**Calendar**

**ADOPTION EVENTS**

*Please refer to our Web site for Adoption Event dates.*

**FUND RAISING EVENTS**

**June 8th** - Paws in the Park, our annual dog walk for homeless animals. It’s never too early to start planning on attending. Visit our Web site for details.

**November 2nd** - The Sixth Annual Save A Dog Auction. We hope that you’ll join us for a fun day of bidding wars and fund raising. Every year it’s a blast. Mark your calendars now.

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**Greetings From Shirley**

It’s been a very exciting and productive year at Save A Dog and we have a wonderful newsletter to share with you. So grab a cup of coffee or tea and spend a few minutes getting your heart warmed with some really touching tales of dogs who we helped this year. I think you’ll be so moved by the rescue stories that you’ll want to share this newsletter with all your friends. Many of the stories you’re going to read here are written by our own teen volunteers. This summer I took four of our hardest-working, faithful teen volunteers on a “mission trip” to visit and help out several humane societies and shelters in rural West Virginia. Several of the teens wrote about their experience and how the trip impacted them. I was so moved by what they wrote that I wanted to share it with all of you. Hopefully, you will be inspired about the work that we do and continue to bless us with your financial support, plus share this with your friends and family.

For me, it was such a joy to finally meet my West Virginia rescue partners. Most of the WV work is done via emails and phone calls, so it was great to finally meet everyone face to face. These are people I hold close to my heart. (Continued on Page 7)

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**West Virginia Diary**

*(as told by Laura Macleod, a teen volunteer)*

Doing rescue work has become a part of my daily life; whether I have a foster, am online reviewing applications, or helping at the shelter itself I am always doing something Save A Dog related. Unloading transports, getting to know the dogs, fostering them, and hopefully adopting them out to great homes is a normal routine. I always read about the horrid situations the dogs we rescued were in and I was well aware that most of the ones that we, and other Human Societies didn’t take from WV were put down. I knew that every dog I cared for at Shirley’s, handled at an event, fostered, and did the adoption for was another dog I was helping saving...but I never knew how urgent the situation was and how much each dog we saved or helped save meant until seeing it for myself.

**Pennsylvania:**

Shirley told us straight out that the trip would include long car trips, and many sad shelters. She thought Hershey Park PA would be a good stop before heading for WV. She said we would need something fun to do and see before heading south. I thought to myself well, I wouldn’t mind the (approx) 14 hour drive to WV and going straight to a shelter, but Hershey would be nice, but I was wrong. The break from driving and a fun part of the trip was much needed. Thanks Shirley.

The first day Shirley, the other teens and I pulled up to Taylor County Dog Pound. We saw dog runs with Border Collies, Hounds, and other dogs all running back and fourth. They all seemed happy a roof over their heads, walks every day, food every day, and play mates. We walked back to some more kennels with more dogs, a Husky, a Rottie, and a lot of hounds. Everything was (Continued on Page 3)
Nina — My Foster Dog  
by Rebecca Robinson, a teen volunteer

Nina’s timid and distrusting nature towards new people made it seem as if she would never find her forever home — but today she has proven me wrong. Her new family is here and ready to take her home. The couple keeps looking down at her and then back at each other with radiant smiles, while their ten-year-old bounds about with joy. We walk to the car in silence, but it doesn’t bother me. I just can’t help but feel odd with this completely new person holding the leash of my precious Nina while my hands hang idly by my sides. Her leash is taut as I have never seen it before while she pulls to get back to my heel. I try to explain to her that this is her new person and that all will be well, but I can find no understanding in her eyes, just confusion and longing. Her big, bright eyes seem to want to communicate but all I can do to avoid tears is look away. When I glance back she gives me an excited wag but soon becomes disappointed when I make no move toward her. We just keep walking toward their car, but I’m secretly hoping we never get there.

I start to think back to our first night together. It had been routine to go to Shirley’s house and pick up a dog to take in as a foster. But when Nina and I arrived back home and sat together in the kitchen she was not interested in me and shied away. Each time I made an effort to look into her blue and brown mismatched eyes, she avoided my gaze. I left her alone for ONE SECOND, and when I returned the front door was cracked open and there was no dog to be found. I flew out the door just in time to see a white flash bolt out of my front yard.

A minute later I found myself with my mom in the car, tears streaming down my face as Nina ran up the center of a busy road full of speeding cars and honking horns. I screamed her name out the window but each time she stopped, she looked back only for a moment before tearing further up the street.

