



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SIXTEENTH EDITION [QUARTER 1 2025]

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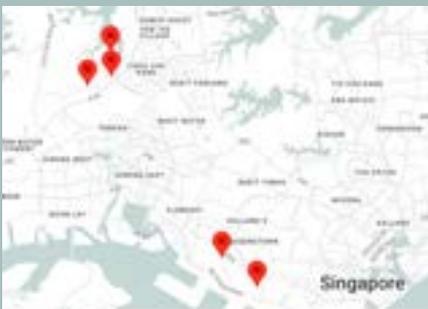
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Our mission is to improve the quality of lives of stray dogs through rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing; to increase public awareness and acceptance of stray dogs as companion animals and that they deserve to be treated with compassion and kindness.



STRAY, ABANDONED, LOST?

One year ago Cookie was seen in multiple areas wandering and also confined in heat and finally injured and sick. Animals like Cookie often fall through the cracks with lack of follow-ups by authorities to encourage and educate owners and caretakers.



CAUGHT BETWEEN RESCUE AND REGULATIONS

SEEN ROAMING, INJURED AND THEN CONFINED - VOLUNTEERS WORK TO HELP COOKIE HAVE A HEALTHIER, SAFER AND MORE HOPEFUL FUTURE

For months, Cookie had been spotted roaming different locations—from Hort Park to Kent Ridge, and later, dangerously crossing the main roads of Sungei Tengah. His presence raised both concern and confusion. Was he a stray? Did he have an owner? Why was he constantly on the move? Reports of his condition varied—some said he was friendly but skittish, while others noted he had visible wounds. What was clear was that Cookie was in distress, and something needed to be done.

A Desperate Rescue Attempt

On 4 September 2024, a volunteer driving past Chengtai Nursery spotted a dog roaming inside. A young boy was seen chasing after him, and the nursery staff seemed eager to remove him. Cookie was visibly injured—his face was covered in wounds, one of his eyes was swollen and oozing pus, and there was a deep laceration on his front leg. His testicles appeared abnormally swollen, raising concerns about an underlying medical condition.

Fearing for his safety, the volunteer attempted to coax him into a carrier, but Cookie was too nervous to enter. The nursery staff were asked to let him stay within their premises rather than chase him out onto the busy road. Later that evening, another volunteer returned and successfully secured Cookie, who by then looked even worse than before. The first hurdle was over, but his fight for safety was just beginning.

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HIDDEN STRUGGLES OF STRAYS IN SINGAPORE

Cookie's journey highlights a troubling reality—many stray and abandoned dogs fall into a cycle of rescue and return, often with little legal recourse to protect them. While Singapore has regulations against animal cruelty, proving neglect is a challenge. Without sustained documentation of mistreatment, authorities have limited power to intervene.

CONTINUED: COOKIE

COOKIE'S STORY CAPTURES ONE OF MANY NARRATIVES IMPACTED BY THE CHALLENGING REALITY OF GREY AREAS IN ANIMAL WELFARE

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The next morning, Cookie was rushed to the vet. His bloodwork revealed low platelets, high white blood cell count, and possible liver issues—signs of prolonged suffering. His wounds were treated, and he was prescribed antibiotics and daily dressings. His swollen testicles raised concerns about Transmissible Venereal Tumor (TVT), a common but treatable condition.

His medical bill totaled SGD 696.51. Despite everything, Cookie remained calm, showing he simply needed safety and care.

Cookie's Troubled Past

Volunteers uncovered a troubling pattern:

- Feb 2024: Spotted between Hort Park and Kent Ridge, described as either skittish or aggressive. A "friend of the owner" eventually claimed him.
- Apr 2024: Found caged and chained in poor conditions at a fish farm, later seen panting heavily in the afternoon heat.
- May 2024: Seen crossing Sungei Tengah's main roads at night, nearly hit by a vehicle.
- Sep 2024: Found injured at Chengtai Nursery, alone for two days before rescue.

Each time Cookie was secured, he somehow ended up back in danger.

The Challenges of Proving Neglect

Despite Cookie's history of distress, proving neglect remained difficult. Authorities need sustained, undeniable evidence, which is nearly impossible in cases like his. By the time proof is gathered, it's often too late.

The Uncertain Future

Cookie has been returned to his owner. Without proper oversight, his well-being is impossible to monitor. Unlike before, when volunteers could check on him, he is now hidden from view. Will he be cared for, or will he continue to suffer in silence?

The Bigger Picture: What Can Be Done?

Cookie's story highlights gaps in animal welfare enforcement. While laws exist, reluctant owners and legal loopholes limit intervention. More must be done to protect at-risk animals and ensure rescues are not undone.

