

The Patriot-News

Dog's tragic life inspires creation of charity

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BY ELLEN LYON
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Merrick, a yellow Labrador retriever abandoned without food or water in an East Pennsboro Twp. apartment, didn't know much of human kindness, but his story has inspired a fund to help other homeless animals.

When Merrick was found in June 2006, he had an open tumor on his side that was infested with bees.

He died the next day as he was being transported to a veterinarian at the East Shore shelter of the Humane Society of Harrisburg Area Inc.

Evelyn Bertoni of Lower Swatara Twp. said her reaction to news reports of Merrick's death was "tears for days," followed by the resolve "to do something about this."

Amy Wimmersberger, also of Lower Swatara Twp. and a former coordinator of the Dauphin County Animal Response Team, had a similar reaction. "I was sick to my stomach," she said. "And I knew I had to do something."

So the two dog lovers created the Merrick Fund Foundation on Sept. 1. It is designed to get emergency and catastrophic veterinary care for shelter animals.

The fund has already helped three dogs:

- Alex, a shar-pei/chow mix who came to the Humane Society as a stray with open sores, hair loss and a serious infection under her skin, received allergy testing and treatment. She is in a foster home and available for adoption.
- Marshall, a mixed-breed who was tied up and repeatedly shot at, had to have a back leg amputated. Now in the care of Homeward Bound Rescue, he also is available for adoption.
- Jersey, a Yorkshire terrier who was hit by a car, required hip surgery and has since been adopted from the Humane Society.

The Merrick Fund Foundation is registered as a charity with the state Bureau of Charitable Organizations. The organizers said they are picking up all administrative costs, so 100 percent of donations will go to veterinary care.

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• HOW TO HELP

- Donations can be sent to The Merrick Fund Foundation, Administrator, P.O. Box 4323, Harrisburg, PA 17111-0323.
- For more information, visit merrick-fund.org

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