Bichon Bits & Bytes

November 2013 Bichon FurKids Rescue

Thanksgiving is a time that we give thanks for the wonderful people, places and things in our lives. This year we want to give thanks to all of you who are a part of our bichon community and to share two special stories.

A Very Special Kind Of Love: Gianna

Vicky and Tom Slesser have owned bichons for many years. In March of 2013, their little 11 year old Lucy suffered a spinal cord injury and passed away. Lucy's unexpected passing left Vicky, Tom and 10 year old Lucky adrift. Wanting to return the joy and unconditional love that Lucy gave her family, Vicky reached out to Bichon FurKids and volunteered to assist us at the Spring Bichon Bash – then offered to assist us at an adoption event in Irvine.

At that event, Michele Olivier was carrying a very special little white fluff in a pouch. Vicky thought the furkid was Michele's own, as she knew Michele often did that at events. When she discovered that Michele's special pup, Princess, was available for adoption, Vicky offered to take her for a walk. That is not unusual at an adoption event! Taking a blind dog for a walk in a new area, however, can be a bit more challenging.

As they walked around the facility Vicky began to feel this very strong emotional feeling towards Princess, and was surprised at how she felt. Vicky had no intention to adopt another dog so soon after Lucy passed. She wanted to give Lucky some special time of his own. Despite that, there was a special bond that formed between a special lady and a special furkid. Let me explain…

In 2004 Vicky got sick; her diagnosis did not happen right away. When it did Vicky found out that she had an acute type of leukemia. With care and treatment from the City of Hope, Vicky was in remission within three months. That remission lasted for two years – then the leukemia returned. As a native American (she is part Cherokee Indian) finding a donor is more challenging. Vicky's oncologist recommended a stem cell transplant – and Vicky spent four months in the hospital recovering and getting stronger. As someone who had leukemia twice, Vicky's chances of surviving were 40%. Happily she beat the odds.

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(Cover story, continued)

As a way of giving back Vicky has been involved in helping others who suffer from leukemia. One of the things she has done is to grow her hair, which she donates to children with leukemia.

Princess, too, has an interesting story. She was left at an LA shelter with one very small, deformed eye and a very precious little face. She was six years old, sweet, spunky and needed a chance. Soon thereafter Princess, as we named her, became a furkid.

As part of our vetting process, Princess went to Stonecreek for a wellness check and an evaluation of her eye. Dr. Glass confirmed that her eye was deformed at birth and she was not seeing out of it. He then went on to let us know that Princess was experiencing a lot of pressure in her other eye – and that pressure was very painful (although Princess never complained.) He said the kindest thing to do was to remove both of her eyes, something we had never done before. Dr. Glass observed that Princess was such a special and happy little girl that someone would come along and love her for her spirit and her sweetness. We all prayed that he was correct …

After the adoption event, Vicky asked if she could foster Princess. Within three days the bond between Vicky, Tom and Princess grew. Lucky was not quite sure at first but came to understand this little girl's presence in his life. The Slessers decided to adopt Princess and changed her name to Gianna or G for short.

It turns out that Gianna is very smart, curious and quite mischievous. She loves to cuddle and play(!) and has learned a number of commands, including step up, step down, pick you up and put you down. If the ground is uneven Vicky tells her 'be careful' and she is. When Vicky jingles the leash (which she loves) Gianna knows that walk time is imminent – then Vicky and G go off together. Gianna is incredibly smart. Vicky remembers how she tested G by walking past their home on a walk recently. Gianna was having no part of that! She turned around and brought Vicky back to her home.

This past July Vicky celebrated her six year anniversary. She believes that one of the reasons she survived was to be there for Gianna, also a survivor. Vicky says she and Gianna are kindred spirits, grateful for surviving and with a great zest for life.

We, too, are very grateful for Vicky and Tom – and for the love and care they are providing to a little girl who came from the streets of LA to the warmth and love of an amazing home and family.

A Very Special Kind Of Love: Luna

Little Luna was born with a hole in her heart. That is not unusual in puppies, however the hole usually fills in the process of being born. Unfortunately, Luna's hole did not. Over the course of the next 18 months, Luna's heart kept working harder and harder (and growing bigger and bigger) to keep her alive.

