



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

EVENTS/COMMUNITY

CAPT'S PACE	1-2
POST-PANDEMIC	2
GRADUATES!	6
WISHLIST	8

ADOPTION STORIES

AKIRA	3
KIVI	4
JALEN	5-6

RESCUE

BLESSING	4
BROWNIE	8

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for stray dogs through rescue, rehabilitation, and rehoming; and to increase public awareness and acceptance of stray dogs as companion animals who deserve to be treated with compassion and kindness.

ABOUT RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

Vibrant learning communities where students create rich intellectual, cultural and social experiences. Each is led by a Rector and Master, supported by faculty and staff. Students join a five-course University Town College Programme (UTCP) and engage in diverse activities that enrich their undergraduate life. The College of Alice & Peter Tan, “weaves the theme of active citizenship and community engagement through its curriculum and other aspects of the student experience.”



CAPT'S PACE PROJECT: FINDING PURPOSE AND PAWPRINTS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What begins as a school project often ends in transformation. CAPT's PACE initiative shows how service, compassion and a love for animals can change lives — both human and canine.

Since its founding in 2012, the College of Alice & Peter Tan (CAPT) at the National University of Singapore has championed integrating community engagement into the student experience. Nestled within University Town, CAPT isn't just a residential college—it's a vibrant, values-driven community where students, faculty and staff come together to make a meaningful difference beyond the classroom.

One of the most inspiring examples of this ethos is PACE—short for People, Animal, Community, Engagement—a student-led initiative that reflects CAPT's commitment to active citizenship. Each year, a team of student volunteers dedicate ten weeks of their semester to volunteer at MercyLight. This year, interest soared, with the team growing from 16 to 25 volunteers—showing a growing interest in animal welfare and hands-on community work.

For Maegan, this journey has been especially transformative. Now the Project Director, she first joined PACE because of her love for dogs and a desire to give back. “I was a bit scared at first,” she shares. “I had never interacted with Singapore Specials or rescue dogs before. But they turned out to be incredibly sweet and friendly.” The early sessions were overwhelming—juggling tasks, getting used to the dogs and memorising all their names. But as time passed, the team found its rhythm.

One of the more intense moments came when two dogs, Tasha and Ted, got into a scuffle—an experience that left a lasting impression. “It really opened our eyes to how much the regular volunteers go through,” Maegan reflects. “They consistently put the dogs' safety and care first, even in difficult situations.”

Inspired by those around her, Maegan stepped up to lead the project. “I want to learn from people like Kelly, the shelter director, and Zaw, the caretaker—people who work so selflessly and tirelessly. That's something I really admire and hope to do more of in the future.” Already a proud dog owner, she dreams of adopting more one day.”

Continued on Page 2...

CONTINUED: CAPT'S PACE PROJECT

CAPT'S PACE PROJECT BRINGS STUDENTS AND RESCUE DOGS TOGETHER IN A SHARED JOURNEY OF CARE, GROWTH AND COMMUNITY.



SPLASHING INTO JOY – The PACE team and their furry friends soaked up the fun at Wag & Wild, celebrating a semester of care, connection, and countless tail wags. A perfect end to a journey filled with heart.

For many of the students, the weekly visits became a form of therapy, especially during exam season. “Even through stressful periods in school, we didn’t stop coming,” Maegan shares. “We just loved being with the dogs. It was our happy place.”

This year’s finale was especially memorable. The team brought the dogs out to Wag & Wild, a water park for dogs. Watching the dogs splash and play brought sheer joy to everyone involved. The team even managed to bring out everyone from the Twinkle Kennel, a feat made possible by the unwavering support of regular volunteers. Some dogs avoided the water, but still played around the poolside, their tails wagging with delight. For the students, the moment was a powerful reminder of why the work mattered.

Maegan’s advice to future volunteers and ‘PACERS’: “Step out of your comfort zone. It may feel tiring at first, but it’s so fulfilling to see how much joy you can bring to the dogs—and how much they bring to you.”

Though PACE participation fulfils a community engagement requirement, its impact extends far beyond hours logged. For four dedicated students—Zhong Rui, Maegan, Ezann, and Lincoln—Wednesday sessions have become a weekly tradition. Now regular volunteers, they embody the spirit of sustained, heartfelt engagement that CAPT hopes to instil in all its students. 🐾

POST-PANDEMIC CHALLENGES: OUR DOGS STILL NEED YOU

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, something remarkable occurred - adoption rates surged to over three times the pre-pandemic levels. With more people working from home and fewer distractions from travel or packed schedules, many opened their hearts and homes to our rescues. But now, we’re seeing a sharp decline.

