

FEATHERS & CURLS

Bi-annual Newsletter of English Springer Rescue America, Inc.

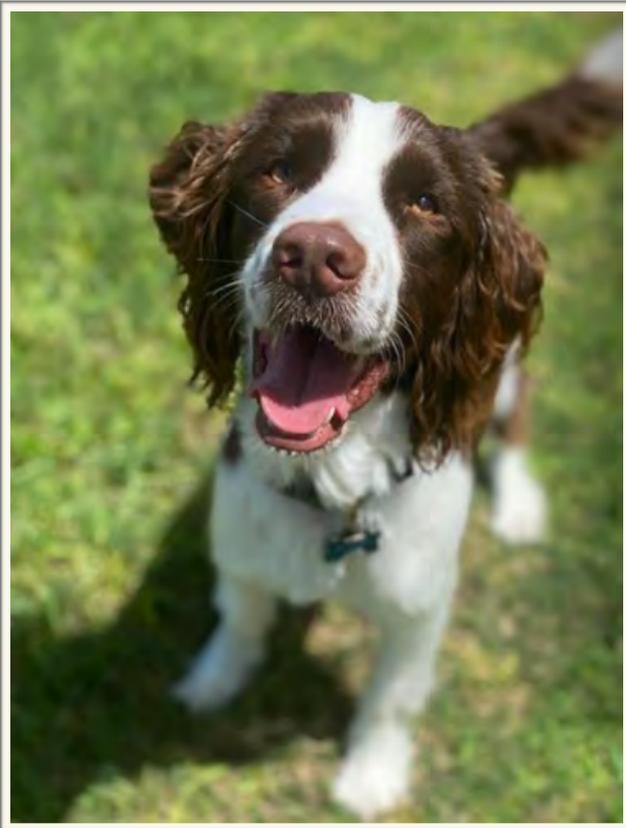
SUMMER 2020



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NEWS FROM THE BOARD

ESRA's Board Members Keep the Doors "Open" for Rescue Business

The pandemic hasn't stopped ESRA's board from pursuing its mission. In fact, the board has been hard at work keeping operations running—and running smoothly—while the country has battled COVID-19. Here's what board members have been up to since the last newsletter:

- In February, the board approved the adoption of new software, RescueGroups, to track ESRA's dogs. Since then, ESRA's IT & Web Team Coordinator Kathy Patterson has led the effort to work with the board and administrators to implement the new system and train all users on its features. The transition has been smooth, and many users have reported that the system is easy to use.
- The board approved the use of Doobert, an online dog transport system, in an effort to make it easier on coordinators to arrange transports. Board member Barb Doolin has worked with the site to address ESRA's specific questions, and she has worked to introduce the website and help ESRA members sign up for transports.
- When COVID-19 emerged here in the United States, Board member Dan Replogle led the board's effort to implement a COVID-19 Response Plan to determine whether and how ESRA could continue operations if key members, such as coordinators, became ill and unable to do their work or if states prohibited the activities ESRA does to save Springers. The team has continuously monitored the economic landscape and worked with the full board throughout the pandemic. The board is pleased to report that ESRA has been able to help every dog it learned of during the pandemic and is committed to continuing doing that while ensuring its volunteers' safety at the same time.
- The board has approved new or temporary measures to ensure flexibility during the pandemic. Those include its March decision to set up an ESRA account with Chewy.com to enable shipments to fosters as needed during an emergency. They also included temporarily expanding ESRA's boarding policy (to accommodate the need for longer boarding if transports couldn't be arranged during the pandemic) and temporarily altering the spay and neuter policy (to permit a dog to be spayed/neutered post adoption if vet services weren't available for those procedures during the pandemic).
- In April, the board approved the creation of the ESRA C.A.R.E.S. Committee, led by board member Linda Plate, to offer guidance to members dealing with senior or special needs dogs and those experiencing the loss of a beloved pet. Look for the article in this newsletter for more details on the program.
- In June, the board approved ESRA's 2019 audited financial statements presented by ESRA's audit partner: Mersereau, Lazenby & Rockas. ESRA's audit partner reported that ESRA continues to be in a strong financial position with strong financial controls.
- In July, the board consulted with ESRA's outside legal counsel to determine if ESRA was required to hold an election with only incumbents running for the open seats. The short answer was no, so the board voted to halt election activities and appoint the incumbents—Nicole Bellemare and Dan Replogle—to three-year terms beginning when their current terms end.
- The board approved the addition of a chapter on adoptions to ESRA's Coordinator's Manual.

LEASH SKILLS FOR HUMANS

- Nancy Kelly

One joyous vision of having a dog is going for long walks in the beauty of the outdoors with a beloved canine companion, enjoying the sights and smells of the world, and becoming more closely bonded as partners. This can occur only if both human and dog have the skills necessary to the task.