In October, whomever the person or family who owned Luna previously let her go. All six pounds of her wandered the streets of LA until the Animal Control officer found her – and brought her to a shelter in Van Nuys. At that shelter a devoted volunteer called Pnina named this little girl and became Luna's advocate. She contacted us and we immediately did two things: 1) Began looking for someone to foster her (as we can never exit a dog without having a foster home) and 2) Made arrangements to transport Luna to Stonecreek Animal Hospital for an evaluation by Dr. Jeff Glass, whose diagnosis and assessments we rely on every week.

The result of Dr. Glass's evaluation was that Luna needed to see a Board-certified cardiologist immediately to see if she was a candidate for surgery that would save her life. Without that surgery, it was not likely that Luna would survive into the new year.

Dr. Jason Arndt is a colleague of Dr. Glass, who earned his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from the University of California Davis in 2004. He then pursued a rotating internship at the University of Illinois in 2005, and a three year residency in Cardiology at the University of Pennsylvania, after which he obtained board certification.

A skilled surgeon, optimist and very kind man, Dr. Arndt practices cardiology at the City of Angels Veterinary Specialty Center. He agreed to meet Luna to determine whether he could help Luna. When he evaluated her, Dr. Arndt observed that Luna's heart was the size of a 95 pound Rottweiler, beating in the chest of a six pound pup. He concurred that the surgery needed to be done at once – and that the likelihood of success and a normal life for Luna was high.

With a fund drive spearheaded by our own Natalie, money donated by many of you and with assistance from the Hogan Foundation, Luna had her surgery. Within 24 hours Dr. Arndt said that Luna's heart had decreased an astonishing 30%! Foster Mom, Cheryl, tells us that Luna is getting better and stronger each day. She has the love and support of Cheryl, the comfort of doggy foster brother, Bijou – and the support of many of you in our wonderful community.

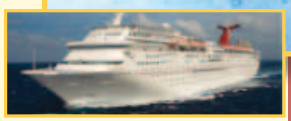
So on this Thanksgiving we are very grateful for the people who contributed to Luna's miracle – and will be sharing Luna's story and photos with you going forward.

Cruisin' for FurKids!

Join us for a 4-Day Cruise from Los Angeles to Baja Mexico aboard the Carnival Inspiration!

September 8 - September 12, 2014

Join us for a FUN and FUNDRAISER Cruise, coordinated especially for BFK through Carnival Cruise Lines! Invite your family and friends — and come along with other bichon lovers to have a great time!



All ages welcome! There are programs for kids and adults galore! (Sorry, no FurKids allowed on the cruise though!)

The 2054-passenger cruise ship departs Long Beach on Monday afternoon, September 8, and cruises all night, then arrives early Tuesday morning at beautiful Catalina Island. We'll spend the day at Catalina and then depart on Tuesday evening for Ensenada, Mexico. There, under Mexico's famed sun and blue skies, you will have all day Wednesday to relax and enjoy Ensenada's shopping, excursions and attractions, returning to the ship that evening. On Thursday, enjoy the ship's amenities to your heart's content as we cruise all day and overnight back to LA. Sit on deck with a drink and a book, relax at the spa, participate in the ship's many ctivities for adults and kids alike, enjoy fine dining, shows, and more, until we arrive back at Los Angeles on Friday morning.

Prices for this fundraiser are:

Category 4B - Interior - $ 373.04 per person

Category 6B - Ocean View - $ 413.04 per person

Prices include cruise fare, taxes and port fees and are based on double occupancy at a per-person rate.

Payment schedule is as follows:

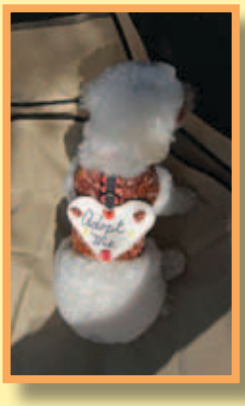
$25 per person deposit to reserve now

$150 per person payment due by May 1, 2014

Final payment of balance due by July 1, 2014

For more information and to reserve your spot, please contact: Pam Kranig, MCC, at
(916) 261-4408
or by email at pamelakranig@yahoo.com

Have fun with friends and help Bichon FurKids!



The Fall Bichon Bash Recap: A Fun Day for Four-Legged and Two-Legged Participants

On October 26th, under a billowy tent and a warm Escondido sky, hundreds of bichons and bichon Moms and Dads came together for the Fall Bichon Bash 2013. With raffles, a silent auction, a number of new vendors and fantastic food, we congregated to celebrate our love for bichons.

