance of a compassionate feeder, stepped in to redeem Asher. With the support of friends and dedicated volunteers, Asher adapted well, now happily eating among his peers and seeking a loving forever home.



CONTINUED: CASPER

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How was his behaviour when he first got here?

Kelvin: Casper bit Hedy the very first night he arrived at our place, when she was trying to clean his paws with a wet tissue. On the second night, after a stressful day that included his sterilisation, I was also bitten while trying to take his leash off. Casper's bite was so forceful that it even dented my wedding band.

Hedy: Subsequently, Casper bit us several more times, including when we tried to stop him from eating his vomit. This bite was also quite serious, as the puncture wound was deep enough that we could see the fat layer below the skin. Kelvin also experienced a bite while stroking Casper.

Additionally, we anticipated that having a dog would encourage us to be more active. However, Casper showed a strong aversion to walking. Upon his arrival, we noticed his paws were raw and bleeding, likely a result of his past confinement in a cage.

Casper's behavior was quite unpredictable, as he would bite us in seemingly innocuous situations, even while lying down and appearing relaxed.

Did you ever think about rehoming him, given the multiple biting incidents? What made you decide to push through with him?

Hedy and Kelvin: Yes, we definitely did. Even two weeks into fostering Casper, he continued to display biting behavior, making us question if we were the right fit for him. We gave it a lot of thought, and decided to continue trying. We realized it wasn't his fault that he had developed these habits, and he was already traumatised from being passed from home to home. Seeking strength from God, we turned to Him for guidance on how to show Casper love. Having God to turn to really helped us.

We also told Casper everyday that he belonged here and that we loved him. Over time, we could see a transformation – his eyes softened, and he started to feel like a true part of our family.

**BE A BLESSING,
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!** 

The government will give a dollar-for-dollar match for donations via:

- > Giving.sg search for "Be a Blessing, Make a Difference"
- > Give.asia
- > PayNow UEN 201502278Z

The word "Blessing" must be entered into the Reference/Comment box to be eligible for the government matching.

Until 31 March 2024

So how did you resolve his behavioural issues?

Hedy and Kelvin: We spoke to Kelly, who encouraged us to engage a trainer to help train him. Our trainer, Ethan, made significant strides, despite being bitten by Casper initially. We did several exercises, such as desensitising him to putting on and taking off the slip lead.


The trainer emphasised that it was important for us to be very consistent in dealing with him, like setting our house rules and boundaries, doing exercises to get him to wait for his food etc.

How is Casper now?

Hedy and Kelvin: He is no longer as aggressive, and is a lot more confident and relaxed. He is still not confident enough to interact comfortably with other dogs, and will get nervous and run away when other dogs approach him. He was probably not well socialised when he was younger. He walks a lot better now as well, and is very excited when we say the magic words "gai gai" and "let's go". We have established a very consistent routine for him, where we bring him for a walk about 3 times a day. There is one day a week where Casper stays alone at home the entire day, but thankfully he doesn't have any separation anxiety. We are the ones with the separation anxiety, and constantly monitor him through the CCTV.

Casper still has food aggression and can be stubborn. However, he is very affectionate with us now, gets on our bed and demands belly rubs, and kisses us everyday. He is much more comfortable with us now.

Do you have any advice for others who are going through the same thing with a challenging dog?

Hedy and Kelvin: Show them more love, it is not their fault! Patience and perseverance are very important through the bad times. Having a safe and stable environment is also very important, on top of a consistent routine, setting consistent boundaries and disciplining to correct bad behaviour. 

BELOW: Casper on adventures with his family



A TALE OF RESCUE AND NEW BEGINNINGS

RAINBOW'S RESCUE BRINGS ABOUT A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR HER PUPS

The rescue of Rainbow Blessing unfolded when the compassionate stray dog feeding team at MercyLight noticed her. Realising that she was expecting puppies, the team committed to rescuing her. They worked tirelessly, setting traps day and night to ensure her safety and well-being. On 7 September 2023, their efforts bore fruit as Rainbow Blessing was successfully rescued. Subsequently, on 20 September 2023, Rainbow gave birth to 7 charming puppies in the comfort of the shelter.

