

RESCUE MISSION

Furry Kids Refuge receives first grant en route to saving dog

By Pete Gutschenritter
The Journal Staff

To see just how far Lee's Summit-based Furry Kids Refuge goes to save cats and animals, one doesn't have to look much farther than Frank.

Frank, a Newfoundland mix believed to be 10 to 12 years old, once lived on the street with a homeless man. Frank developed a yeast infection in his skin and sacro-lumbar stenosis, the narrowing of space for spinal nerves that could have left him paralyzed.

Frank was seized by the Independence Animal Control and set to be euthanized, until Kim Accurso, president of Furry Kids Refuge, came to claim him.

"We had been watching him and when his time came (to be euthanized), we brought him in. We take in animals like this. We don't shy away from this type of situation," Accurso said.

Furry Kids Refuge is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization

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Frank, a Newfoundland mix, was rescued by Kim Accurso, president of Furry Kids Refuge, at the Independence Animal Control this spring. Frank, believed to be 10 to 12 years old, is one of 70 cats and dogs up for adoption. Profiles of the potential pets are available at www.furrykidsrefuge.org.

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that relies on donations to care for the animals it rescues and puts up for adoption. The group has established foster homes across the Kansas City area that care for the pets before they are adopted.

Frank's situation was unique in that the state he was in was near fatal. His medical bills amounted to approximately \$4,000, Accurso said. However, as they prepared to give Frank the surgery he desperately needed, Furry Kids Refuge found some financial relief when it received its first grant from the Internet-based group Orthodogs Silver Lining Foundation.

The \$1,000 grant from OSLF, a non-profit organization that provides assistance to service, rescue and companion dogs with orthopedic needs, helped finance the surgery that saved Frank from potentially being paralyzed.

"It was so wonderful and so kind of (OSLF) to give us the grant," Accurso said. "It makes things like this possible."

Frank, like 69 other cats and dogs in the care of Furry Kids Refuge, are now up for adoption. Like donations, "forever homes" also are needed for Furry Kids Refuge to be successful in its effort to reduce euthanizations.

"These are wonderful, perfect pets — some just need more work than others," Accurso said.

There are two other dogs

currently in the hands of the Furry Kids Refuge that also are in need of financial assistance.

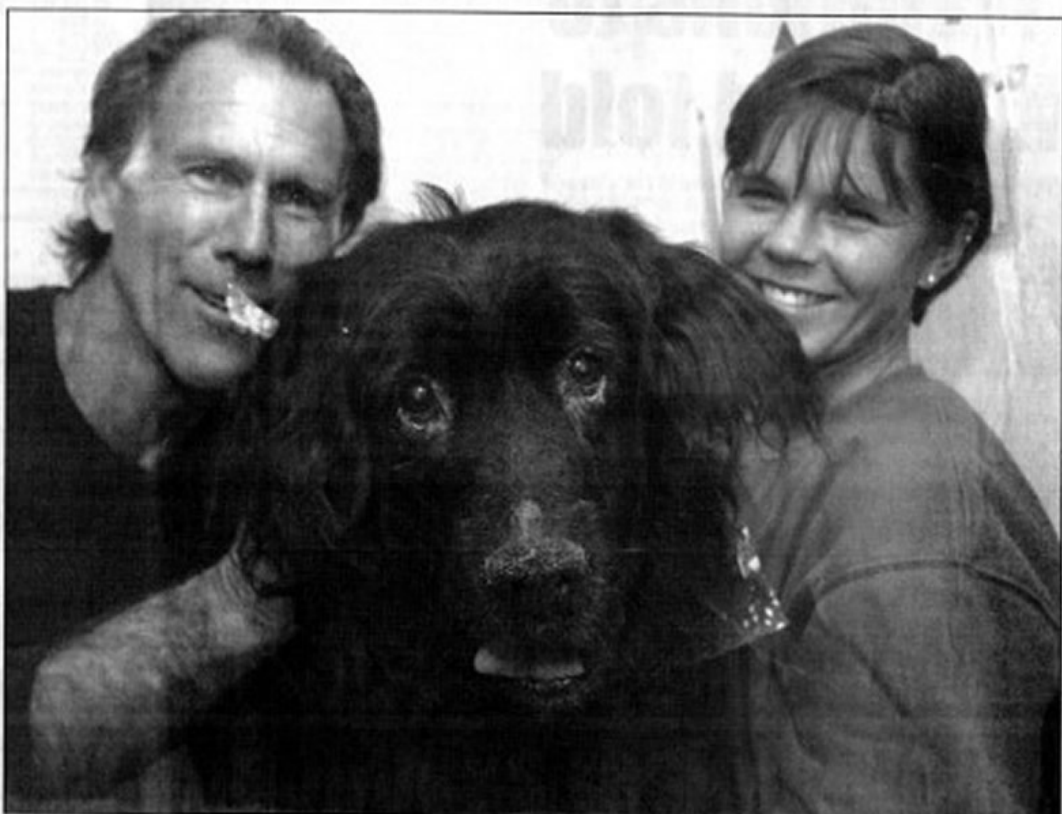
Boomer is a 1-year-old black lab that has a birth defect in his right arm. From his right elbow down to his paw, he suffers from the arm that is underdeveloped and "looks like a fin" in X-rays, Accurso said. A prosthesis may be needed for Boomer.

Stanley is a Newfoundland mix puppy who suffered from the worst case of pneumonia Accurso has ever seen. He has since recovered thanks to a lot of medication and special treatment in an oxygen-enclosed tunnel. He will be available for adoption next week.

"We give dogs like Frank, Stanley and Boomer a chance," Accurso said. "We don't pass them by just because they have some problems."

Profiles on the dogs and cats available for adoption are posted on the Furry Kids Refuge Web site, www.furrykidsrefuge.com. Accurso and the group of volunteers from Furry Kids Refuge also go to the Lee's Summit Petco, 1860 N.W. Chipman Road, with pets available for adoption from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays each month in the winter beginning in December.

All animals in the care of Furry Kids Refuge are spayed or neutered and receive all vaccinations, are heartworm tested and kept on preventatives. Adoption fees range from \$105 to \$175, Accurso said.



Jeff Kirchhoff/The Journal Staff

Galen Ericson (left) of Ericson Veterinary Hospital in Blue Springs, Mo., helped bring Frank up to good health after he was rescued from the Independence Animal Control by Kim Accurso (right). When Frank was rescued, he had a yeast infection in his skin and needed nine teeth pulled. Ericson also diagnosed Frank's sacro-lumbar stenosis, the narrowing of space for spinal nerves that could have left him paralyzed. Frank received a surgery that was partially paid for by a grant Furry Kids Refuge received from Orthodogs Silver Lining Foundation.

For Accurso, a self-described animal lover, that's a small price to pay to limit the

escalating number of animals that are euthanized each year. "The reason we do this is over 6 million animals die in shelters each year," Accurso said. "These kids would be part of that number if we didn't save them."