Sadly, Cookie is not alone. Until stronger protections are in place, countless dogs will continue to suffer unseen. 🐾



ROAMING UNSTERILISED AND SIGNS OF NEGLECT — Cookie's journey highlights the harsh reality of stray dogs caught between rescue and regulations. Will he find safety, or remain unseen behind closed doors?

MISSED OPPORTUNITY: RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

Despite Cookie's history of distress and roaming, he was returned to his owner without sterilisation—a decision that contradicts Singapore's efforts to manage the stray population through NParks' Trap-Neuter-Release programme. Sterilisation helps prevent unwanted litters and reduces disease risks like TVT, which Cookie was suspected of having. While authorities advised the owner on sterilisation and responsible pet ownership, the lack of enforcement raises concerns about whether these measures will be followed.

KEY CHALLENGES: ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT

Lack of Oversight – Once an animal is returned to its owner, follow-ups are rare, making it difficult to ensure proper care.

Burden of Proof – Neglect cases require undeniable evidence over time, making intervention nearly impossible in many cases.

Regulatory Gaps – While stray feeders and volunteers work tirelessly to help, their efforts can be undone when legal loopholes allow animals to return to unsafe environments.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Report cases of suspected neglect with clear documentation (photos, videos, timestamps).

Support rescue organizations through donations or volunteer work.

Advocate for stronger laws and enforcement to better protect at-risk animals.

Cookie's story is one of many. Until regulations strengthen and enforcement improves, countless dogs will remain caught between rescue efforts and regulatory limitations.

MEET THE ADOPTERS: ABBY

ABBY'S NEW CHAPTER: A STORY OF LOVE, PATIENCE AND WINDY DAY WALKS

For Adele and Marcus, bringing a dog into their home was always part of the plan. Animal lovers at heart, both had grown up with beloved family dogs—Adele with Snowy, a Singapore Special (SS), and Marcus with Ron, a Maltese, and another Abby, a Chihuahua. They knew that once they had settled into their new home, it would only be a matter of time before they welcomed another four-legged companion.

Their journey to adoption began with a simple idea: to give a Singapore Special a second chance. Unlike the pedigrees often seen in pet stores, SSs are often overlooked despite their intelligence, loyalty and gentle nature. Having grown up with Snowy, Adele knew just how wonderful these dogs could be. More importantly, she understood that by opening their home to a rescue, they would free up shelter resources for another dog in need. Their search led them to MercyLight, a shelter recommended by Marcus' brother, who had been a regular volunteer. They were drawn to MercyLight's approach — free-roaming dogs, a carefully curated adoption process and a deep commitment to finding the right match.

At first, the dog that caught their attention wasn't Abby, but Stitch—who reminded them of Snowy. But as they spent more time at the shelter, they noticed a quiet, unassuming presence at the back of the pack. While other dogs jostled eagerly for treats, Abby stood patiently, her big, hopeful eyes giving away how much she wanted one too. She had a funny little habit of sniffing and "restyling" long hair — a quirk that Adele found utterly endearing. It wasn't love at first sight. But slowly and steadily, Abby found her way into their hearts.

Bringing Abby Home

When they finally brought Abby home, the reality of adoption set in. "She was wary and withdrawn," they recalled. "Mostly lying down in a corner."

It was a stark contrast to her shelter days, where she had been surrounded by familiar dogs and caretakers. Now, in a brand-new environment, she seemed unsure of her place. Meals were a particular challenge. At the shelter, she had eagerly eaten alongside the other dogs. At home, she barely touched her food. Hand-feeding became a routine, with countless hours spent encouraging her to eat, experimenting with different treats and ingredients. Through it all, doubt crept in. "There were times we considered giving up".



TUNING INTO ONE ANOTHER - Adele and Marcus committed to their promise to Abby, and with time, they saw little signs of Abby building confidence and settling. Now she is a prominent member of the family!

"We questioned whether we were actually making her life better. Was she happier in the shelter?"

But deep down, they knew they couldn't bring her back. They had made a promise—to give her the time and space she needed, no matter how long it took.

Little Steps, Big Changes

Gradually, Abby started to settle in. The first signs were subtle—a willingness to explore beyond her corner, a newfound preference for soft mats over hard floors. She discovered the joy of windy day walks, lifting her nose high as if to capture all the scents in the breeze. She formed friendships — an on-again, off-again romance with Chuck, a new suitor in Wolfi, and a pack of friendly neighborhood dogs. Her confidence grew.

