

Dying dog rescued: Adams SPCA aids German shepherd's recovery **The Evening Sun**

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With the freedom to roam the farmland at his new Littlestown home, Jericho is living the good life.

It is a big difference from the 2-foot chain and ice-filled shelter to which the 8-year-old German shepherd was confined only weeks ago, when Adams County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals officer Brandi Luther rescued him from near starvation.

When she found him, she said Jericho was the worst case of animal neglect she had ever seen. At the time, he weighed only 38 pounds.

For weeks, SPCA staff watched the dog make a comeback none of them expected, and his life is nothing short of a miracle, Luther said.

"He went from being unable to stand and walk by himself to, just in two to three weeks, he was able to jog and play with other dogs," she said.

Jericho's recovery has been so remarkable that Luther said she feels compelled to tell people about it.

In March, Luther said she received a tip from a utility-company worker that a dog was being neglected at a home in Heidlersburg. When she arrived to investigate the allegation, Luther said she immediately determined that Jericho was in imminent danger and needed to be removed.

The dog - whom SPCA staff gave his biblical name - was taken to the Confederate Woods Veterinary Hospital in Gettysburg, though veterinary workers said there was little hope Jericho would recover.

But a long-shot blood transfusion administered by the Frederick Veterinary Referral Group saved Jericho's life, Luther said.

There was little debate over whether to attempt a transfusion in an effort to save the dog's life, she said.

"If that was his only chance of recovering, that was what we were going to do," Luther said.

Jericho's former owners, Owen and Jennifer Sterner of Heidlersberg, have since pleaded guilty to charges of animal cruelty, according to the office of District Justice Mark Beauchat.

Meanwhile, Jericho weighs 70 pounds and is expected to be given a clean bill of health within weeks.

Then, the dog will be removed from his Littlestown foster home and become available for adoption at the Adams County SPCA, Luther said.

So far, the Merrick Foundation has covered Jericho's medical costs, but donations are needed to supplement that fund. Soon, Jericho will need a new place to call home.

For a dog who was literally dying in front of her, Luther said Jericho's new name is more than appropriate.

"All his walls came tumbling down," she said.