After the pandemic, many are heading back to work in offices or making up for lost time with long-awaited overseas trips. The lifestyle that once made pet adoption more viable for many has shifted dramatically.

Other shelters have reported a worrying rise in returned adoptions - a heartbreaking reminder of how fragile a second chance can be. While we’re grateful that Mercylight hasn’t experienced this, the overall trend is alarming.

Volunteer numbers have also dwindled, as many become busier with new responsibilities and travel commitments.

But here’s the truth: Our dogs haven’t changed. They still wait at the shelter every day. They still need walks, care, love and the hope of a forever home.

You can still make a difference:

- **Adopt or Foster:** Whether for weeks or forever, you’ll change their lives.
- **Volunteer:** Just a few hours of your time at the kennel or behind the scenes can make a difference.
- **Donate:** Every dollar supports their food, shelter and medical care.

To our current volunteers—thank you. Your time still matters more than ever. Your presence brings joy, comfort and connection to every dog you meet.



Pardon
Male, 3yo



Tasha
Female, 5yo



Mikel
Male, 7yo

MEET THE ADOPTERS: AKIRA

AKIRA'S JOURNEY HOME: A TALE OF BELLY RUBS, BRAVERY AND QUIET JOY

What made you decide it was the right time?

We had always planned on adopting a dog. We each had family dogs, and also a Shih Tzu in the past. We were in the process of adopting from another shelter, but it did not work out. That dog had some behavioural issues like resource guarding and sleep startle, and it was quite bad. We found MercyLight on Instagram and went to the adoption drive at Furiends.

How did you know Akira was “the one”? Was it love at first sight?

Not really. We met Akira at an adoption drive alongside other dogs like Leo and Malia. We didn't have our sights set on him at first. We went to visit the shelter, and Kelly recommended Akira and Layla, after asking some questions about our lifestyle and experience with dogs. After two weeks of visiting MercyLight, interacting with both Akira and Layla, we decided that Akira would be a better fit for us. We knew that he was “the one” when he rolled over for belly rubs and seemed so at ease with us. We then started to focus solely on Akira - feeding, walking, even showering him.

Describe your first week together - any surprises, funny moments or challenges?

The first week was actually very smooth. He was eating, settling in, and exploring his new environment. But the challenges started in the second week. He suddenly stopped eating. No matter what we tried, hand feeding etc, it didn't help. We wondered if he was homesick. We even tried asking Kelly if we could bring something that smelled like the shelter to comfort him, but she advised against it. Eventually, we figured out that he was just... fussy. He'd flick the kibble aside to get to the meat. Even the type of bowl made a difference. He refused to eat from his metal bowl but ate when we changed to a slow feeder.

How has Akira settled into his new routine?

He has settled in very well. He used to be afraid of new places, especially the sea or long unfamiliar roads, but he eventually plucked up the courage to explore. He's still very calm and quiet. He rarely barks, even when someone comes to the door. The most we have heard him is in his sleep.

How has Akira changed you or your family?

Having Akira has made us more sociable. In the past, with our family dogs, we were cautious, even avoidant, of other dogs. But with Akira, we're more open. We've learned the importance of socialising him.



FINDING HOME IN EACH OTHER - For Elizabeth and Utek, it wasn't love at first sight—but with belly rubs, walks and lots of patience, Akira quickly won their hearts. Now confident and calm, he's brought joy, connection and new adventures to their lives.

Do you take Akira on any special outings or adventures?

Definitely. He went swimming with the Twinkle pack, though he refused to paddle into the deep end and just walked in the water and drank it. We've brought him to Coney Island, the dog run (where he just lay down under a tree), and even the Pet Expo. He did very well at the Pet Expo. He wasn't overwhelmed at all. He met some of the MercyLight volunteers again and was happy to see them. He even went into the playpen and had people reaching in to say hi, the volunteers jokingly said he was trying to get adopted all over again.

Has Akira made any furry (or human) friends?

Yes! Aside from the swim outing, he will be meeting Enzo and Abby, and we're planning to meet more dogs like Champ, Yori, and George soon. He has made many friends around the neighborhood, people are always surprised at how calm he is.

Back to adoption day, would you do anything different?

Honestly, no. After the unsuccessful (and a bit rushed) adoption process with the previous dog, we thought that MercyLight's adoption process was very well thought out and thorough.

Any funny or mischievous moments you'll never forget?