"She skips now when we start our walks," they say, laughing. "The first time we saw her do that, we knew she was happy." Even on ordinary days, Abby finds her own magic. A typical day revolves around her — adjusted mealtimes, carefully planned weekend activities and scheduled walks to catch up with her doggy friends. At home, she's a quiet but comforting presence, sometimes watching curiously as her humans work from home, other times simply enjoying the space she now knows as her own.

A Forever Home

Looking back, they realize that Abby's journey was never about meeting expectations or milestones. It was about giving her a safe place to be herself — whether that meant trotting confidently through the streets or taking things one small step at a time.

If Abby could talk, what would she say? "Just keep trotting, just keep trotting, and everything will be okay." And for Adele and Marcus, that's more than enough. 🐾

NEW RESCUE: LAYLA

FROM CONFINEMENT TO A NEW BEGINNING: A GENTLE SPIRIT, READY FOR LOVE

Layla, whose name means "black beauty," has a story of resilience and quiet strength. For years, she lived in isolation, locked up in a cage at a nursery farm where she had been since she was a puppy. She was only let out once a day for a short walk before being confined again. Though the cage had a roof and side cover, it provided little protection from the scorching heat or relentless thunderstorms. The small, enclosed space offered no comfort, no companionship — just years of solitude.

But Layla's story didn't end there. Thankfully, her former owners were willing to let her go, giving her the chance to finally experience the life she had been deprived of for so long. Despite spending most of her life in isolation, Layla amazed everyone with how seamlessly she adapted to her new environment. Within days of arriving at MercyLight, she integrated effortlessly into the pack. She played joyfully with puppies, followed the older dogs with quiet respect and walked beautifully on a leash as though she had always known freedom.

Even more astonishing was her gentle and trusting nature. Layla, who had never known true human companionship, was completely at ease with volunteers, accepting their affection without hesitation. She was calm, affectionate and exuded a quiet grace that made her instantly lovable.

Now, Layla is ready for a new chapter—a life where she is no longer confined, where she is loved and cherished as she deserves. She has already shown that she is resilient, adaptable and full of love. All she needs now is a forever home where she can continue to blossom, making up for lost time with a family who will never let her feel alone again. 🐾



MERCYLIGHT ANNUAL CHRISTMAS WALK 2024

On December 17, MercyLight's Annual Christmas Walk lit up Orchard Road with shelter dogs, volunteers and adopters celebrating the season together. Under the dazzling lights, our furry friends—decked out in festive gear—brought smiles to passersby as they strolled through Singapore's most iconic holiday spots.

The Christmas Walk Route

7:15 PM - Meet-up

7:30 PM - Walk begins

7:40 PM - Group Photo #1 @ Forum

7:45 PM - Walk to Wheelock & ION for Group Photo #2

8:10 PM - Group Photo #3 at Takashimaya, ending at Design Orchard Rooftop

Along the way, adopters shared heartwarming stories, and shelter dogs soaked in the love of the community. Thank you to everyone who joined—until next year, keep spreading kindness, just like our four-legged friends do every day! 🐾



MEET THE ADOPTERS: ENZO

PATIENCE BROUGHT OUT A PLAYFUL, LOVING AND GRATEFUL FAMILY MEMBER

Why did you decide to adopt a Singapore Special?

Our beloved 10-year-old French Bulldog, Loki, passed away in June 2023, leaving us heartbroken. Despite the pain, we always knew we wanted to open our home to another dog. While mourning for our dog, we joined a stray feeding session and developed a soft spot for Singapore Specials, as we find them absolutely adorable—not in the typical, conventional sense of what people often consider "cute" but in a loyal, charming and unique way.

From that point on, we began attending adoption drives and browsing through the social media pages of various shelters. After reviewing countless profiles, we were certain that we wanted to adopt a Singapore Special.

Why did you choose to adopt from Mercylight?

We began exploring the social media pages of various shelters and reaching out to friends who have adopted Singapore Specials to learn about their experiences. We eventually spent more time browsing Mercylight's website, as it provided photos and descriptions that gave us deeper insights into the dogs' personalities.

Why did you pick Enzo? What was the moment you knew Enzo was the one?

This photo was the one that truly captured our hearts. We couldn't help but find him absolutely adorable.



What was the adoption process like for you?

As first-time dog adopters, the experience has been quite different from what we anticipated. After chatting with friends who have adopted Singapore Specials and consulting with several shelters, we learnt that the usual adoption process involves visiting the shelter, selecting a dog you're drawn to, taking them for a walk, and if everything goes well, bringing them home.