We followed her diligently as she ran and with each car that was forced to slam on its breaks, my heart skipped a beat. There was a screech of halting brakes and I shut my eyes instinctively. When I brought myself to open them, Nina was still standing, but there were many cars stopped and she seemed not to know which way to go. Confused, she staggered backward toward the other lane, but that was the worst move she could have made. Out of the darkness appeared a set of huge blinding headlights which came barreling toward her. I thought it was over. I had no idea what to do; I just sat there desperately trying to make sense of the scene around me. My mom leaned her whole body down on the car’s horn, trying to deter the driver. The source of the headlights, an eighteen wheeler, came to a screeching halt only feet from the spot where Nina stood frozen. Breaking my motionless gaze, I flung open the door to the car.

“Nina” we coaxed gently from inside the vehicle. To our astonishment she began to edge toward us. When I thought she was close enough, my arm darted out and caught her by the scruff. All my fear suddenly subsided, all the visions of how horribly that night could have ended seemed to vanish from my mind. As I hauled her up over my mom and into the car, I felt as if I should be thanking the god I don’t usually believe exists. The traffic resumed at its regular pace, but sitting on my lap Nina’s tail broke into its first wag as if it had been waiting for years to find a reason to move. Since that moment, she has never left my side.

Now it’s time to say goodbye; to send her off to her forever home. I don’t feel ready, but I never feel ready when it comes to this point. We have finally reached their car and the family begins to climb in. I kneel down to take a moment to say farewell, and our eyes meet. But this time when I look into those bright eyes, I can see understanding. She leans in and gives me a kiss on the nose, as if to say “Thank you”, as if she knows exactly what’s happening. I don’t know where this sudden understanding of hers comes from, but for some reason it seems to help me come to terms as well. When I look into those eyes once more, I feel no more grief; no more longing for this moment to have never come. I am not her forever home; I am simply some help along the way. She has found her place in this world, and it is my time to let go. As the family’s car pulls away I watch Nina sitting serenely in the back seat, staring forward toward her new life. I can almost see her tail wagging its slow yet joyful wag.
clean and the dogs were happy after we had walked them, groomed them, and played with them each separately. Once we started talking to the directors we realized that this only happens once a day and sometimes there are too many dogs or not enough time for individual attention, this was sad because all of the dogs really loved all of the attention they were getting. A Border Collie I brushed out was covered in matts, a Beagle I sat with rolled around in my lap and cried after me as I left, and a Shepherd I walked ran around and got out all of his energy, as if he had never been able to run before. We ended the day on a good note taking 2 Beagles (Peaches and Justine), 2 Yorkies (Itsy and Bitsy), and the Husky (Aspen) back home.

West Virginia, Day 2:
Late morning on Tuesday we pulled into Ritchie County Human Society. We saw a barking black lab walking in the road, loose and found it was the directors own dog. The shelter works like this: Puppies loose in a trailer, Kittens loose in the same trailer, cats in cages in the trailer. Adult dogs in pens outside with dog houses, kept with up to 3 other pen mates. As we took turns walking and cleaning dogs every dog I sat down with was craving attention, barking as other dogs passed by and rolling around begging for more scratching. As we left them in their cages they all jumped onto what dog houses they had barking and jumping looking up at us with really sad eyes. That was so hard to see. I pulled a Rottie named Robyn out of her cage, she was different. She walked calmly by my side and looked up at me every so often to see if I was still there. Her cage was clean, somewhat organized. One corner for eating, one for bathroom, and one to sleep in. She didn’t bark, or jump when I left, just stared at me… almost crying. As I write this, Robyn is in her new home. As we pulled out I was at ease knowing Robyn, and a 7 month old Minpin/Shepherd mix named Emily would be saved. However I was trying hard not to think of the fate of all the others. [Editor’s note: Ritchie County is a high volume county shelter taking in dogs from the whole county. They have to euthanize for space as they don’t have the option of turning any dog away.]

West Virginia, Day 3:
We left early Wed morning to go to Friends For Life. Donna Jo has many dogs (around 90!) and calls her humane society a ‘dog sanctuary’ as she has no adopters for the dogs she takes in. As we pulled up we could hear the dogs barking, some lunging at the cages to get out. As we greeted Donna Jo, we grabbed leashes and were told which ones we could walk. We proceeded to the outdoor dogs and opened a kennel with 2 Beagles; Duke and Gus. Becca and I walked them down the road they were so, so happy to be out. After our walk we gave them each a good pat and put them back, both barking and crying for more walks and attention. We walked 2 hounds, A Shepherd and a Corgi mix, and many more dogs until we were done with the outdoor dogs. We wanted to walk a little black dog who was happy wagging his tail, licking us but were told she was way too fearful for a walk. Once she noticed others were being walked she scaled a 12 foot wooden fence and got her nail stuck. We all watched her rock back and forth on the fence. Lily unhooked her nail and DJ got her off the fence and back to her pen. This was absolutely heart wrenching. DJ then led us to various porches, and fenced in areas with many dogs in them. Most of them older, some of them with missing fur on parts of their bodies. She told us we could walk them all, but most were limping or not leash trained so we offered to sit with them and pet the friendliest ones of the group.