We humans commonly have abominable leash skills, mostly because we assume we have control of the dog simply because a leash is attached. We tend to depend on the leash, and we just don't try very hard, hence all the discussion online about what type of equipment to put on the dog to "make" it walk nicely.

We allow ourselves to be distracted from our job of paying attention to the dog, being its partner, enjoying teamwork with our beloved dog, and most importantly, doing the required training to help a dog succeed. Try to imagine from a dog's perspective what it might be like to get excited about going outside for a walk with no real guidance from the human on the other end of the leash:

"I always run to the end of the leash, pulling with all my might, nose out and stretching my legs to get to the next exciting thing along the path. My human is coming behind, but so slowly! I pull harder. I don't feel any pain from my collar or harness pulling—I think they call it being 'desensitized.' My human sometimes makes noises or offers treats, but I'm so excited about the sights and smells I can barely hear her, and the outdoors has completely captured my brain, anyway! This is how our walks always go. My beloved human just can't seem to keep up, but I'll just go on my own. Partnership? What's that?"

One big problem with this scenario is that the human has very little control over the dog. If anything untoward happens—another dog comes around the corner or a squirrel or cat crosses the path—the handler will be lucky to be able to physically pull the dog out of danger by dragging on the leash. If any of the equipment fails, they're in big trouble.

Consider two human friends out for a walk. There are certain understandings between them, honed from childhood in the form of politeness and manners. Walking along next to someone requires vigilance to ensure you don't bump, trip, or step in front of them. When you reach a fork in the path, you use some form of communication as to which way the two of you will turn, whether it's a simple pointing gesture or nod of the head, or actual words: "Why don't we go this way?" We certainly don't grab a human companion and pull.

How can we make a walk with a dog look more like two companions walking together than like a rodeo?

First, we have to know what's possible. If we've only ever walked a dog—er, had a dog walk us—on a tight leash, it's hard to imagine a loose leash and partnership with a dog. Believe it's possible, that you have the power to make the choice, and you're capable of learning it.

How dogs learn is well documented in behavior science. When we use positive reinforcement to teach leash skills, we get a dog who curiously looks for what to do to gain rewards, paying attention to the human at the end of the leash. When we use equipment that limits their ability to move, tightens up, or zaps them when they pull on the leash, we get a dog who makes decisions based on avoiding pain or fear and sometimes a dog who simply gives in to the drag on the leash in a situation termed "learned helplessness."

Why should he think or try when he doesn't even know what it might feel like to have a loose leash? If the leash is always tight and pulling, why would the dog ever pay attention to his handler? He can just lean on the leash and move in the direction with the least resistance; he can even have some control over the direction. If the handler pulls harder than the dog, the dog will give in to the pressure—but the handler might need an ice pack for his arm when they get home!

Dogs don't "come with" leash skills. It's not innate, and in fact, it's quite foreign to them. Consider what it might be like to have a line attached to you and someone pulling you around with it when you have your own ideas of where you'd like to go. Training is required, for humans and dogs.

"You can't expect an animal to reliably perform a behavior you haven't gone through a teaching process to train the animal to do."—
Alexandra Kurland

There are so many individual skills on both the human end and the dog end of the leash that we could fill this story with them. I'll name just a few of the important ones.



What will you put on your dog next when he still doesn't walk nicely with the current equipment on? Training is the real answer, not equipment.

LEASH SKILLS FOR HUMANS

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Dog skills

- **Loving the equipment** and doing what's required to have it attached to their body. If the equipment itself causes a dog to back away or be cautious, it's not a good start to a pleasant walk.
- **Consistently doing their job.** The dog's job in any situation is whatever you define and train. If the human doesn't know what we expect, how can a dog know what he's supposed to do? A dog's job can be as simple as walking at the handler's left or right side as trained, keeping the leash loose, moving when handler moves, stopping when handler stops, taking a break to go smell something when the handler indicates it's time, or coming back to handler's side when asked. Dogs are thrilled to do their job when they understand what's expected and the paycheck is good!
- **Using the human as their guide for decision-making.** The handler's voice, body language, and rewards constantly communicate what works for the dog. A squirrel, cat, or fire hydrant isn't what you respond to; check with the human at the other end of the leash if you want access to something.

Human skills

- **Planning:** Setting specific goals; positioning yourself and the dog; knowing what's likely to distract your dog from his job and making plans to help him through that situation. It's also about knowing what you'll do with your other dog and the kids while you train this one, if that's your situation.
- **Assessing:** Resisting "going for a walk" until you and the dog have the skills you need. If the dog can't keep the leash loose as you approach the front door, how can he keep the leash loose after you go out, farther down the block, or heaven forbid, at the park?
- **Practicing your skills:** Creating habits of holding the leash, walking in a straight line with consideration for the dog next to you, paying attention to the dog's needs, and feeding treats to the dog as you're moving to reinforce correct behavior as you've defined it. Feeling awkward with your own skills isn't conducive to helping your dog succeed. (See the video below.)