In June 2024, we came across Enzo's picture on the Mercylight website, and we were instantly smitten. However, we were in the midst of selling our home and had months of renovation plans ahead. We wondered if it was too early to visit the shelter, as it might interfere with our renovation and moving schedule.

Despite our doubts, we decided to take the plunge and reached out to Mercylight to inquire about Enzo. I clearly remember the day we anxiously waited for Enzo to meet us for the first time. We felt like nervous parents waiting to meet our future son.



As first-time dog adopters, Shaun and Sze Li were committed to getting to know Enzo - "We felt like nervous parents waiting to meet our future son."

After spending some time with him, we realized that Enzo was extremely shy and needed more time to warm up to new people. It felt like serendipity—he needed time to adjust, and we had the time due to our renovation plans. Thanks to Mercylight's patience and kindness, which we could tell came from a genuine desire to do what's best for the dogs, she advised us to visit Enzo twice a week to help him warm up to us. During the first three months of our weekly visits to the shelter, Enzo would shy away from us and avoid us. However, one day, everything changed. He finally accepted us, started following us around, and even sat on our laps.

We were deeply grateful for Mercylight's patience with us. We had heard of failed adoptions stories from friends, where dogs struggled to adjust to sudden lifestyle changes after being brought home too quickly. It took us five months of regular visits to the shelter before we brought Enzo home. Given his shy nature, we believed he also needed that time to get to know us before making the transition.

What has been the biggest surprise or challenge about adopting Enzo that you did not expect?

At first, Enzo seemed shy, but it's clear he has a playful and loving nature. Since joining our home, each day has brought new surprises - one of the most heartwarming ones has been the dramatic shift in his personality. He responds to the love and care we've given him, and we can see in his eyes how much he appreciates it.

If you could describe Enzo in 3 words, what would they be?

Before adoption: Cautious, timid, shy
After adoption: Playful, loving, grateful

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RESCUES: AKIRA, ACE, AVA AND ASKER

FRESH FACES: TAKEN IN TOGETHER FROM 'LIMBO' EVEN WITH LIMITED SPACE AT ML

Our four new faces at the shelter, Akira, Ace, Ava, and Asker, were living as strays on Pulau Tekong when they were trapped by a third party and surrendered to NParks. Under the Trap-Neuter-Rehome/Release-manage (TNRM) programme, the four dogs were neutered and vaccinated. Ideally, the next step would have been for the four dogs to be released back to Pulau Tekong, where they were from.

MercyLight understood that the four dogs were not allowed to be released back to Pulau Tekong, or to be released at all. The situation left them in a state of limbo, and at risk of euthanasia after a period of time if no animal welfare groups stepped in to redeem them.

At this point, MercyLight stepped in and redeemed the four dogs from NParks, and managed to squeeze them into our shelter. All four dogs have been mild mannered, with no signs of aggression in our shelter. Two of the four (Akira and Ace) have taken to their new environment rather quickly, and have been very friendly to both humans and the other dogs, while the other two are slightly longer to open up and learn that they are now in a safe space. 🐾



Asker



Ace



Akira



Ava

CONTINUED: ENZO

What does a typical day in Enzo's life look like?

He wakes up early but remains quietly in his bed until we're up. Once we're awake, he greets us enthusiastically and waits eagerly for us to open the door so he can start his day. He dives into his toy basket and excitedly spreads them all over the living room floor. If we're sitting in the living room with him, he loves to put on his daily performance, wriggling around the room with his belly up. Enzo enjoys 3 to 4 walks a day - 2 longer walks and another 1 or 2 short pee breaks. He trots around with excitement whenever he hears "Gai Gai!!," eagerly slipping his head into his harness, ready for the adventure.

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

Be kind, be patient. There is no one size fits all solution when it comes to dogs. We sincerely feel that they can sense our emotions, so act and speak with them with your heart and they will eventually come round to be part of the family. 🐾



MEET THE ADOPTERS: SHAMUEL

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT FOR SHERMAINE AND DANIEL

When did you know that Shamuel was the one?

We did not intend to adopt a dog at that point in time, as we had just lost one of our dogs. We chanced upon MercyLight's adoption drive at Marina Bay, and Shamuel caught our eye - he was just sitting there calmly and was quite handsome. He had the same hematoma as our dog who had just passed not too long ago. When we interacted with him, we found that he had just the right temperament that we were looking for, and we already knew he would be a good match. I like Singapore Specials (SS) and Shamuel is our fourth SS, and I also like older dogs, who tend to be more set in their characters.

We also had to make sure that Shamuel had no major behavioural issues if left alone at home during the day, as we both have to head out for work. We looked at the CCTV footage and saw that he did not have any issues, did not chew on items or anything, and was very comfortable.