A new beginning began for Rainbow Blessing and her precious pups, consisting of four girls and three boys. The unsung heroes in this story are the dedicated members of the MercyLight stray feeding team. Their time, effort, and unwavering commitment played a crucial role in ensuring the success of Rainbow Blessing's rescue. Their constant vigilance, changing trap baits, and round-the-clock care were instrumental in providing Rainbow Blessing and her puppies a chance for a safer life. 🐾



Rainbow Mummy & her puppies

EMILIA'S TRIUMPH: A TALE OF RESILIENCE AND RESCUE

The mission to save Emilia kicked off on 5 December 2023, near Tampines Link. This brave mother dog proved challenging to catch, but after weeks of persistent efforts, success came after midnight. Emilia's rescue took an unforeseen twist when it was discovered that she had recently given birth.

The MercyLight stray feeding team and Dayna played pivotal roles in Emilia's rescue. Dayna, who initially spotted Emilia, was instrumental in the process. This rescue went beyond capturing a dog; it aimed to save the mother of numerous puppies – Lilo (now adopted) as well as Stitch, Ebba, Enzo and Espirit (waiting for a loving home). The team's dedication ensured the success of this challenging mission.

The immediate challenge became locating her newborn puppies. Kelly urgently reached out to the MercyLight feeding team, sparking a response from dedicated feeder Lechelle, Dayna (a volunteer session leader at MercyLight) and her husband as well as 2 other independent stray feeders (Anthony and Bernard). Despite the late hour, they united to search for the newborns. In the end, it was Anthony and Bernard who bravely ventured deep into the forest. Their unwavering efforts paid off when, 3 hours later at 3:30 am, the cries of a newborn puppy led them to the concealed litter. This touching moment marked the triumphant conclusion of Emilia's rescue, ensuring her and her puppies' transition from the wilderness to the comfort of a caring animal shelter, and ultimately to a loving home. 🐾



Emilia & her puppies (from left to right) Ebba, Enzo and Espirit

CARING FOR: THEODORE

THE CARE, PATIENCE AND EXPERIENCE OF FOSTERERS HELP THEODORE DEVELOP, LEARN AND BUILD STRENGTH WHILE HE AWAITS AN IMPORTANT SURGERY

In the heart of Audrey and Lloyd's home, Theodore sprawls gracefully on their balcony. His eyes, gentle and focused, fixate on a floor fan nearby. When asked to describe their foster dog, Mr. Lloyd summed him up with the statement, "Theodore is a 'super dog.'" Upon hearing his name, Theodore's ears perked up and a cheeky grin painted his face while he looked over to listen in on our conversation about him.

Audrey and Lloyd, retirees who have lived between New Zealand, Australia and Singapore, discovered a void in their lives without a furry companion. Before fostering Theodore, they had had over 9 dogs, including a Great Pyrenees, German Shepherd, Husky and a Singapore Special. Theodore's presence has filled that void. Theodore's tale unfolds as one of unmet commitments from previous owners who, surrendered him due to their inability to invest time and money into his care.

Theodore has severe hip dysplasia and "bilateral accessory carpal bone subluxation" (see sidebar) conditions often present in the Malamute breed. Despite these adversities, Theodore exudes resilience and a docile demeanour.

Under Audrey and Lloyd's care, he is carefully walked, is undergoing rehabilitation, and has become stronger. Under the efforts of MercyLight, Theodore is undergoing crowdsourced treatments that will gradually enhance his well-being. Described by Audrey and Lloyd as very intelligent, he has no destructive behaviour (i.e. chewing, gnawing or biting) and although he can be particular with his food (he often needs coaxing), he brings joy through his calm and gentle nature. He is great with humans of all ages due to his very docile nature.



A SAFE SPACE: Fosterers like Audrey and Lloyd are blessings to dogs like Theodore who need an environment where they can learn and grow stronger while undergoing rehabilitation and awaiting both surgery and future adopters.

Theodore's lack of socialization with other dogs in his formative months means he is very eager to play when he sees other dogs. Due to his hip condition, potential adopters must be unwaveringly committed to his ongoing care, including obedience training and carefully monitor social interactions to ensure this "super dog" continues to shine. 🐾



Theodore's scans (above) compared to a normal scan (below). The yellow arrows show the dislocation of the small bones.

WHAT IS BILATERAL ACCESSORY CARPAL BONE SUBLUXATION?

A condition where the accessory carpal bones (small bones near the carpal joint, which is equivalent to the human wrist) in both front limbs partially dislocate or move out of their normal position. The carpal bones are located in the wrist area of the front limbs. "Bilateral" indicates that this subluxation occurs in both limbs.