We moved from porch to porch pointing out the few younger, friendlier dogs that we might find homes for. As the end of our visit neared, we said our goodbyes to all of the dogs, wishing we could have done more then we did. DJ offered us a tiny puppy and we convinced her to let two of the beagles come too. This day was one of the saddest, most heartbreaking days of our trip. Donna Jo had a huge impact on me.

West Virginia, Day 4:
On Thurs we had a different kind of day. Monroe County Animal Shelter has no shelter, but foster homes, like us. Before we left, the owner of the chapel we stayed at is also a foster parent, so we walked to her house and met Lace, a lab mix, Misha a Shepard mix, Benny, a lab hound, and Daisy, a spaniel. They were all very sweet, very playful, and very trainable. Shirley added them to the list. We spent lots of time with these dogs. At another foster home, we met Smiley, a shy border collie, who...
Eventually warmed up and let me and the others pat her. Lindsey was just a little social butterfly and the lab was obviously owned. We left her house, Smiley and Lindsey would soon be Save A Dog’s. We also added Bongo, a mastiff and Annie, a Boston Terrier, to our list. This day was filled with mixed feelings; happy the dogs were out of bad situations and some had awesome fosters, yet sad that they were in limbo.

West Virginia, Night 4:
After going to Monroe, our last shelter we headed up to a volunteer’s house for a cookout. All the foster moms and rescue people from Monroe came. Dina’s home was surrounded by and 8 foot fence with iron gates that opened on their own. It was situated up in the mountains surrounded by 350 acres of farm land. During the night to our surprise we heard paws clicking around, all 8 of her dogs big and small were upstairs on the couch and running around. 3 of her dogs really touched our hearts. Shadow, a 7 year old Shepard mix had a bad cancerous tumor on his muzzle and in his mouth. She drove him up to MASH in Hopkinton and bought an ozone machine for her dog, which is a new way to treat cancer victims. He has lived past his prognosis, all because of the love Dina has for him. Annie, a 6 year old tree walker has 3 legs because while Dina was walking with her one day, a 17 year old boy shot the dog in the leg because he thought she was going to get the deer he was hunting. That explains the fence. She had other dogs too, that she had rescued from bad situations. These dogs had the life; 10 acres of land, a pool, a huge house, and most of all an amazing mom who will do anything to keep her kids (dogs) safe. Dina left a huge impact on us, showing us what caring really means.

Pennsylvania, Day 5:
Day 5 was another one of those “take a break have some fun” days. We drove up to Harrisburg, PA were we re-booked our previous room. We were given a behind-the-scenes night tour of the Medical Facility at Zoo America. There we used blow darts to practice tranquilizing (a cardboard box), held a baby owl, held an alligator, fed 2 otters, and fed 3 big black bears. It was amazing.

Transport Day, Day 6:
Day 6 was the final day of our trip. We drove down to Hagerstown to meet the transport. We left Harrisburg, Dave following us in the SAD van; filled with crates, collars, and leashes. Once we arrived the 5 dogs from Taylor County awaited us. Next we took the 2 dogs from Ritchie county. Last but not least, the driver from Monroe, who had also given Donna Jo’s 3 dogs a ride showed up with a van full of dogs, all for us. Once everyone was loaded, we took off for our 8 hour drive. We stopped a few times for gas and ice. We arrived on time at Shirley’s. We unloaded all of the dogs, walked, fed and walked them again. We finally ate lunch at 10:33 p.m. Then after all of the adults and Becca were gone, Tally, Lily and I headed up to the guest room and fell right asleep. We started as normal the next morning bright and early feeding, and cleaning.

