



Val's Pals German Shepherd Rescue

A rescue organization focused on saving and improving the lives of German shepherds

Written by Wendy Teng | Select photography by Shanna Kenney

German shepherds in search of new homes can find hope from Val's Pals German Shepherd Dog and Large Paw Rescue. The non-profit dog rescue was named after Valerie, one of the founding member's first German shepherds. Valerie was beautiful, smart, and most of all, a best friend to Melissa Kambitsis. The loss of Valerie brought sadness and grief, but it also inspired Kambitsis to dedicate herself to helping other German shepherds in need.

German Shepherds Awareness

In October 2014, fellow German shepherd owners Melissa Kambitsis, Jeannie Barker, Rikke Tafelmeyer, and Kim Munroy started the group. The organization and its volunteers work toward rescuing, rehabilitating, and finding new homes for German shepherds.

As one of the top five dog breeds known to be abused, abandoned, lost, or stolen, Val's Pals also tries to prevent



Val's Pals began in 2014 with the goal of rescuing and rehabilitating German shepherds and other large breed dogs



Melanie and her rescue, Duchess



Karla Hughes with her shepherd, Shelby

their abuse and abandonment. Although the main focus is German shepherds, they also rescue other large and mixed breeds. The volunteers work hard to pair the dogs with foster and forever homes that are suitable for both owner and animal, and the return rate is minimal. “[We] always put the welfare of the dog first,” says Karen Blanchard, applications coordinator at Val’s Pals.

Welcoming Love and Care

The German shepherds that are taken in by Val’s Pals usually come from euthanasia lists at shelters, were strays, or those in need of medical help. Val’s Pals takes in approximately five German shepherds each month, but the maximum number of dogs they can help is 25 at one time. The organization does not have its own facility, so all of its dogs reside in the care of foster homes.

The dogs receive vaccines, treatment for infections, and get spayed or neutered when they are in the care of Val’s Pals. They also cover all the medical expenses for the dogs in foster care. “We really want to make a difference, to help these beautiful souls recover and go on to live a healthy and happy life,” says Blanchard. Every dog is vetted, medically cleared, and screened carefully before they are available for adoption. There are approximately 21 dogs available for adoption and six dogs available for foster care.

Dog’s Best Friend

German shepherds over the age of 5 are wonderful companions for seniors. Blanchard adds, “We call them ‘velcro dogs’ as they will never leave your side.” Nearly 15%

of the dogs from Val’s Pals are adopted by owners 50 years and older.

Val’s Pals is planning to work on a few unique and special projects in the new year. One program will offer to support senior citizens by keeping the dogs as their own, help pay the vet bills, and opt to take the dogs back if needed. Another project will focus on finding foster and forever homes for senior and disabled dogs. “We hold both senior citizens and German shepherds close to our hearts so this is a passion for all of us,” says Blanchard.

Paws Before Adoption

Although German shepherds have many positive attributes, Val’s Pals advises that German shepherds are not always the right fit for every household. Families who are considering adopting one should be ready for an animal breed with lots of energy that can often be challenging. Val’s Pals thoroughly reviews and approves the placement of their rescued dogs to ensure success. Reference checks and home visits are required before they give final approval for adoption.

Val’s Pals welcomes volunteers, fosters, transportation help, those who want to sponsor a dog’s medical expenses, and donations to cover expenses. All donations to Val’s Pals are used entirely for the care of dogs, and no compensation is given to volunteers or its officers. **KM**

For more information, visit valspalsgsdrescue.org

WENDY TENG is a freelance writer who loves dogs and hopes to help save more dogs in need with her writing.

A HAPPY ENDING



Miracle was run over by a car and left in the street when the owner thought she was dead. Val's Pals convinced him to surrender her to them where they rehabilitated her and placed her with a forever family.

Adoption & Visiting Days

February 21 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Petco Store 17412 S. Grand Pkwy.	March 5 12 - 4 p.m. Petco Store 7510 Westheimer Rd.
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