Subluxation means a partial dislocation or displacement of these bones, indicating they have moved out of their usual alignment but not entirely dislocated. This condition can cause pain, lameness and discomfort in affected animals. Veterinary evaluation and appropriate treatment are typically necessary to address bilateral accessory carpal bone subluxation and alleviate any associated issues.

Crowdsourcing for Theodore's surgery continues. Now is a great time to give; even small amounts are mighty as there is a dollar-to-dollar match campaign ongoing (see Page 3 for full details).

MEET THE ADOPTERS: GUARDIAN

A TOUCHING STORY OF GUARDIAN'S FULL CIRCLE RETURN TO ADOPTER ASHLEY

Could you share a little bit on Guardian's background, as well as the circumstances of his first adoption?

My grandfather adopted Guardian and Psalmus in 2014, 10 years ago. One fateful night, Guardian ran out of the house, was knocked down by a car, and fractured his front right leg. We brought him to a vet to check him out, but my grandfather made the decision to not go ahead with the necessary surgery to help with the fracture. I think the older generation had a very different mentality and attitude towards dogs. They don't treat dogs like how we do today.

At that point in time, I was a student, and unfortunately did not have the means to afford surgery for Guardian. I informed Kelly, and she decided to take back both Guardian and Psalmus after the incident.

Why did you decide to adopt Guardian after all this time? What factors did you consider?

I had a lot of regrets over the past 10 years about how the first adoption went. I regretted that I did not have the means to do more. For the last 10 years, Guardian and Psalmus were living with their fosterer Mary. I had been periodically checking the MercyLight website and social media to get updates on them to see if they had been adopted.

I had thought about adopting both Guardian and Psalmus once I had the means to do so, but I already have 2 other dogs, Dallas and Money, and I thought 4 dogs may be a little too much to handle. I did not want to adopt only either Guardian or Psalmus, and thought if I took them back, it would have to be the both of them.

I noticed sometime last year in March or April that Psalmus was finally adopted, but Guardian was still not adopted yet. I felt very bad for Guardian that he was still not adopted yet and wanted to change that. I was concerned about whether I could handle 3 dogs, but I thought about it, and believed that I could do it. Although I had that thought in my mind, I had no idea how to approach Kelly, after the circumstances of our last interaction.

How did you go about the adoption this time round?

I decided to approach things one step at a time and so I contacted Kelly to sponsor Guardian's daily meals as a start, to be on the same gently cooked meal plan as Dallas and Money.

We were working on gaining back trust from Kelly and Mary, given the circumstances of Guardian's first adoption. I knew that I could do it, but I needed to convince Kelly and Mary that I could do it. Mary had been fostering Guardian for all these years, and had a very strong bond with him, so I knew it was going to be difficult to gain her trust.

After about 2-3 months of sponsoring his meals, Kelly told us that we could bring Guardian out for outings if we wanted to. I was very happy and grateful that they trusted us enough to let us bring him out. Although Guardian may not have recognised me, he was already very affectionate the first time we met him at Mary's place.

From April to September 2023, I consistently brought Guardian out for an outing every Sunday, about 3-4 hours each time. In September, we started having Guardian on the weekends - I would pick him up every Friday night after work.



A decade ago, as a student, Ashley was unable to provide the necessary care for Guardian and Psalmus, when her family decided to part with them after an accident. However, years later, fueled by determination, persistence and an enduring bond, Ashley opened her home and heart and welcomed Guardian into her pack.

Things were going well, so we started the 3 week home trial in late November. My immediate family also fell in love with Guardian very early on! All in all, I am very thankful to Kelly and Mary for trusting me throughout this whole process.

How did you introduce Guardian to Dallas and Money?

We chose to introduce Guardian to Dallas and Money on neutral ground, as Money can be very alpha and protective of the family. We weren't as worried about Dallas. We had them meet at the field outside for a couple of times before we brought Guardian home.

I was extremely cautious, and did not want anything to go wrong; but Guardian was very smart. He did all the right things, and was very respectful of Money's and Dallas' spaces. He didn't touch their toys or drink their water. We also made sure that there was always somebody at home with them and didn't leave the three of them alone. If there was no one at home, we would keep Guardian in a separate room from Dallas and Money for safety.