This trip had such a big impact on me. We saw both sides of the spectrum; the saddest, worst, dirtiest situations for these dogs and some of the best. We saw shelters killing by the hour and some who just couldn’t put anything humanely to rest. These dog’s stories are so much more personal to me then any other dogs I have met and helped thru Save A Dog because instead of hearing about their stories, I’ve lived it. When I talk to people about their previous fosters/ homes I can tell them what the dog really went thru, not just second hand information. All of these shelters are trying so hard and mean very well, but just don’t have the resources to give these dogs what they really need. Most of what we saw was heart wrenching, some of the things we saw put smiles on our faces. But in the end this trip has changed my thoughts about rescue, Save A Dog and the work we do so much. It has made me care so much more about the dogs we save. And most of all it made me realize that the name “Save A Dog” is the absolute best name, because we truly do Save these dogs from abuse, neglect, and sometimes even death.
A Success Story — GusGus

I could not wait to write to you and give you an update on how our sweet Gus is doing. He is sprawled out on the floor snoring with his big sister as I write! Gus was meant for our family. He adjusted very quickly to his home, his yard, and to his big sister, Sophie. He knows that she is the boss and stands back at the door to let her out first. She taught him how to enjoy a good bone, and even how to tear apart stuffed animals and play ball!

He is indeed a quiet beagle (much to our neighbors surprise!) and just stares up at you, as if to say “What would you like me to do next?” So proud of learning how to sit, he often just sits down right in front of you, so full of heart and eager to please. Everyone looks forward to our after dinner walk. He is training very well on his leash and I now walk both dogs without any problem. We have had a few housebreaking lapses, but we are working on that every day. He tends to need many reminders to stay off the couches, though, as he does enjoy a comfy snooze and has a tendency to sneak up when no one is watching! He loves our family, especially my brother Brian, who came with me to pick him up when we adopted him from Save a Dog. Gus and Brian have a very tight bond.

GusGus, as we call him, has a heart of gold, and my only regret is that we didn’t find each other sooner. He is home.

Thanks again!

Erin O’Leary
She lifts her head, shaky and unsure.

I loop the two ends of an old donated leash to form a collar, and gently slip it over her quivering head. As much as I had imagined that this would be the happiest day of her life, I can only see the fear and depression looming in her eyes. It forces me to think back to where she came from, her story, and why she is here.

The ground beneath the dog’s feet no longer sprouted grass. The dog’s paws were dry and cracked from pacing on stones all and every day, and their coats were caked in dry mud. The dog in the miniscule pen to my left was standing in front of a dark puddle, lapping up the thick muddy water.

After inquiring more about her from the caretaker, I focused all of my attention on her. I was told that she was eleven years old and had lived at “Friends for Life” since she was a seven week old puppy. She arrived with her mom and 2 littermates who one-by-one, eventually escaped and ran off. “They were either run over or shot.”

When I went over to her pen for the second time, she looked up. Her rich mahogany eyes caught the light as if every ray of the sun was pointing down to her, a spotlight. The glistening specks of transparent caramel and coffee tones aided in the illusion of her blank, haunting expression. Everything about her seemed pathetic and isolated, except for her eyes. The translated a faint suggestion of hope.

“Save Me,” they cried.

Her coat was noticeably oily and gritty. Her body was a pathetic bag of skin and fun containing no muscle. Her short, stout build did a fair job of hiding the significant amount of emaciation; although her pelvic and a few rib bones managed to emerge thought thick ridges of fur. I promised her that I wouldn’t forget her, that this wasn’t the life for her, that I’d find a way to save her.

All of the volunteers are inside, helping Shirley make for the dogs’ first meals since the beginning of the nine-hour road trip. Partially from fear, and partially from the bald patches in her coat, Gypsy continues to tremble in my arms. Even through a thick layer of fleece, I can still feel the bitter chill nipping at my bare neck. We are sitting just outside the basement door in Shirley’s yard, utilizing the only remaining source of light. She was surprisingly tolerant of the leash, and is now lying next to me with her head resting uneasily in my lap. This is the first night of her life that she will spend sleeping indoors, though she does not know that.

I can feel her heart racing. She withdraws from my comforting grasp and hobbles to a patch of dirt within the length of the leash. Calmly, she begins to nest; circling and turning the soil in attempts of creating a comfortable place to sleep. My eyes become glassy as I observe this behavior that comes so naturally to her. Nonplussed by my interruption, she stops nesting as I gently tug and gesture her to follow. She obediently heels at my side as I escort her inside.

Our West Virginia Trip

By Tally Levitz

West Virginia was TONS of fun, but it was also really sad. It was lots of driving—in total we were in the car for over 40 hours. We visited various shelters, walking, playing, and grooming the dogs and cleaning out the pens. At one shelter, the cement slabs the dogs were on hadn’t been cleaned in days, the drinking water was green, and the pens had beehives in them, because there was so much work and so little help. At Friends For Life, there were 89 dogs; it was heart wrenching. I brushed out one dog Tonka who’d been there since she was four months old and now she’s eight years old. She had terrible mats and some even had to be cut out. Another dog, when she saw that other dogs were being walked, scaled a 12-ft fence to try and get to us. None of the dogs were routinely walked, but they were all so sweet. It was sad to think of them living so long in small pens. Some didn’t have any shelter at all for the winter. Despite Shirley’s declaration that this was going to be a “no-hounds transport,” we came back with a few since we fell in love with so many dogs. It was hard to leave so many behind. Our dogs don’t know how good they’ve got it.
Greetings From Shirley, Cont.