Having good leash skills is key to working with lots of dogs in a rescue organization. We humans develop routines and habits and tend to do the same things over and over again, just as dogs do. We all do what's worked for us in the past. Rather than handling every dog the same way we always have, we need to practice the habit of reading dog behavior so we can respond in a way that allows them to change their behavior. If you learn only one thing about leash skills, let it be that you have the power to keep the leash loose. If you do, you reduce stress, anxiety, and arousal, and you facilitate dogs solving the problem of how to walk with you as a partner. Let your body language and treats do the work of getting dogs to walk with you, and let the leash be simply an extra safety device.

- **Training the dog:** Leash skills must be trained; dogs don't come with them. Work on each individual skill in a location and at a level where the dog can do it right and get rewards.
- **Managing the leash.** Do it in a consistent manner, hanging loosely without pressure on the dog but helping the dog keep from getting tangled up in it.
- **Performing an emergency U-turn.** Practicing U-turns prepares you and the dog for getting out of a situation when necessary. Practicing off leash in a safe area with few distractions helps you and the dog hone your skills. Check out this video for tips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0c2W3qVC4o>
- **Getting your dog's attention quickly**

The Value of Treats in Training Leash Skills

Tiny, kibble-sized treats that are super tasty are the best training tools around. Treats and commitment are truly all you need to develop good leash skills. If your dog isn't a good eater, you have problems other than leash training, most likely anxiety or stress levels. Dogs in a new home are usually a bit stressed and may not be interested in food, and you need to deal with that right away.

Sometimes a new dog can benefit from leash walking, but only if they can do it with some semblance of skill—on a loose leash. If a dog is pulling on the leash, he's increasing stress and anxiety and not learning to walk on a leash nicely; find some other way to help him exercise.

You can use other forms of reinforcement for leash work while separately working on your dog's eating behavior, but it's much slower. The reinforcers or rewards you give have to help the behavior you're training get better or they're not helping you achieve your goal. Pay attention to whether the behavior is getting better as a result of being released to play with a toy, get petting, or have a short play session with you. If the leash behavior you're training isn't getting better, you need to change how you're reinforcing or rewarding it. It's really that simple; the hard part is disciplining ourselves to do what it takes to pursue the goal we want to achieve.

Want more leash-training tips? Email Nancy Kelly, who has much more information to share, at bluemarble@furstenwerth.net.

LEASH SKILLS FOR HUMANS

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How to Get Started

1. Make a plan. Without your dog around, stand in the living room with your treat bag on and a leash in your hand and decide which side you want your dog to walk on. Experiment with ways to hold the leash and how you'll give the dog treats as you walk. It's very helpful to get another human to hold the snap end of the leash and walk with you, holding a hand out to receive treats.

You have so many options: two hands to choose from for each job, and you can change as needed; but you have to practice without a dog because this is likely a new skill set and it will feel awkward at first. This is where you create your vision of how a walk can be.

Video: Practicing without a dog: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4i_H2rWF-c

Video: Practicing with a "surrogate dog": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVqOlh04DEY>



It's effective to start when a puppy is young so he never learns habits you don't care for, but any dog can learn new skills—and any human!

2. Try it once. Treats are the best training devices. Put on a treat bag with so many treats you won't run out. Set the leash aside for now. Set a timer for one minute and simply give your dog a treat every time he's at your side as defined in your plan. Feed him treats while standing still. Take one step and feed him if he takes a step to remain at your side.

Be quick! Feed him immediately! If you don't, you're likely to miss him "getting it right." Each treat he gets increases how often he'll make the choice to be in that position, and you may need 100 "correct choices" for your dog to get the idea that this is a valuable behavior to practice.

Start strong, give a treat for every correct choice, and you're on the road to success. While you're training leash skills, you're also increasing the frequency of your dog looking at you, which helps build the behavior of "checking in." If your dog "checks in" with you regularly, it will be easy to get his attention if you need it at some point along your walk, helping you keep the two of you safe.

3. Be consistent. You really have to commit to your leash goals because your dog doesn't care. He's happy to keep going the same way he always has—pulling like crazy. Your dog can't understand what's expected of him unless you do it every single time the leash is on and a lot of the time when the leash is off.

Trust the process, and whenever you're ready to start going for short walks, remember that they're training walks. In fact, every walk is a training walk—you just want to make sure you have a say in what your dog is learning. Invest your time and effort in creating the leash behaviors you want, and enjoy the result as they develop.

4. Build the behavior you want. The process of training is different than the vision you have of the final behavior you want, but *both* are important. Picture how you want things to be, and use your training sessions to reinforce tiny bits of behavior that look like they lead into that vision.