Guardian has been getting along well with both of them, although he is a little more mischievous now and likes to go disturb them more.

How has Guardian been settling in? Any changes in his behaviour or demeanour?

He is a lot more confident, playful, and cheeky now than he was initially. He is settling in well and is very comfortable here.

Do you have advice for others considering adoption?

Adopting a dog is a lifetime commitment, and you need to think about it very carefully. I knew that if I adopted a dog, I would want to give them the best, in terms of their lifestyle and the food they eat.

I think the personality of the dog is also very important, especially if you have other dogs. Socialising the dog and having them be connected to old friends and siblings is also very important. We will be having a gathering with Guardian's siblings in March. 🐾

MEET THE ADOPTERS: BOWIE (PREVIOUSLY KAISHIN)

FROM FOSTERERS TO A FOREVER FAMILY, BOWIE FINDS HIS HOME

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

Ann: During my time volunteering at Mercylight, I had the opportunity to interact with Malia's litter of puppies. Among them was Bowie, who I wasn't drawn to initially because of his playful and sometimes boisterous behavior, such as playfully biting my butt.

Following the passing of one of our family dogs, we felt a shift in our home dynamic with just one dog remaining. We did not want Scout to feel lonely, which is why we started considering adding another dog to our family. Scout tends to be dominant and selective with canine companions, and Bowie stood out as a suitable choice because Scout seemed to accept him well, treating him as a younger brother and offering gentle corrections when needed. It's heartwarming to see how they can interact with each other despite their distinct and different personalities.

Can you run us through your decision making process when you decided to adopt Bowie? What factors did you consider?

Ann: At the time, we were in the process of moving to our new home and undergoing renovations - we intentionally designed the layout to accommodate the needs of two dogs. During the adoption process, we also recognized the need to retrain Scout and correct some of his quirks and bad habits, such as pulling on the leash while walking.

KL: Before introducing a second dog into the family dynamic, it was essential to understand Scout's temperament and ensure that he is well-trained so that he can set a good example for Bowie, and smoothen out the integration process for Bowie. It involved revisiting and reinforcing the training processes that we went through several years ago with Scout, and implementing the same techniques for Bowie to establish a solid foundation for his behaviour and better integrate him into the household.

What was the adoption process like for you?

Ann: We initially fostered Bowie for about a year before making the decision to officially adopt him. Kelly was very thoughtful and detailed, and ensured that we were well-informed about the challenges associated with Bowie, such as his tendencies to pull and bark excessively during walks. She provided a lot of useful tips to deal with his reactive behaviour.

One aspect we truly appreciate about Mercylight is the strong sense of community it fosters amongst its adopters. We have regular conversations and meetups with Bowie's siblings as well as other adopted dogs, such as Kara, Champ and Yori. Through our regular interactions, we can exchange insights and tips, and gain valuable knowledge and support. We are also working with another Mercylight volunteer, Kim, for regular training sessions with Bowie. Given that she already knew him beforehand, she can provide a lot of useful tips and insights on managing his behaviour.

KL: Kelly's pre-adoption email was extremely thorough and useful, serving as a comprehensive checklist of important things to note during the initial process of getting Bowie settled in. Kelly also regularly checks in with us to assess Bowie's progress and provide tips, which has been invaluable.



Ann and Kuan Liang with Scout, a 10 year old Singapore Special, adopted at 3 years old, and Bowie, who just turned 2 years old.

How has Bowie been settling into your family?

Ann: Bowie is incredibly sweet and affectionate, bringing joy to our lives in countless ways. He loves to cuddle with us on the sofa and stick closely to us. One of the highlights of our day is when he excitedly rushes into the bedroom and hops onto the bed when it's bedtime. We initially built a sliding door in the living room to segregate him from the main door so he doesn't get too excited by people walking by - but he is super clever and figured out how to open the door with his nose.

KL: Bowie has a unique way of greeting us that is very different from Scout. When we return home, he expresses his excitement by whining a lot and bringing us his favourite toys. I also enjoy taking Bowie on long walks or runs around the neighbourhood - his endurance and stamina definitely needs work but he's slowly improving on it. It's nice to see how the dogs can learn from each other and develop positive habits after living together. We noticed that Scout has been eating better with Bowie around, likely because Bowie is such a good eater. Scout has taken on the role as an older brother, teaching Bowie how to respect personal space such as their individual eating corners.