They work tirelessly to save lives and trust us with dogs they have pulled off the street or out from under barns or abandoned houses and in many cases, have taken from death’s door back to good health.

The whole experience of this trip is one that will stay with me for a long time. Driving with four teens in the car was an inspiring, although sometimes exhausting, experience. On a typical day we would drive for several hours, and then hop out of the van and spring into action, walking dogs, cleaning out pens, giving care where it was needed. I brought homeopathy kits and left an animal rescue kit and instruction booklet with each shelter. As I talked to my rescue colleagues about the wonders of the healing art called homeopathy, we administered remedies to the various dogs and cats in need. The teens really enjoyed visiting the “kitten room” at Ritchie County and brought out the tiniest kittens for us to hold. June, the shelter director, is another “rescue savior” who works tirelessly on behalf of dogs. She and her husband drive regularly to Hagerstown, MD to meet the canine underground railroad so that the dogs have a chance at getting a great life. When she learned we were coming, she held some dogs for us to look at in hopes we could take them back up north. We fell in love with everyone she showed us and the teens picked out some dogs, including a young Rottweiler, Robyn, who thought she was a lap dog.

The teens were such an inspiration to me on this trip. They saw some difficult things, but took it all in stride and kept on working, cleaning the filthiest kennels without any complaint, even working around swarming bees, which were living in some of the igloo dog houses. It was an emotional trip, with many highs and lows, but it felt so good to be able to make a difference, and to give some of the shelter workers a break, even if for a few hours. Also, it was such a good feeling to be able to share our knowledge of homeopathy, a healing art that is inexpensive and extremely effective, and to end the trip on a good note by filling the van with 22 very lucky dogs.

The most memorable place we visited was a humane society called Friends For Life. I had heard about FFL for the past few years and even had taken a dog or two from them, but never dreamed that so many dogs could be housed in one small facility. Actually, it was a house. Many of the dogs were housed outside in pens, all jury-rigged together. Laddie and Gypsy, two dogs we rescued, had been there for ten years, living outside.

Before our visit to FFL, I had the impression that most of the dogs were just hard to place, special needs dogs, as most seemed older or sickly and Donna Jo, the director, always sounded so upbeat, that I assumed she had plenty of help and didn’t really need our help. Donna Jo is an amazing woman, like a Mother Theresa to her rescued dogs. She has been closed for intakes for years because she does not euthanize to make space. She takes care of the ones she has and will keep them for life, even if it means the dog has to live outside in a pen. It’s a different mindset, but I respect it and have vowed to try to help as much as I can. For me, it was an education to learn that people in that part of the country can legally shoot their dogs if they don’t want them anymore. To Donna Jo, this is unacceptable and she won’t take that chance with a local adopter. So the dogs sit, sometimes for years. Well, we’re hoping to change that and we already have started to bring some of those dogs up. At our benefit auction I told the story of the Friends For Life dogs and people in the room raised their paddles to donate directly to help us bring more dogs out of the cold. That was a day that still gives me chills thinking about it. I’m hoping to inspire our supporters who couldn’t attend the benefit to help us continue our dog rescue efforts. So far this year, we have saved 250 lives. Your support is important to help us continue the work of saving lives.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Lovingly yours,

Shirley Moore
President and Founder
Save A Dog, Inc.
Hi Foster Mum Jill, Scott and Cloudy;

I have been settling into my new home and I love it!!!!!!!!! Mum, daddie and I walk every morning before they go to work and then I get a nice warm bowl of breakfast with some Cheerios on top- Mum says if its good for her heart then it must be good for mine. My favorite time of the day is when the sun comes into the dining room and I sleep on the rug and soak all that warmth in! I have definitely gotten used to this kind of living! Another favorite time of the day- dinnertime, it is so much fun to watch Mum make dinner and it always smells sooooooo good and I always know that I will get a taste as well!

Its a bit colder up here than in West Virginia but I am the luckiest girl and I love it here! Daddie often tells Mum that I won him over to get to her-- she is just so much fun to watch.

I hope to see you all again soon! Happy holidays and happy new year too!

Love

Gypsie