If a child draws a straight line, that may be the beginning of writing an "A" and lead to the vision of reading and succeeding in life. If a dog chooses to take a step at your side rather than walking away from you, it's the beginning of a long walk in partnership. Continually increase your standards as the dog learns to offer you the behaviors you like—the ones you give him treats for and the ones that make you move forward so he can see and smell more new things.

Be creative in how you set up short training sessions, making sure the dog succeeds most of the time. He's not ready to learn from failure at this point—that comes much later. Right now, he has to learn just how beneficial it is to do what you want.

Video:

- It's best to practice in tiny increments of leash behavior; here's how to begin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMbZ3ZCHHMY>
- Watch the elbow movements and the high rate of reinforcement this intern is using with a shelter dog: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ys7eLbPNcQ>
- Demonstration of final behavior with Albert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxq6MSrKZk>
- Demonstrating the same mechanics while teaching a dog to heel with a power wheelchair: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9oddViyYQo>
- Starting indoors, making sure you'll have a loose leash outdoors; if you can't walk out the front door with a loose leash, how are you going to have one farther along your path? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99SvRoGEm38>

FOSTER HOME EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

- Ronnie Riner and Dan Replogle



Experienced foster homes know how to safely bring a new dog into their home, nurse them back to good health, and start changing bad behaviors using proven training techniques. They reintroduce them to a family home environment and then help place them in a forever home best suited for their success in life.

Their efforts are invaluable to the work ESRA does daily.

However, many of ESRA's state coordinators say they don't have enough experienced foster homes. Some states have done an excellent job of recruiting, training and mentoring foster homes, others have asked for help in this area. To provide that assistance, ESRA recently formed the Foster Home Excellence Committee, or FHXC, whose role is to help coordinators recruit, train, and mentor foster homes. The goal is to recruit more foster homes and help them become more knowledgeable and proficient at setting our dogs up for success.

Here's what the committee has accomplished in the first half of 2020:

- It created a Facebook group for all of ESRA's foster homes that provides a platform to share and exchange ideas, experiences, and photos. The group provides a means by which to seek and gain support from one another or from ESRA's foster home mentors and dog behaviorists. Currently, 500 of our foster families are doing just that.
- It launched a recruitment campaign: "Try it once—Be a part of their story...Foster!" The effort challenges challenging each ESRA member to try fostering a Springer one time with the hope that you'll continue to foster.
- It strengthened ESRA's foster home training program with a focus on the safety and wellbeing of all animals and humans and creating an environment that improves the adoptability of the foster dog. The current focus of this work is the initial orientation and mentoring of new foster homes.
- It created a network of experienced foster home mentors who collaborate to strengthen ESRA's mentoring programs and offer assistance and emotional support to foster homes. All new foster homes will be assigned a mentor who'll then talk them through the orientation and be available to answer questions as they arise and direct them to experts for advice and support.

Happy Beginnings Lead to Happy Endings

We all love hearing the heartwarming stories of happy endings when a dog finds its forever home. But all of those happy endings begin with a foster home that has done all it can to set those dogs up for success. Here are just a few of those "happy beginning" stories.



Molly and the Ferguson family: Deanna Ferguson fostered Molly, a two-year-old stray who tested positive for heartworm disease. Deanna was relatively new, having fostered only one previous Springer—but she was up to the challenge!

One week into treatment, Molly started coughing. By the next day, her breathing was labored, and her gums and tongue were turning purple. Deanna rushed Molly to the ER, where she was stabilized in an oxygen tent. After this early scare, the rest of Molly's heartworm treatment was textbook successful. Deanna has since fostered many Springers back to good health and helped move them on to their forever homes.

FOSTER HOME EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

- Continued

Ruger and the Fewell family: Two-and-a-half-year-old Ruger was surrendered to a shelter in Michigan after having been in three homes that couldn't correct his resource-guarding behavior. The shelter's assessment was that Ruger was unadoptable. ESRA's coordinator contacted Joy Fewell to see if she would foster Ruger. Joy took her two-year-old female Springer along to the shelter and spent some time getting to know Ruger to make sure it was safe to bring him home.

Once at home, Joy observed the resource guarding behavior and reached out to Nancy Kelly for advice. Nancy provided Joy with techniques to use: Trading treats for whatever Ruger had in his mouth and asking Ruger if it was OK to approach, if it was ok to touch him, and so on.

Joy learned to teach Ruger to associate everything with a treat so that things he might not like were associated with something good, basically taking the pressure off of him in all situations. He learned to retrieve and return his ball when playing rather than guarding it. He's now a great fetch-player! Ruger was adopted by previous ESRA adopters who are providing him his best home ever!



Addy and the Hughes family: Senior girl Addy was pulled from a shelter in early April. Newly approved foster Rose Hughes agreed to take Addy into her family. After a few days, Rose noticed Addy was asking to go out frequently for potty breaks during the day and was also chasing shadows. Surprise—Addy was more of a project than expected!