Akira is a little thief! He has stolen our rugs, socks, underwear and cleaning tools. One time, he even destroyed a brand-new mouse that was still in its box. I had to tell my boss that my dog ate my mouse. He once raided our snack tray, and got into nuts, marshmallows, and even tried (unsuccessfully) to open a bag of Doritos. He was so excited to see me get home, that I felt so bad for scolding him about it. 🐾

RETURNED: BLESSING

Blessing was adopted from MercyLight as a puppy 14 years ago. Friendly and well-behaved, she had no issues—until she was returned earlier this year.

Her family shared that their six-year-old child had developed asthma and was sensitive to fur. Following a doctor's advice, they began limiting Blessing's contact with the child. Instead of keeping her at home, they rotated her between boarders—until even that was no longer an option after more than a decade with them.

At first, they tried confining her to a separate area, but Blessing—never used to being isolated—became anxious and vocal. Eventually, the family told us it had come down to a choice: their child or the dog. To them, the decision was clear.

What devastated us most was hearing that they had considered euthanising Blessing. MercyLight immediately stepped in and brought her back into our care. We tried to find her a new home, but as a senior dog, Blessing is often overlooked. Thankfully, she is now safe and adjusting well in a foster home. Was it truly impossible for co-existence—or was it simply more convenient not to try?



Returned at 14 for being “inconvenient,” Blessing's story is a heartbreaking reminder of how age and comfort can too easily outweigh commitment—but she's now safe, and still full of love.

Did the family explore every available option, or decide that Blessing, now old, wasn't worth the effort?

According to our vets, there are often alternatives in such situations—ways to manage exposure without resorting to rehoming. Complete avoidance of allergens is rarely achievable, but many families find workable compromises. Blessing's story highlights a painful truth: that some dogs are abandoned not because they can't be cared for, but because they've grown old, sick, or simply “inconvenient.” 🐾

DAZZLER AND CHOCO WELCOME A FAMILIAR FACE: KIVI!

If you've been following the heartwarming journey of Dazzler and Choco — adopted by Cheng and Nick — here's an exciting update: they've now welcomed their third rescue dog from MercyLight... Kivi!

All three dogs were once shelter mates, and this latest addition feels more like a reunion than an introduction. Kivi and Choco were best friends at the shelter, and when he came over for a few staycations, it quickly became clear that he was already part of the family. His expressive vocals, bold personality, and easy friendship with the girls made the decision feel natural.

Many of you may remember Dazzler and Choco from our past interviews, where Cheng and Nick shared their thoughtful, patient approach to rescue. Their commitment to giving dogs a second chance has always inspired us — and now, their pack is complete.

Follow their adventures on Instagram at [@shidachoki_crew](#), where Kivi's sass, Choco's sociability, and Dazzler's quiet charm make for a perfect trio.

We're overjoyed for this sweet little family — proof that some friendships are just meant to come home together. 🐾



MEET THE ADOPTERS: JALEN

LOVE, TIME AND A TROLLEY TURNED JALEN INTO THE PERFECT COMPANION

Seven years ago, Olga spotted a photo of Maia on Mercylight's website and felt an instant connection. "There was a click in my head," she said. Maia was initially shortlisted by another family, but they ended up adopting a different pup from the litter — and that twist of fate brought Maia home to Olga and Mike instead.

Fast forward four years: now parents to Maia and Valarie, Olga and Mike were considering fostering again, this time with a heart for helping a senior dog. They opened their home with no expectations — and ended up finding family once more.

"We were thinking of fostering a senior dog, like Noble or Shepherd, since senior dogs are often overlooked by adopters and may be more in need of care", Olga shared. "Kelly then told us about Jalen. When we did the first weekend staycation with him, though he was skittish, we could see that he was a very capable dog — even without his prosthetic leg, he was able to hop up onto the sofa!"

Mike laughed, remembering those early days. "He didn't do much — I think he was mostly observing us. We even thought he was mute—he didn't bark at all until about a month in, when we turned on the TV to a particular programme with a male voice, and he surprised us all by howling!"

Fostering Jalen - Foodie, Bush Explorer, Thunder-Hater, Dog with Three Legs

Jalen was first rescued by Mercylight in October 2021, found with a missing paw, tick fever, dry eyes, and several other health issues. Fostering a three legged dog was not easy at first, but with Jalen's courageous resilience and Mike and Olga's unconditional care and love, things progressed quickly for the family.

"He would take a longer time on walks and mark anywhere that had the smell of other dogs," Olga said. "Now we use a trolley to bring him downstairs, and then start the walk from there, which helped a great deal. We sometimes also walk Maia separately, so that she can get longer walks."

