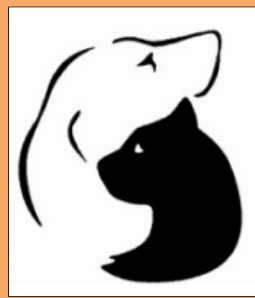


Max Gives Back

By Jennifer M. Brauns



Denver's MaxFund Animal Shelter is a unique non-profit organization providing much-needed services for dogs and cats in Denver. MaxFund takes in injured animals with no known owner, provides medical treatment, meals, a warm place to stay, lots of TLC and a promise that they can stay there until their owner is found or they have a new home, no matter how long that takes. Here is their story.



Max shown here with owner John Joseph

In 1988, someone hit a young dog named Max with their car and fled the scene, leaving the poor helpless animal in shock with two broken legs. Some time later, a passerby discovered Max on the side of the road. Max was driven to a local veterinarian for help. Max was clearly in need of extensive, not to mention costly orthopedic surgery to repair his legs, but there was no one to pay the bills. The veterinarian, Bill Suro, and his wife Nanci, who was hospital manager, decided they would give Max what he needed. They placed a fish bowl

on the front desk at their office with a sign that simply said "The Max Fund." After 5 surgeries and an 8 week stay at their hospital, Max was finally well enough to leave and went on to his forever home with John Joseph, one of the hospital's veterinarians.

When all the bills were paid, there was

still money left over from donations, so the Suro's decided to start a non-profit organization that would help injured dogs like Max. There are few options for injured pets with no owners. MaxFund was started in May of 1988 and has helped over 21,000 animals find adoptive homes and provided over 27,000 spays and neuters. In February, MaxFund earned its fifth straight Charity Navigator Four-Star Award. According to Charity Navigator, only 4 percent of the charities they have rated have earned this distinction. It signifies to prospective donors and others that MaxFund has consistently outperformed most other charities in America and executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way that is worthy of the public's trust.

The shelter has capacity for sixty dogs and one hundred and twenty five cats. While helping injured animals with no known owners is their mission, they also take in some owner-surrendered animals and strays, based on availability. They have rooms of

The Story of MaxFund

cats with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) which is similar to HIV in humans, but they receive hours of love and attention every day and they will be taken care of until they are adopted. The longest any dog has ever stayed at the shelter before being adopted was four years. Happily for this dog, Tucker, he was adopted by one of the shelter's dog walkers who fell in love with him. Although many animals are fortunate enough to be taken in by MaxFund, they are typically forced to turn away 5 to 10 animals each day due to capacity limitations.

They have one dog at the shelter now who has been there for two years and is still waiting for a home. James, a sweet and handsome four year-old Collie-Shepherd mix (shown at right), came to MaxFund as a blind youngster. After careful evaluation, it was determined that he had a disease that was causing his blindness. He was treated for the disease and can now see the world around him. Having grown up a blind dog on the streets, he is wary of new people, but once he gets to know someone, he is a loving and loyal friend for life. You can read all about James and other adoptable dogs on their website www.maxfund.org.

What always amazes me are the resources it takes to provide for so many animals. Last year, they had revenue of approximately \$1.8 million with expenses of about \$1.6 million. Seventy-nine percent of their 2008 income came from private donations

and estates, about eight percent came from adoption fees and another five percent came in the form of grants. They run a very lean organization.

Now what we haven't yet said about MaxFund is that their shelter facility is in serious need of some renovation. Last year, the shelter placed third in ZooToo's nation-wide Million Dollar Shelter Makeover Contest. The top finalist shelters were visited last spring and we were hoping that MaxFund would win but alas they did not. The sad news is that the Makeover Contest was offered again this year but was not as well publicized. The top 20 shelters have already been chosen and MaxFund was not in the running this time. So for 2009, the funds are simply going to have to come from private donations, grants, adoptions and estate gifts. I hope each of our readers can find a way to assist MaxFund this year. I also encourage you to go and see their facility for yourself. Once you see the love and effort that goes into helping the animals, you will surely want to be a part of this cause.

Our special thanks go out to MaxFund's 20 employees and over two hundred volunteers who work tirelessly to help injured, stray and surrendered animals. For more information on how you can lend a hand, please visit www.maxfund.org and check our Upcoming Events page for fun ways to benefit MaxFund. The next benefit is a Colorado Avalanche game on April 12th.

Adoptables

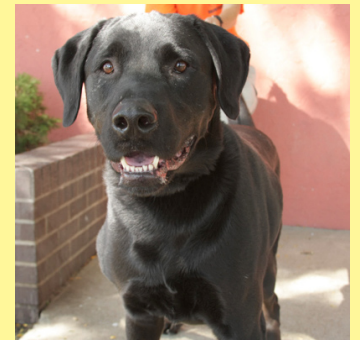
Logan



James



Cole



Checkers



Georgia



Paws Fur Love Memorial Wall at MaxFund