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

Ann: Integrating a dog into your household requires a considerable amount of patience. It's essential to set aside dedicated time and effort to ensure a smooth transition, which means more time at home and postponing overseas trips until he has fully settled in. We've also learnt to celebrate the small wins, such as successfully transitioning Bowie to a slip lead to improve his walking behaviour. Lastly, adopt don't shop! Adopting is such a meaningful and rewarding experience, every shelter dog deserves a loving home.

KL: It's important to focus on the needs of the dog over our own desires. This may require going against our natural instincts - for example, we had to find a balance in terms of how much attention to give Bowie so that we could use attention as a reward and reinforcement for good behaviour. It's also necessary to dog-proof the house and make adjustments to ensure their safety, such as keeping potential hazards out of their reach. For instance, we had to install grids on our glass door to prevent Bowie from running into it.

Place training has been particularly helpful for us, and is something that we are currently working on with both Bowie and Scout. The concept is to establish their placemats as a designated area to relax and be calm, and they are encouraged to stay on the placemat using treats and positive reinforcement until a command is given to move. Place training can manage their excitement when guests visit, or when there are parcel deliveries. 🐾

MEET THE ADOPTERS: LILO ON MAKING DECISIONS AS A FAMILY

How did the idea of bringing a canine companion into your family first arise?

It all started with the kids, Oliver (8) and Colette (10), expressing a desire for a hamster. As parents, we were navigating this journey with them. However, after some research, we discovered the nocturnal nature of hamsters, prompting us to reconsider. We then shifted our focus to the idea of adopting a guinea pig. It was during our exploration of the guinea pig option that something interesting happened. Lydia coincidentally stumbled upon a captivating video featuring puppy siblings Lilo & Stitch on Instagram. This unexpected find added a new dimension to our considerations and led us to initiate contact with MercyLight through an email. And that's how our transformative journey with Lilo began.

What motivated your family to choose adoption over buying a dog?

Our decision to adopt was rooted in a deep awareness of the challenges faced by abandoned animals. Regular exposure to videos portraying the struggles of dogs in shelters also left a lasting impact on us. The sheer number of dogs without homes struck a chord, reinforcing our commitment to adoption. We firmly decided against contributing to the demand for purchased pets, opting instead to provide a home for a dog in need.

How was the adoption process for your family?

The adoption process was a deliberate and extended journey for us. After reaching out to MercyLight, Lydia was informed that it would involve 5-7 visits to the shelter. While the length might seem daunting, we valued the thoroughness of this approach. Each visit and staycation during the extended timeline provided us with crucial insights into potential challenges, allowing us to address issues gradually. The time spent apart from Lilo also became a poignant reminder of our growing attachment. Every time we returned home without Lilo, our longing for her company became more pronounced, and we often found ourselves adjusting our schedule to minimize the time until our next reunion with Lilo. This emotional journey further strengthened our commitment to making Lilo an integral part of our lives.

What factors did you consider when choosing a canine companion for your family, especially with your children in mind?

When selecting a dog, we were mindful of the energy level, aiming for a balanced disposition suitable for family life. We sought to avoid any potential issues like snapping, particularly around the kids. Kelly's guidance played a crucial role in this process. Through multiple visits, she provided insights that helped us understand Lilo's behavior, contributing to our decision to adopt her. It was a thoughtful consideration of traits to ensure a harmonious match with our family dynamics.

How has Lilo's presence influenced your family dynamics since she joined your family?

Lilo's arrival prompted a conscious reshaping of our family dynamics. In December, we made the decision to postpone a planned trip, underscoring our dedication to Lilo's integration into our lives. Recognizing the importance of acclimating her to being alone, we chose to forgo outings as well, prioritizing the establishment of a strong bond and addressing any potential separation anxiety.



Lilo's family (from left to right): Lydia, Colette, Wilson and Oliver

This intentional shift in our lifestyle has had several positive repercussions. Our daily step count has seen a notable boost, thanks to regular walks around the neighborhood and leisurely Sunday visits to parks—all facilitated by Lilo's need for exercise and outdoor activity. The anticipation of returning home to Lilo's cheerful welcome has also become a cherished highlight for the kids, fostering a deeper sense of joy and connection within the family. Beyond serving as a pet, Lilo has seamlessly woven herself into the fabric of our routines, taking on roles that extend beyond the conventional. She has assumed the role of the family's new alarm clock, bringing delight to the kids by joyously jumping onto their beds and showering them with morning licks and kisses each morning. Her attentiveness extends to our outings, where she keeps a vigilant eye on the kids, waiting patiently outside stores or observing them from a distance. This affectionate behavior further underscores the deep emotional bond that has flourished between us and Lilo.