Rose had Addy checked by the vet, who ruled out medical issues, and Addy was given a clean bill of health. Rose then got in touch with Nancy Kelly, a trainer/behaviorist who donates her expertise to help ESRA dogs. Nancy worked with Rose and Addy for a few weeks to help manage Addy's general anxiety. Fast forward to mid-May . . . Addy was adopted! ESRA can't thank Rose enough for hanging in there and putting in the time and effort to get Addy ready for her forever family!

Foster Home Excellence Committee: Kathy Armstrong, Sheri Cromwell, Nancy Kelly, Beth Maryan, Carolyn Molloy, Christi Olinger, Kathy Patterson. It's co-chaired by Ronnie Riner and Dan Replogle.

FOSTER HOME EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

- Continued



Bitsy and the Lambert family: Shannon and James Lambert and their two boys have fostered more than 100 Springers since they began fostering in 2009. The Lamberts are one of the "go to" homes for their state coordinator for dogs that need lots of TLC. Many of these dogs need treatment for heartworm disease or assessment and modification of serious behavioral issues.

The Lamberts are most proud of their current foster girl, Bitsy. Bitsy came to them with heartworm disease. She was easily frightened, had to be carried outdoors to take care of business, and was an escape artist once she was outside. Over the course of several weeks of training and care, Bitsy came out of her shell, her true personality emerged, and she is now very sweet and unafraid.

Although the Lamberts would love to adopt every foster dog, they'd feel bad about depriving an adopter of that opportunity. Over the years, they've adopted several fosters, but they've always left room in their house for the next foster. Shannon has two pieces of advice for new fosters: Be patient and very careful when first bringing a dog into your home since you really won't know them for a while. And treat them like your own dog.

Thanks so much to the Ferguson, Hughes, Fewell, and Lambert families for providing a safe haven and halfway house for the dogs ESRA rescues. ESRA's mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome Springer Spaniels couldn't be accomplished without good foster homes like theirs. We hope to recruit many more over the coming months with the "Try it once" campaign.



How can you fail?

The most frequently stated reason for not fostering we've heard during the "Try it once" campaign is the fear of "foster failure"—of taking home a foster dog and then adopting the dog after deciding you can't live without it. This is Gabriella Filisko's perspective on that concern:

"This is my boy Pucklechurch nearly a year after Christi Olinger fostered him. She loved him enough to let him go, and I'm so thankful she did. This is why foster parents let fosters go—because they can be happy in a forever home, and there's always another dog who needs a soft, temporary place to land. Thanks Christi and all fosters!"

Thanks again to all of you who continue to foster—ESRA is forever grateful for what you do to save our Springers. Please let any of us know if you'd like to volunteer to support any of these activities, or if you'd like to stick your toe in the water and "Try it once" by fostering.

ESRA C.A.R.E.S. - Linda Plate



An organization like ESRA, built on over 20 years of members' compassion and dedication, reminds us that members, too, need someone to lean on from time to time. With this in mind, I'd been thinking for quite some time of a program that could give back to the ESRA community in a way that might benefit its members. The result is ESRA C.A.R.E.S.

What is ESRA C.A.R.E.S., you may ask? For starters, it's a new committee put together to help members share their personal experiences with their own senior or special needs dogs. Additionally, the committee was formed to offer grief support to members who may be suffering the loss of a family pet or the adoption of a foster, or even to offer compassion and understanding to those who may be experiencing compassion fatigue.

Our platform for sharing our experiences, concern, and maybe even recommendations to those in need is a Facebook page that has been created for ESRA members only. The core team of the committee who are ready and willing to help serve you comprises ESRA members from all walks of life and experience. Among us are several foster parents, veterinarians, an animal behaviorist, retired medical professionals, Springer breeders, and others who've loved and cared for many senior or special needs Springers through the years.

“C” is for Compassion... something that ESRA volunteers have a LOT of!

“A” is for Affection... something that we all share with the pets we love.

“R” is for Reassurance... something that many of us need from time to time when loving and caring for senior or special need dogs.

“E” is for Empathy... a trait this team have for others who are experiencing difficulties or dealing with terminally ill or ailing pets.

“S” is for Support... Something that this team is ready to offer for your questions, concerns, or emotional support if you are grieving.

If you currently own a dog—it doesn't have to be a Springer—that may be having health issues or showing signs of decline in old age or possibly behavioral changes that may be giving you difficulty, we're here to help. If you've lost a pet and would like to share that story with us, we want to offer you our support in that regard as well. If years of working in rescue have taken a toll on your heart and may be causing you sadness, we truly care and are here to lend an ear or share our own experiences.