Despite mobility issues, Jalen enjoys beach outings and swims at Sentosa. "We bring him to swim for his rehabilitation and exercise but he really loves just lying on the sand," Mike added. "At home, we have carpets everywhere so he doesn't slip. Our condo grounds also have nice gardens and outdoor areas for him to explore. He also has gained a bit of fame in the estate, with him being very friendly to kids and neighbours."

Though he might only have three legs, things change whenever there's food around. "He can jump on his hind legs when he sees his dinner!" Olga laughed.

Building a Bond: Maia, Jalen & Valerie

Maia and Jalen didn't immediately become playful companions — their relationship is tender in other ways.



WHEN FOREVER FINDS YOU — What began as a plan to foster a senior dog turned into a beautiful new chapter for Olga, Mikhail, Maia, and Valarie the cat. With patience, love and a shared sofa (and maybe soon a king-sized bed!), Jalen — three legs and all — found exactly where he belongs.

"They lick each other's faces after walks," Olga smiled. "Though they don't play with each other a lot, they're still close and provide each other company."

"They look out for each other," Mike added. "If one disappears from view, the other will start searching."

In a funny twist, Maia has picked up Jalen's habits over time. "Jalen has this peculiar habit of walking into bushes in slow motion to let the branches scratch his body. A few months later, we noticed that Maia started doing the same thing!" Olga said.

At home, Jalen has blossomed. He's cuddly, relaxed with human contact, and enjoys lounging on the sofa—though he draws the line at loud sounds. "He's scared of thunder and not fond of loud music," Olga said. "But he's incredibly affectionate—he'll fall into a deep sleep with his head planted on Mike's leg all night." At this point, the couple is seriously considering upgrading to a king-sized bed.

When Fostering Turns Forever

Over two years, there were a few adoption attempts for Jalen—but nothing stuck.

"Two families came by to visit him, but the adoption didn't go through," Olga said. "It was a bittersweet feeling. On one hand, we wanted him to be adopted by a good family... but on the other, we also didn't want to let him go."

Continued on Page 6...

CONTINUED: JALEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Mike added, “We have been trying to apply for Permanent Residence (PR) in Singapore, but back then we weren’t sure if we could stay. It made things complicated. But with the strong bond we had built, we came to the conclusion that he was already part of our family, and saying goodbye would be challenging.”

He also shared a deeply personal moment: “What haunted me the most was the fear that Jalen might feel abandoned if we let him go to someone else. That thought alone brought me to tears, and it was difficult for me to come to terms with it.” Eventually, the decision was clear: Jalen was home.

Why Fostering Matters

When asked if they would recommend fostering, both answered with a resounding “yes.”

“Fostering is like an extended home trial—it’s a great way to get to know a dog,” Olga said. “It’s hard to give them up to potential adopters after you form a bond, but it gives the dogs, especially the senior ones, a peaceful place to rest, even if it’s only temporary.”

She also encourages others to ease into it. “Start with staycations,” she suggested. “If you have the space and capacity to do so, why not!”

“Fostering enriches the dog’s life,” Mike added. “They learn how to live in a home environment, which can make the eventual adoption process easier. It’s also a good way to test how your current pet handles a companion. Honestly, managing two dogs isn’t that much harder than one.”

Maia, who used to struggle with separation anxiety, now finds comfort in Jalen’s company when the couple goes out. 🐾

Follow their journey here: [@blessed.by.maia](https://www.instagram.com/blessed.by.maia)

“ With the bond we had built, we realised Jalen was already part of our family. ”
– Mike

Thinking of fostering or adopting?

Olga and Mike’s story is a beautiful reminder that opening your home—even temporarily—can change a life, sometimes your own. If you’ve got space in your heart and home, consider fostering. You just might meet your forever friend.

Reach out to MercyLight to learn more about fostering or adoption today!



SPECIAL FEATURE: EMMA, LEO & BETHEL

SIT, STAY, SUCCEED! OBEDIENCE COURSE GRADUATION HIGHLIGHTS



SIT, STAY, GRADUATE – With wagging tails and proud hearts, Emma and Wenting, Leo and Sheryl, Bethel and Dzar celebrated their obedience course graduation—proof that patience, practice and love make all the difference.

Over the past six weeks, a small but dedicated group of dogs and handlers came together every Saturday afternoon in Choa Chu Kang with one shared goal – to build trust, communication, and confidence through obedience training.

