

# ARGUS COURIER

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PHOTOS BY VICTORIA WEBB/ FOR THE ARGUS COURIER

Alice Mayn, founder of Lily's Legacy, hangs out with some of the ranch's canine residents. The dogs from left to right are: Precious, Shelly, Addie and Gretta in the background.

## Waiting for a forever home

Lily's Legacy of Petaluma is a senior dog sanctuary that helps find homes for older, large-breed dogs

BY YOVANNA BIEBERICH  
ARGUS-COURIER STAFF

Found wandering and alone, Lily, a 12-year-old Golden Retriever in very poor health, was languishing in a large pen at the Sonoma County Animal Shelter for nearly a month before Alice Mayn met her and instantly knew she had to rescue her.

Suffering from a nasal infection and a tumor on one eyelid, Lily's next few months involved surgery and treatment for her ailments, which later included canine bloat and a blood disorder. Through it all, Lily was a gentle, trusting and loving dog that quickly won the hearts of Mayn and her family members.

Unfortunately, Lily's health continued to decline, and she died at home just a few months later.

"Prior to Lily, I did volunteer work for rescue dog groups," said Mayn. "I was involved with foster care and doing home visits. It was in the fall of 2007 that I rescued Lily. We

only had her for four months, but in my heart it's like we had her ever since she was a puppy. She was an angel of a dog."

Lily's passing inspired Mayn to do something to help other older, large-breed dogs that often end up abandoned or displaced for various reasons. According to Mayn, larger, older dogs are difficult to find homes for, and often animal shelters

have no other choice but to euthanize them.

"When Lily passed away, the message I got from her was that, 'there's a lot more dogs out there like me and they need help, too.' Senior large-breed dogs are the hardest ones to adopt out, and in most cases they don't make it into the adoption queue," said Mayn. "It's not the fault of the shelters, which



Floppy eared Kira is one of many older dogs awaiting a forever home at Lily's Legacy.

### LILY'S LEGACY

Senior dog sanctuary for abandoned, homeless or displaced senior large-breed dogs.

Information: [www.lilyslegacy.org](http://www.lilyslegacy.org) or call (415) 488-4984.

### MUSIC FOR MUTTS BENEFIT

What: Benefit concert for Lily's Legacy featuring local musicians Steve Seskin, Julia Sinclair and Liz Longley.

When: 1-4 p.m. Sunday, June 2.

Where: Lily's Legacy in Petaluma.

Tickets: \$35. For tickets and address, email [lilyslegacysds@gmail.com](mailto:lilyslegacysds@gmail.com) or call (415) 488-4984.

are overworked and overrun with dogs. They have to adopt out the ones they can, and usually it's the smaller, less costly ones veterinarian-wise that find homes."

Mayn founded Lily's Legacy senior dog sanctuary in Marin County a few years ago, and moved the organization to Petaluma last August. Lily's Legacy provides a home for senior, large-breed dogs until they are adopted or until they pass on.

"Over the years I've developed a relationship with many of the local shelters, so the volunteers call me when they have an adoptable dog they know won't be leaving the shelter," she said. "We get a lot of surrendered dogs, too."

Mayn said that many larger dogs are surrendered to shelters due to health problems the owners can't afford to pay for. Other dogs outlive their owners and have no place to go except to the local animal shelter.

Lily's Legacy is currently licensed through Sonoma County to keep up to 10 dogs at the sanctuary, while other rescues are kept in foster homes until space is available. The organization's goal is to be able to house 20 to 25 dogs at a time, and rescue a minimum of 150 dogs per year.

The resident dogs get to live in rooms, each with its own direct outside access in a fenced area specifically for the dog or dogs assigned to each room.

"We had a three-car garage that we converted into rooms, which open to the runs at the back of the house," she said. "We have a big exercise field behind the yard in the back."

The sanctuary also has an isolation area where ill dogs can be separated from the healthy

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## Lily

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ones.

"It's a 24-7 operation," said Mayn. "We are 100 percent volunteer run. Nobody gets a paycheck. We do what we do entirely through fundraising and donation. We have a team of veterinarians who give us very good discounts and often are able to get medications donated."

While all the dogs at Lily's Legacy are welcome to live out the rest of their days at the sanctuary, the ultimate goal Mayn said is to find forever homes for each one.

"The nice part about adopting an older dog is that in most cases you

don't have to train them as much as you would a puppy," she said. "In a lot of ways the behavior and training aspects are much easier to deal with."

The process for adopting a dog from Lily's Legacy includes filling out an application and undergoing a home visit to ensure the dog is going to a good home.

"The goal is to give these dogs a good end of life experience, whether it's here or in a home," said Mayn. "We're very careful about who we adopt out to."

Mayn said that they adopt out about 85 percent of their dogs.

"The ones we don't usually have significant health issues, but even some of the healthier ones

don't get adopted right away," she said. "We had a 15-year-old English Pointer here for about eight months before she found a home. It was hard to say goodbye, but she was going to a good home."

To help raise funds to care for residents of Lily's Legacy, Petaluma musician Steve Seskin will be performing a benefit concert with fellow musicians Julia Sinclair and Liz Longley at 1 p.m. on Sunday, June 2.

"It warms your heart and breaks your heart to see these dogs and to see what they do at Lily's Legacy," said Seskin. "They do this all on donated time."

Tickets to the concert, which will be held at Lily's Legacy, are \$35. Tickets

must be purchased in advance by calling (415) 488-4984 or emailing [lilyslegacysds@gmail.com](mailto:lilyslegacysds@gmail.com).

"There is a lot of sadness when you think about what these dogs have been through and that they don't have much time left," said Mayn. "The other side of the coin is that it's wonderful to see the right dog go to the right family to enjoy the time they do have left in their forever home."

To learn more about Lily's Legacy, find out about adoptable dogs or to make a donation toward the cause, visit [www.lilyslegacy.org](http://www.lilyslegacy.org).

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