The sole purpose of this group is to be supportive in nature. It's in no way a replacement for the professional advice of your veterinary providers, specialists, or personal trainers. If your questions or concerns involve your ESRA foster dog, we recommend that you work with your state coordinator, regional vice president, or our Foster Home Excellence team. We may be able to help you better understand your pet's diagnosis, treatment options, or even help with end-of-life decisions. Wherever you feel the committee might be able to help, or even if you're willing to share your own experiences that could potentially help others, this is the reason this group has been formed. We hope you'll find it a useful and enjoyable source of open communication with other ESRA members.

ESRA C.A.R.E.S. -Continued



Our team is ready to support you. Here are a few words from some of them on what participation in this committee means to them:

"ESRA CARES means to me a group of fellow ESRA members who can listen, reassure, share past experiences, and offer support to peers." – Etta Meinecke

"To me, it encompasses love of dogs, compassion to ensure healthy life, and resource for owners of seniors and special needs dogs." – Barry Breckle

"This group means to me a way to support and honor the human-animal bond." – Taryn Lindbeck

"I see ESRA CARES as facilitation of a community of humans. The humans who love dogs worry, grieve, and suffer with the crises pets bring into our lives. It's easy to feel alone during a crisis with a pet. The pressures of decision-making and not being able to control what's happening to a beloved pet are very personal experiences that can isolate people. ESRA CARES can offer community, a network of like minds who care about animals and people. We can help heal and usher people into their new reality following a crisis, whatever that turns out to be." – Nancy Kelly

"ESRA CARES means to me that we're extending our compassion, love, support and experiences with our fellow dog lovers." – Christi Cooper

"For me, it's the freedom of sharing my love for my Springers and sometimes the sorrow when you lose one without reserve. To know others, love the breed, and understand." – Gail Dingee

Look us up on Facebook at ESRA C.A.R.E.S., <https://www.facebook.com/groups/358611731764237>, and submit a request to join the group. We'd love to have you join us. It's our goal to respond quickly and be at the ready to help you any way we can. If you're not a Facebook user, reach out to our committee at ESRACares@springerrescue.org.

ESRA C.A.R.E.S. Committee: Barry Breckle, Gail Breckle, Christi Cooper, Gail Dingee, Nancy Kelly, Taryn Lindbeck, Debbie McCane, Etta Meinecke, Patricia Meiser, Angela Mesarchik, Darci Petercheff, Linda Prouty. It's chaired by Linda Plate.

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

By Rene Pizzo



Richard and Martha Lang with Geeche, Mardi, and Brezi

ESRA members have a passion for Springers, and Martha and Richard Lang of Darien, GA, are no different. When they recently updated their wills, they left a planned gift to ESRA. "ESRA has given us 19 years of love with our two Springers," says Martha.

What is it about Springers that makes them so special? Why do seemingly normal people drop everything to pull needy Springers from shelters, transport them hundreds of miles, bathe them, groom them, train them, take them through the long, difficult heartworm treatment process, and match them up with their new forever home?

This passion for Springers is something all ESRA volunteers have in common.

Long-time ESRA members Martha and Richard Lang have been helping Springers for many years. They adopted their first girl, Miss Mardi Gras, in 2001, and she brought joy to their lives for the next 14 years.

They adopted their second girl, Brezi, in 2007, when she and 40 other Springers were rescued by ESRA from a puppy mill in Alabama. Though she had a rough start in life when she was diagnosed with bilateral hip dysplasia at six months and needed extensive orthopedic work, Brezi continues to bring joy to the Langs' lives daily. As Martha puts it, "She's now 13 years old and still runs like a little filly."

The Langs' passion for this wonderful breed led them to volunteer with ESRA. The Langs have been involved with screening applicants, home visits, transports, vet visits, and scanning Petfinder and Craigslist daily looking for Springers in the southeast region who need a new home. They're on call to help as needed.

The Langs have no children, so they decided to leave their estate to ESRA. As Martha so eloquently says when asked why, "It's so that the work can continue and these wonderful dogs will have their 'forever homes' and will never be cast aside. Through the years, we've seen the compassion and devotion of hundreds of volunteers throughout the United States who've saved countless Springers whose lives, without ESRA, would have ended. ESRA has given us 19 years of love with our two Springers."

Carry on your compassion for Springers and the work of ESRA through a variety of options, such as a gift from your will, retirement plan, or living trust.
ESRA encourages you to consult your legal and financial advisors when considering a planned gift.

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

-Continued

There are a number of ways you can help Springers be rescued, rehabilitated, and rehomed:

- Make a gift to ESRA in your will or living trust, either as a specific dollar amount, as a designated percentage of your estate, or as the remainder after bequests to loved ones have been made.
- Include ESRA as a designated beneficiary on your life insurance policy, IRA, other retirement plan; on savings bonds; or through a specific bank account.
- Instruct your brokerage firm to “transfer on death” to ESRA some or all of a specific brokerage or other financial account.
- Provide for a gift of specific property, real estate, stocks, or other items.