Our initial plan was to not adopt Shamuel until we moved into our new place. We interacted with him weekly and brought him for several staycations. Each time he went back to the shelter, it felt like we were restarting the whole process with him. After a while, we decided that we could not go on like that, and that it was time to bring him home for good.

How was the adoption process like for you?

MercyLight has been very accommodating throughout the entire process. They knew our needs, and it was a very smooth journey. We were told from the start to voice out any issues that we have, and reassured that we could back out at any time if necessary. As Shamuel was our fourth SSs, MercyLight trusted that we could handle Shamuel, and we did not have a formal home-trial period.

What are some of the challenges you encountered?

Shamuel was initially scared of men and skittish, so he had to get used to Daniel. It was also very challenging for us to feed him at the start, he was quite resistant to eating. But after a while he got used to us, and can now be coaxed to eat.

But small wins are important. We were afraid that he would be an escape artist, but he now knows that this is his home, and won't do anything silly when left alone.



MET BY CHANCE and found an "almost immediate" home with Daniel, Shermaine and Bibimbap.

How did you introduce Shamuel to Bibimbap?

Their first interaction was on neutral grounds, and we brought both of them home afterwards. Both Shamuel and Bibimbap are very chill dogs, and they co-exist very well together.

What are some funny or unexpected things Shamuel did after you brought him home?

Shamuel knows what a good cushion is. He is very comfortable lying on the cushions below the TV, which is very cute. At the beginning, he used to get spooked when there were gunshots from the TV or loud noises, and went to hide under the dining table. But he has gotten over that fear and no longer hides in any corners.

We also did not expect Shamuel to be such a good and fast runner! I brought him on a 5km run, and my dogs usually do not match my pace. But Shamuel was so fast that I could not catch up with him after 3km.

He also knows that his food is in the fridge, and will trot over to the fridge whenever someone opens it to stare at his food.

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

It is important to find a dog with the right temperament. You need to find a dog who can match your vibe and energy. If you are not going to be home a lot, you can consider adopting an older dog, who tend to be more independent and require less attention. 🐾

“ I liked older dogs, who tend to be more set in their characters. ”

ADOPTERS SHERMAINE & DANIEL, ON CHOOSING TO ADOPT A SENIOR DOG

FIRST EVER CHARITY BAZAAR

AN EXCITING DAY FOR ALL AND HOPEFULLY A NEW CHRISTMAS TRADITION!



Dr. Kitty and the team at Furiends Veterinary clinic are long-time advocates for stray animals, accessible sterilisation and affordable veterinary care for all. The team is known for her kindness and professionalism. In December 2024, the Furiends team and Dr. Kitty's two sons put their time and energy into creating a vibrant Charity Bazaar and Adoption Drive.

We're thrilled to share that our fundraiser on 1 December 2024 raised an incredible \$4,200 for our shelter dogs! Beyond the donations, the event was a heartwarming display of community spirit, bringing together passionate individuals who share a love for rescue animals.

A Special Thank You

This wouldn't have been possible without our generous sponsors:

- Royal Canin Importer Singapore
- DHKS Pet Supplies
- Purina Singapore
- KC VET SG, KC Pets SG
- Silversky Pet Care
- SingAPaw

A heartfelt thanks to MercyLight volunteers, the Furiends Veterinary Clinic team, Dr. Kitty's family, and every supporter who contributed, spread the word, and made this event a success. Your kindness makes a real difference for our shelter dogs! 🐾

Highlights: Furiends x MercyLight Fundraiser 2024

Bazaar Sale – A mix of online and on-site sales featuring donated items, plants, pet accessories, dental treats, and handcrafted fridge magnets of shelter dogs, painted by May from the Sunday AM team.

Free Dental Checkups & Goodie Bags – Courtesy of Furiends Veterinary Clinic, pets received free dental checkups and discount vouchers for future visits.

Game Booth Fun – Dr. Kitty's sons ran a crowd-favourite booth, where players tossed balls into a cat-face target to win soft toys and keychains—raising a significant portion of the funds!

Adoption Drive – Shelter dogs Akira, Leo, and Malia made a special appearance, charming attendees and spreading awareness.

MercyLight Adopter Reunion – A heartwarming gathering as past adopters returned with their furry family members, filling the event with wagging tails and happy faces.

Dollar-for-Dollar Matching Campaign – Every donation was doubled, bringing our total to \$8,400!

A huge thank you to everyone who participated. We can't wait for the next one—see you all there!

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 June 2025!

