

Feeding Our Souls

Throughout most of 2010 and 2011 DDAF has focused on assisting senior companion animals in need – dogs, cats, and likely a few guinea pigs, ducks, and a pot-bellied pig or two through one of our grants to rescue groups across the country. Of course spay / neuter and our Horse Adoption Center have been central to our efforts also.

One group, Peppertree Dog Rescue (www.peppertree.org) of Albany NY, rescues dogs headed for euthanasia who have good temperaments and a real love of people, no matter their age. Sometimes it's simply to serve as hospice care, but more often the group has proven effective in finding forever homes. One story this year really stood out for us, and pointed out the real value of rescuing seniors.

Mahogany came to Peppertree around eight or nine years old – underweight, with an eye infection, double ear infections, upper respiratory pneumonia, lower GI infection, mouth tumors, and several mammary masses. Not what many would consider a likely adoption candidate. But throughout the nursing, antibiotics and trips to the vet, her tail never stopped wagging and she proved to be an exceptional old gal indeed. Surgery was still ahead on the mammary growths, but off she went to an adoption clinic with her foster. One very special young man of 12 fell totally in love with her and wanted to stay in touch to hear about the surgery. The verdict no one really wanted to hear was breast cancer with less than a year to live.

Amazingly enough, this young man's family opted to let him adopt Mahogany anyway so she could enjoy her few remaining months in a loving forever home. Peppertree, with help from the DDAF grant, waived the adoption fee and covered the veterinary costs. Peppertree volunteers know there is no logical or practical foundation for rescuing poor-condition seniors, but Mahogany reminded them they are saving some very special beings. As one foster put it, "It does a good job of feeding our souls!"

It makes you wonder who gained the most – Mahogany herself? The young man and his family who adopted her? Or even the volunteers at Peppertree? Just one of the reasons we do what we do.

When you're thinking of adopting – please keep our senior companions in mind; they have a great deal to offer!