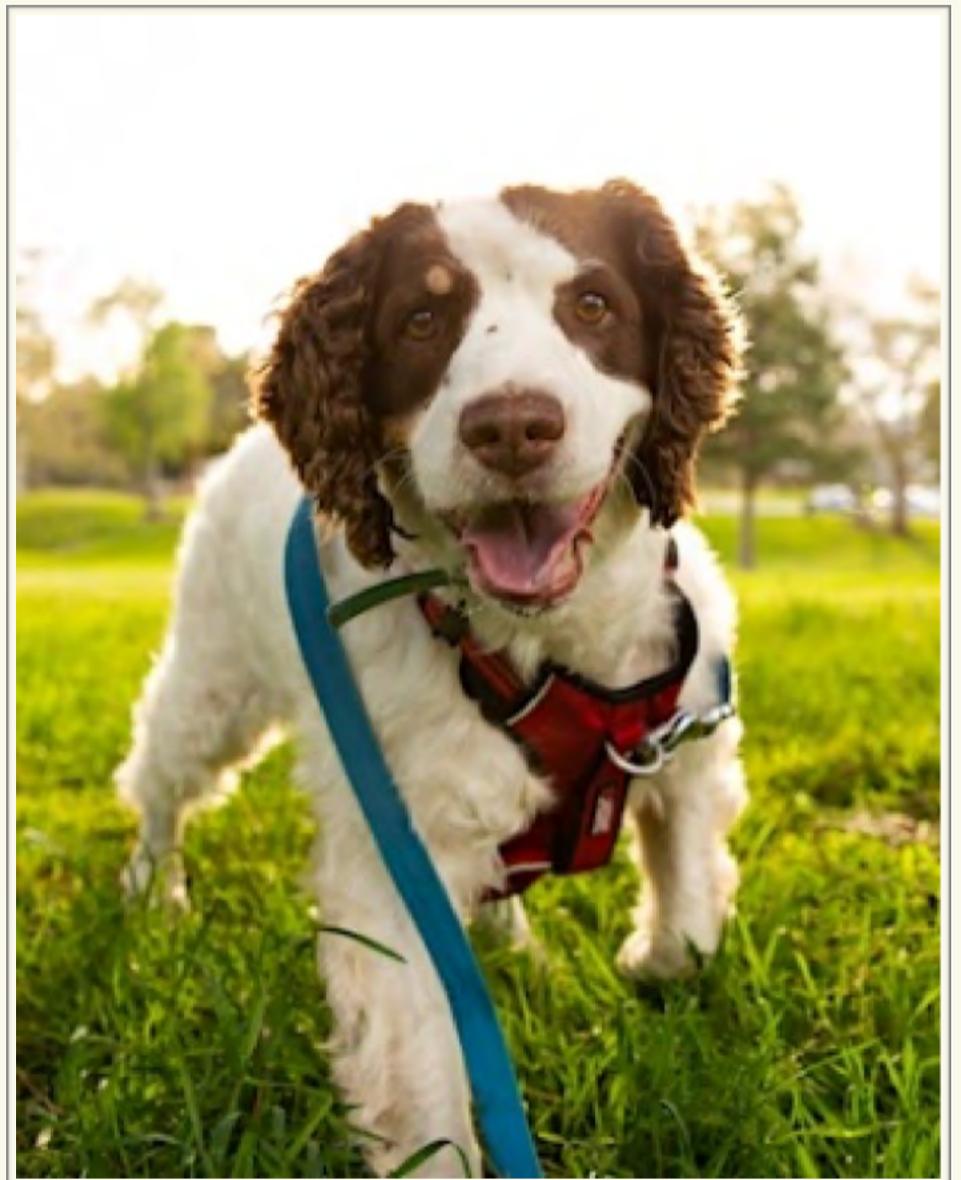
You may designate that your bequest be used for ESRA’s general purposes or to support a specific program, such as special needs dogs.

The following is wording you might use for a bequest, but be sure to run anything you’re considering by your estate planning lawyer to ensure it meets your state law and your own goals:

“I give and bequeath to English Springer Rescue America, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation, with principal offices presently located at 1025 Rose Creek Drive, Suite 620-305, Woodstock, GA 30189, the sum of \$____, to be used for the accomplishment of its general purposes (or for a specific purpose, as indicated).”

Federal Tax ID #33-0872975

For more information, please contact ESRA at bequests@springerrescue.org or treasurer@springerrescue.org. All inquiries are held in strict confidence.