The Parade of Rescues was, as always, a crowd favorite. Therapy Dog Training and Training Techniques with Colleen Demling got us thinking about new ways of working with our furkids. Our fantastic MC, Tod Howarth, kept the program movin' and groovin' – and the costume contest created a happy conclusion to a fun day. (Who was that darling little bichon dressed as a hot dog – or the adorable furkid who was racing around, cart and all, with the red cape and horns?)

Thanks to Julie and Thea for the fresh flower bichon centerpieces they made to adorn our tables -- and to Joyce and Mary and for jumping in to co-chair the event! Thanks to Judy P. and Julie for finding so many interesting new vendors. We'd love to have them back again for the next Bash.

Of course a HUGE THANK YOU to all volunteers who worked so hard to make the Fall Bichon Bash a wonderful day for friends and furkids.

We look forward to a new venue for the upcoming Bash – and will keep you posted on dates and locations.

The 2014 Bichon FurKids Calendar
Just in time for the Holidays !

The 2014 Bichon FurKids calendar is ready to order for your holiday gift-giving fun! This little work of art (if we do say so ourselves) showcases the adorable and, in some cases, downright silly bichons who participated in our recent calendar contest, along with our 2000th FurKid. The calendar is available now to order from our website at http://www.bichonfurkids.org.

Please think of the people you love who also love bichons — and buy a calendar for them. They not only make great holiday gifts, but are also the perfect birthday or anniversary gift for any dog lover! And remember, the proceeds from each calendar go towards the needs of incoming FurKids.

DRIVERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED

Want to help but can't foster? Love to see new places and meet new people? Want to make a difference for a FurKid or two? We need your help! BFK needs drivers and people who like to take pictures.

Driving Miss Daisy (or Mr. Davy)

Every week FurKids need to be transported to groomers, vets and foster homes. We rely on our volunteer drivers to get them there - and are grateful for their help. We DO need more people who are willing and able to transport our fluffs primarily throughout San Diego or Orange County (and not for great distances usually, either.)

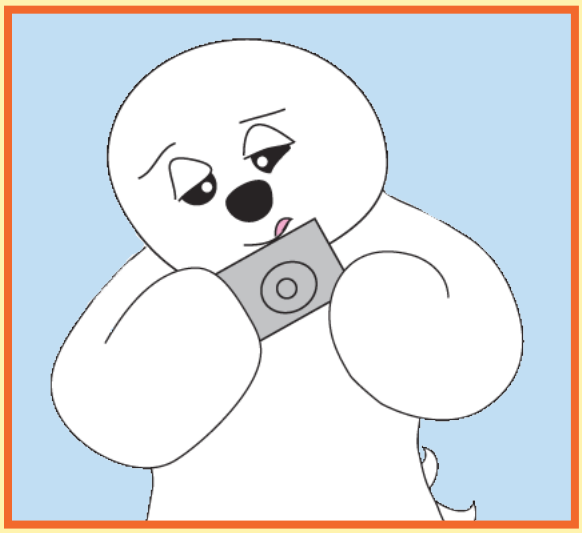
Sometimes we have days in which to plan; other times it is more immediate like when we find a FurKid that needs to be moved 'right away' due to a medical situation, to be exited from a shelter or who needs to be some place other than where he or she is at that moment.

If you have time and a love for bichons, we NEED you. And if you love to organize transports, we need help with that too! Please email marti@bichonfurkids.org and say " I'd like to drive a furkid" - and we'll be in touch.

A Photographer is worth a Thousand Words

Do you like to take pictures? Are you good with a camera? We need people who can take photos of our new FurKids to accompany their bios on the adoption pages of our website. The photographer plays a very important role in getting our FurKids adopted. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words - and as clever as our FurKid profiles are, nothing clinches an adoption application like a few engaging photographs of cute little balls of fluff frolicking in the grass - or peeking out of a flower pot or bathtub.

Another of the photographer's roles is taking pictures of the events that BFK participates in - such as adoption events, the Bichon Bash, and other activities. You never know where your masterpieces may end up - they could enhance a story on our website or in the newsletter...or even grace the BFK calendar. And like they say, a picture is worth...well you have the idea by now - we couldn't do our work without the work you do when you press the shutter button.



If you can frame a good picture and have a decent camera that takes high resolution photos (not a cell phone camera), you can help the FurKids by being their very own paparazzi! You never know when or where a FurKid may need to be photographed, so if you have "wheels"- and the time and flexibility -
WE NEED YOU!

Please email marti@bichonfurkids.org and say " I'd like to be a FurKid Paparazzi" - and we'll be in touch.

Thank you for helping the FurKids!