We're thrilled to announce that Bethel and Dzar, Leo and Sheryl, and Emma and Wenting have successfully completed their basic obedience course, conducted by Pawsitive Furkids, with their final assessment held on 31st May 2025!

Using positive reinforcement methods, the course covered essential commands like sit, down, stand, stay, recall, and heelwork, along with fun bonding games designed to challenge the dogs and strengthen the bond between the dogs and handlers. By the end of the course, the dogs had shown clear improvement in their ability to focus, follow commands, and walk calmly on leash, even amidst distractions.

A Special Commitment

For volunteers who enrolled in the 6-week course, the commitment extended well beyond the weekly classes. Each committed to practicing with their dog at least two additional days a week, on top of their regular kennel duties. This dedication was crucial in reinforcing what the dogs learned and in helping them apply their skills in everyday situations. The training fees were a joint effort too – \$100 co-paid by the volunteer and \$100 by Mercylight, reflecting our shared investment in the dogs' futures.

Why It Matters

Training like this doesn't just teach obedience – it helps dogs become more adoptable by giving them the structure and confidence they need to thrive in a home environment.

To Bethel, Leo, and Emma – we're so proud of your progress. And to Dzar, Sheryl and Wenting – thank you for showing up week after week with patience, persistence and heart. 🐾



From left to right: Sheryl with Leo, Bethel and Dzar, Emma and Wenting

Thinking of Joining the Next Round?

Interested in training a shelter dog? Stay tuned—new course dates will be announced soon! Obedience training doesn't just teach commands—it builds trust, confidence and connection. It helps our dogs become more adaptable, focused and ready for life in a forever home. Your time and effort could be the key to helping a dog find—and stay in—a loving family.

NEW RESCUE: BROWNIE

FRESH START: FROM SILENT SUFFERING TO HOPEFUL NEW BEGINNINGS

We first heard about Brownie through Ally, a former volunteer who reached out to us for help. What she described broke our hearts: a 9-year-old Singapore Special who had spent most of his life neglected and confined — his skin perpetually damp from being kept in a wet toilet, his legs weakened from years of barely moving.

When Brownie's plea was first shared on 18 March, it was urgent. He had been brought to the vet on 22 February and was undergoing treatment for a persistent skin infection that wouldn't heal in his current living conditions. Weighing only 10kg, Brownie had not been neutered, was last vaccinated as a puppy, and hadn't been toilet trained — not because he couldn't learn, but because no one had given him the time, space or care to.

And yet, despite everything, Brownie was gentle. He was calm on a leash and welcomed affection with soft eyes. There wasn't a trace of aggression in him.

On 2 April, we found Brownie a safe haven with a kind foster who stepped up, even though she already had several dogs in her home. It's a temporary arrangement, but it gave Brownie the breathing room — and healing space — he so desperately needed.

Brownie made his first adoption drive appearance at Pet Expo on 27 April. He stood quietly among the other hopeful dogs — but didn't receive a single enquiry. Perhaps it was his age, or his reserved nature. But to us, he's the same sweet boy — one who has endured so much, yet still shows up with quiet hope.

Now, we're looking for something permanent. Brownie deserves a home and a family who can shower him with the undivided love he's never known. His remaining years should be filled with soft beds, daily walks, gentle cuddles and the warmth of belonging.



FROM NEGLECT TO NEW HOPE – Once kept in a damp toilet for years, Brownie arrived frail but full of quiet grace. At his first adoption drive, he stood patiently, overlooked yet still hopeful. Gentle and resilient, he's ready to start the life he's always longed for.

If you've ever wanted to make a difference, this is your moment. Open your heart to Brownie. Give him the fresh start he's waited nine long years for. 🐾

To adopt or learn more, reach out to us!

Shelter Wish List: Small Gifts, Big Impact

Want to help our dogs? These essential items keep them healthy, clean and comfortable:



Bath Towels: Absorbent, easy to dry for medium to large dogs—perfect for post-bath snuggles.



Canned Food (6+ months before expiry): Daily Delight Beef (pictured)



Rice: NTUC-brand Thai Hom Mali rice ONLY (pictured) – easy on sensitive stomachs.



Shampoo: Mipuchi Hypoallergenic Shampoo – gentle & safe for frequent use.

BONUS HELP:

- **Dog Beds:** We love doughnut-style beds for our medium to big dogs—comfy, calming, and well-loved (pictured).
- **Cash Donations:** PayNow to help us cover medical and daily care needs.



Charity Registration: UEN 201502278Z

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 September 2025!