Carry on your compassion for Springers and the work of ESRA through a variety of options, such as a gift from your will, retirement plan, or living trust.
ESRA encourages you to consult your legal and financial advisors when considering a planned gift.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Kim Harris, Washington: ESRA member since 2004

The Springers in her life

Kim and her husband both grew up with Springers. When they first got married, they bought their first Springer puppy, Rosie, from a breeder. Then they adopted Minnow from ESRA after he was turned over by some caring nurses when his owner became very ill and couldn't take care of him.

Cassidy Marie was adopted when Barb Doolin, ESRA's Washington coordinator, asked Kim to temporarily foster a dog that wasn't working out in its current adopted home. Cassidy was blind and needed a different environment. After about 24 hours with the Harrises, they knew Cassidy wouldn't be going anywhere. She had a very special relationship with Rosie, who suffered from seizures. Tragically, Rosie and Minnow passed within 10 days of each other.



On the way home from the ESSFTA National Specialty that year, the Harrises stopped to meet a one-year-old Springer named Josh that couldn't show. He was incredibly sweet with Cassidy and, once again, they were a multi-Springer family. Currently, Kim and her husband are surrounded by three beautiful Springers: Josh, Violet, and Jake. When Kim and her husband have adopted a dog from the Puget Sound English Springer Spaniel Association, they've also donated to ESRA to help rescue other Springers.

How she's making a difference

Kim has pulled numerous dogs from shelters, fostered a few, and done many a transport. She's the main point of contact to organize the area's annual picnic. She has raised thousands of dollars for ESRA over the years through yard sales, event raffles, ESRA store sales, and the rescue roast coffee partnership in Washington. (Love a cuppa Joe yourself? You can check it out here: <https://camanoislandcoffee.com/rescueroast/>.)

In 2009, Kim went on a second run to Missouri after ESRA did a large rescue there; she was helping to bring to the West coast more dogs that needed extra assistance. In 2016, she was the local volunteer liaison for the ESSFTA National Specialty held in Washington. Kim, along with ESRA another volunteer, started the national ESRA Facebook page before eventually turning it over to ESRA's social media team.

When did you get involved with ESRA and why?

We were wanting to adopt another Springer. We'd discovered ESRA but were also considering a local animal rescue organization. We decided to volunteer at the local organization but also kept an eye on ESRA. Since Rosie suffered from seizures, we knew it would need to be the right match and that fostering would be a challenge since it increased stress for Rosie.

We began by walking dogs at the local rescue organization. During the six to eight months of volunteering, a Springer never came into the local rescue organization. So we contacted ESRA and completed the application, home visit, and other adoption processes and adopted Minnow. This led to a rescue parade with the local ESS group, raffles, or auctions with 50 percent of the proceeds going to ESRA. Eventually, we were transporting, managing raffles and the rescue parade, and more for both ESRA and the local ESS club.

Why do you do what you do?

I look back on volunteering at the shelter, and the one thing I've really gotten out of it is some really wonderful friendships with like-minded people. When you're around people who have the same kind of love and passion for animals, there's something that just touches your soul that I can't even begin to describe. I've met some of my best friends through rescue. You'll be surprised at the amount of people you meet, and you feel like you've known them forever as kindred spirits.

The local picnics are amazing. We do a raffle and sell stuff from the ESRA store. One year, it was raining and everything was blowing around. It was just a mess, and all I wanted was to raise money for ESRA. Everyone pulled together, and we figured things out. We raised more at that picnic than we'd ever raised. I realized then that it's not about me or what I'll raise for ESRA. All these volunteers come together, and it just happens. It's so amazing.

What would you say to others who are thinking of getting involved but haven't yet?

When they think of rescue, a lot of people focus only on whether they can foster. But there are so many other things you can do to volunteer. I really think it's easy to get paralyzed by "I can't foster" and get stuck. If anything, go to your local shelter and see if there's something you can do, such as walking dogs, helping with laundry, or socializing animals. During the pandemic, I made wristlet keychains, which were given to anyone who donated at least \$20. I made more than \$700 with a birthday fundraiser on Facebook. Take that one little step because you don't know where it'll take you.

RENEW OR JOIN NOW!



To join:

It's free and easy, just fill out the application here-
<https://www.springerrescue.org/support/join/>

To renew:

Log into your member profile at-
<https://englishspringerrescueamerica3.wildapricot.org/>

You will be prompted to renew your membership if needed.

All members are strongly encouraged to keep their contact information up-to-date by logging into their profile at the above web address.

NEXT NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2020

Be on the watch this Winter for our next newsletter containing news from the Board, interesting training tips and learn about what ESRA does day in and day out to make this a better world for both our beloved Springers and their families.

If you're like most members, you don't know all of the literally hundreds of people across the nation working hard to rescue Springers through ESRA—they're quite literally ESRA's unsung heroes. If you have a story to share, please let us know!

If you'd like to nominate someone in your area to be featured in an upcoming issue, or have an idea for an interesting story please email the newsletter team at newsletter@springerrescue.org.



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