

CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

{giving back}

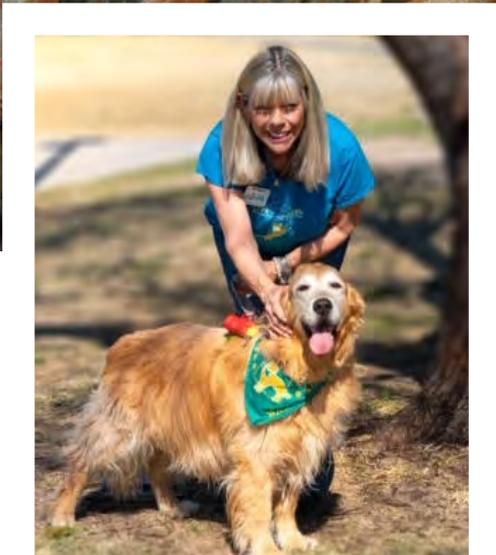
By Karen Werner

AS SEEN IN

frontdoors
magazine

HEARTS OF GOLD

Rescue A Golden of Arizona helps beloved breed



THE STORY

In 1998, Joyce Hubler, a retired detective from the Phoenix Police Department, did some sleuthing that changed thousands of dogs' lives. She had gotten her first Golden Retriever, Lucy, the year before and learned that many Golden Retrievers were being abandoned and put down in shelters.

Why was this the fate of so many of the popular breed? Hubler discovered that many people weren't prepared to handle a dog that would grow large, shed and incur medical expenses, so they simply gave up their dogs.

“Many people were buying puppies, not realizing they would become large, energetic dogs that require a lot of grooming and healthcare.”

To help, Hubler started rescuing Golden Retrievers from shelters, grooming and rehabbing them, then finding them new homes. Once the work became more than she could handle alone, she enlisted help from friends and people in her network. Through a lot of hard work, they established Rescue A Golden of Arizona as a nonprofit organization in October 1998.

THE CAUSE

At the time Rescue A Golden of Arizona was launched, Golden Retrievers were the second most popular breed of dog, a distinction that remains today. “Many people were buying puppies, not realizing they would become large, energetic dogs that require a lot of grooming and healthcare,” said Heather Marcom, president of Rescue A Golden of Arizona.

The organization educates the public on the traits of these outgoing, eager-to-please canines. For instance, they are easy to train and make great family dogs, but their playful, puppyish behavior makes outdoor play a priority. “For a breed built to retrieve waterfowl for hours on end, swimming and fetching are natural pastimes,” Marcom said.

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As the oldest and largest Golden Retriever rescue organization in Arizona, Rescue A Golden helps these dogs, regardless of their health or age, serving the entire state as well as the El Paso area in Texas. Over the past few years, the organization has also rescued Golden Retrievers internationally from countries that lack resources or local families willing to take in a rescued Golden, including China, South Korea, Turkey and Mexico. “When we have the resources, we do what we can to help those Golden Retrievers, because pain and suffering have no borders,” Marcom said.

THE FUTURE

Rescue A Golden of Arizona has placed more than 3,400 dogs in homes and will continue as long as the work is required. “Our hope is that one day there won’t be a need for us anymore because all Golden Retrievers are able to stay in loving homes. But until then, we will be here to save every Golden that needs us.”

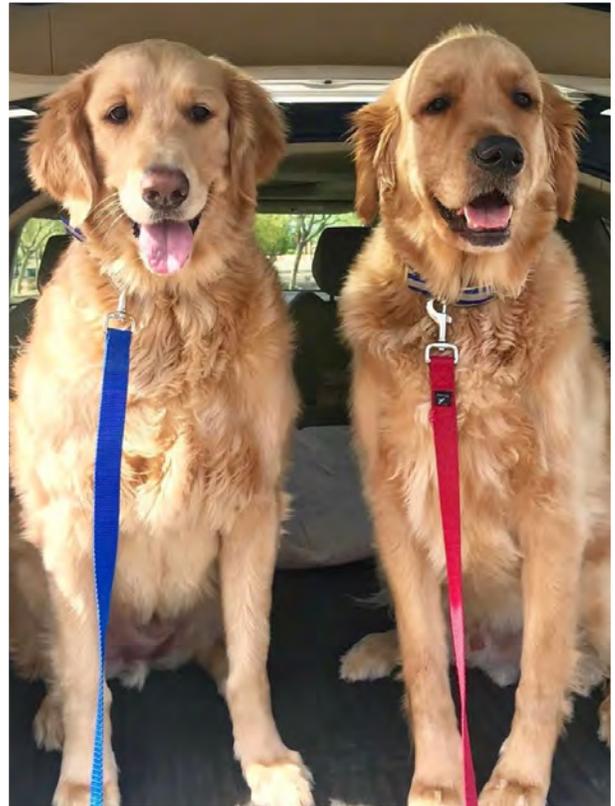
Of course, the need often goes both ways. Marcom shared the story of a 99-year-old man whose life was touched by a Golden Retriever. “He was depressed and didn’t feel he had anything left to live for, and his daughter was worried about him,” Marcom said. “He had 24/7 healthcare providers who agreed to take care of the dog.”

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When Rescue A Golden delivered his Golden, Katie, the man's eyes lit up, and Katie went straight to him as if she knew he was the reason she was there. The man's health improved — in fact, he lived another year and celebrated his 100th birthday. "While this is not a typical adoption scenario for us, we were happy to be able to help this man make a connection with a Golden when they both needed it most," Marcom said.

As a nonprofit, Rescue A Golden of Arizona welcomes donations and is always looking for volunteers to help with home visits, transporting dogs, assisting with adoption coordination, intake and more. "We have a comprehensive list of opportunities to volunteer on our website, and people can stay up to date on what's happening with us by following us on Facebook and Instagram," Marcom said.

To learn more, go to golden-retriever.org.



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