How has having Lilo as part of your family become a teaching ground for instilling values in your children, especially in terms of responsibility and respect?

The experience of having Lilo has been a profound journey in instilling essential values in our children. Daily routines centered around Lilo have emerged as invaluable lessons in responsibility. Each family member, including the kids, actively participates in these routines, recognizing the importance of their individual roles in caring for Lilo. This shared responsibility not only fosters a sense of duty but also instills the understanding that every family member contributes significantly to ensuring Lilo's well-being. It's a tangible and hands-on way for our children to learn about the importance of caring for another living being.

Moreover, the commitment to Lilo's safety has become a shared responsibility, leading to a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and animals. The children have learned to watch out for Lilo, ensuring she's not in harm's way, which has, in turn, translated into a newfound respect for animals. Guided by Lydia, the children approach dogs in the neighborhood with respect, allowing them to smell their hands and adopting a slow and cautious interaction approach. This conscious effort to avoid touching anything that moves recklessly signifies their enhanced understanding and respect for the boundaries and comfort of animals.

[continued on Page 9]

MEET THE ADOPTERS: LILO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

How has Lilo's journey been marked by challenges and triumphant transformations, particularly considering her initial timid disposition?

Every day with Lilo has been a dynamic journey filled with growth and adaptation for our family. The initial surprise of encountering a timid and fearful Lilo posed a unique challenge. Her timidity, more pronounced in a home than anticipated, led to instances where she would bark at other dogs in the neighbourhood out of fear. Concerned about her adjustment during the homestay, we frequently reached out to Kelly at MercyLight for guidance.

Over the span of two months, we witnessed a remarkable evolution in Lilo's demeanor. She transcended her initial timidity, becoming increasingly curious and forming friendships with dogs in the neighborhood. This transformative process not only showcased Lilo's resilience but also emphasized the crucial role played by our family in fostering her newfound confidence.

During the annual MercyLight walk that we participated in, a crucial moment unfolded as Lilo continuously barked, causing a sense of discomfort within our family. Doubts surfaced—questions about whether we were doing something wrong or if we could truly care for Lilo if she continued to struggle. Kelly's unwavering support became a guiding light during this challenging period. Her encouragement and assurance propelled us forward, reinforcing our commitment to Lilo's well-being.

The subsequent positive shifts, observed for example during our recent outing to Wag n Wild, where Lilo displayed remarkable composure and even engaged in novel activities like sliding down a slide, attested to the resilient spirit within her. Obedience training also played a crucial role in Lilo's journey, unraveling lessons that extended beyond basic commands. This comprehensive approach to Lilo's well-being underscores the commitment and responsibility inherent in pet ownership.

How did your family prepare for the staycation and homestay process that played a pivotal role in solidifying your bond with Lilo?

As we geared up for the staycation and homestay, we received invaluable guidance from Kelly, which we found crucial in preparing for this significant step. Recognising the importance of meticulous preparation, we engaged in a family discussion around our dining table, using a comprehensive email from Kelly as a guide. This email was filled with pointers and considerations, prompting us to deliberate on essential aspects such as designated walkers for Lilo's morning, afternoon and evening strolls, ensuring the safety of both our kids and our furry friend.

Reflecting on the adoption process, how did you perceive the detailed emails and guidelines provided by MercyLight?

The adoption process has some rigorous elements, especially the detailed emails and questions that we discussed as family. We now acknowledge that every element stems from a place of profound love. Rather than viewing these guidelines as mere tasks, we encourage others to perceive them as gestures of love from those who genuinely care about the well-being and future of the dogs. The commitment showcased by MercyLight and Kelly goes beyond facilitating adoptions; it embodies love, ensuring the establishment of lifelong bonds that flourish in a nurturing environment. 🐾



Colette and Oliver's day includes looking after Lilo's well-being and involving her in their daily routines.

“ The experience of having Lilo has been a profound journey in instilling essential values in our children. Daily routines centered around Lilo have emerged as invaluable lessons in responsibility. Each family member, including the kids, actively participates in these routines. ”

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 April 2024!

