

Chipper's Story: A Tribute to Courage, Determination and Love

By Lauren Partida

Editor's Note: On September 10th we received a message from a vet clinic we had worked with over several years. A young bichon male had been surrendered for euthanasia by his owners. Apparently this little guy had eaten his back legs to the bone, after being left in a yard, unattended and uncared for. He was apparently paralyzed and the clinic was not sure if he would ever regain the use of his legs. A vet assistant at that clinic reached out to bichon rescue groups, asking if someone could help him. That help would take the form of daily bandage changes (to preserve his skin and help him to heal), multiple weekly vet appointments, medications, therapy to help him potentially regain the use of one or both legs, a wheeled cart to help him learn to walk again when the timing was right, proper nutrition and lots of tender loving care.

Looking at his little face, thinking about all the years of life he had ahead of him, BFK responded to this plea, Our Foster Coordinator, Lauren, agreed to foster the little guy—and to do all that was required to hopefully save his legs and return Chipper to health. Chipper's treatments were extensive and expensive and the result was not guaranteed when we started! Chipper's spirit and Lauren's devotion are the reason he recovered—and the miracle that we are excited to share..



We picked Chipper up from the vet on September 10th, knowing that he was paralyzed in his back end, and had a gaping wound on one rear leg (down to over an inch of exposed bone). He had been thrown into the backyard by his prior owners, and subsequently chewed through tissue and muscle, probably from mental anguish. The vet diagnosed him with probable IVDD, and the hope was that with crate rest and the right medications, he might walk again, although no one knew for sure. The vet was unsure if his leg or legs could be saved, but he was a favorite at the

vet's office. Everyone there loved him as Chipper's sweetness and gentleness won them over.

Fortunately the vet refused to "put him down" per the owners request. Instead one of the vet techs took him home and proceeded to reach out to rescue groups. That's where we came in.

We picked him up, brought him home, and noticed how gentle he was right away. He allowed us to bandage his wound with medical grade Manuka Honey bandages, without any fuss or concern. It's as though he knew we were trying to help him. We had to carry him out 5-6 times a day to potty, and kept him in

Continued on next page...

Contents

Chipper's Story: A Tribute to Courage, Determination and Love	1
Another Bash to Remember!.....	4
Order your 2025 Calendars in time for the Holidays!.....	8
Drivers Wanted.....	9
Home Checkers Wanted	10
Flyer for new adopters	11

Donate to BFK

The staff of Bichons FurKids is paid only in the love of what we do. Your entire contribution will be used to offset the expenses of the FurKids we rescue, and it is tax deductible. Please click the yellow button above to donate or go to: <https://bichonfurkids.org/donate/>
We and the FurKids thank you!

Fosters Needed

Without loving foster homes, we cannot rescue FurKids in need. To apply to be a BFK foster, go to: <https://bichonfurkids.org/volunteer-foster/>



Sign up for the Ralphs Community Contribution Program and link your Ralphs Shopper's Card to BFK. When you shop at Ralphs, a portion of your purchase will be donated to BFK.

Bichon FurKids Rescue
Phone: 858-408-1937
Fax: 760-966-1702

www.BichonFurKids.org
info@bichonfurkids.org

[@bichonfurkidsrescue](https://www.facebook.com/bichonfurkids)

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Tax ID: 20-3652098
Marti Colwell, President



Cover Story, continued...



Chipper when he first arrived in September



Chipper with his bandage



Chipper resting in his pen

an exercise pen to limit his movement. Chipper had to take many medications, which he took eagerly in a wad of cream cheese.

We took Chipper to our local vet who, like the original vet, wasn't sure if his legs could be saved or if he could walk again. He agreed with the IVDD diagnosis, and said we'd have to "take it a day at a time". Our vet seemed skeptical, which was concerning. And then the treatments started.

Chipper had standing appointments three or four times a week, for three weeks, for re-bandaging. That's when we started to see improvement in his legs. After about another month of medications (for his spine), and bandaging on the leg with Medical grade Manuka Honey we added laser treatment—and began to see substantial improvement in the more damaged leg. He could also stand in his own for a little time every few days. At first it was 20 seconds, then a minute, then two to three minutes. Every week Chipper gained strength and was able to stand for longer periods of time.

The gaping wound started to really heal. Tissue was growing back, although the muscle would never grow back, which caused a deficit in his walking. After another month, Chipper started taking a few steps, which were met with excitement from all of us caring for him. We put yoga mats on our slippery floors to help him get a better grip. To our amazement and delight, he began trotting about the house like a champ.

We joined a Facebook group for owners of dogs with IVDD, who gave us many tips and helpful guidance on managing care with an IVDD dog. We reached out to an amazing organization that donated a top notch wheelchair for him. He used it several times, with some modifications by my husband, however Chipper didn't need it for long! He started walking (a few steps at a time), within about 6 weeks on his own (although he looks a bit like a drunken sailor because of the missing muscle in his one leg).

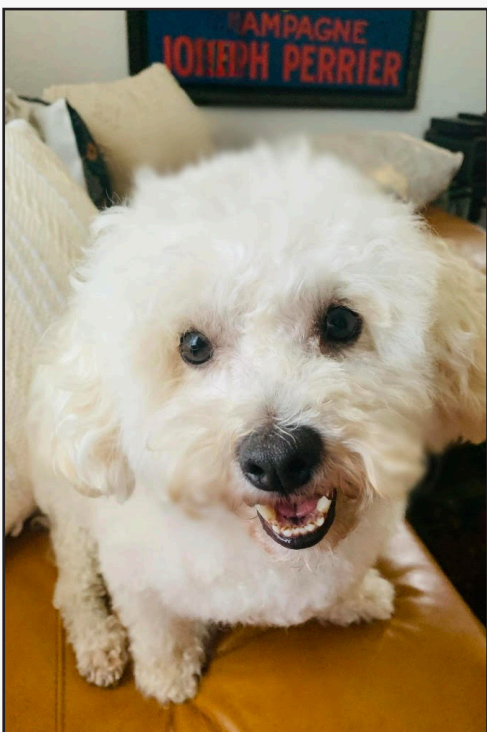
It has been 4 months since we began caring for Chipper and he continues to amaze us with his mental strength, sweetness and "can do" personality. He NEVER gave up. My husband built a ramp for him outside our rear door (as dogs with IVDD should have all 4 paws on the ground at all times!), he's not allowed up on furniture, as jumping up or down could cause paralysis again. Statistically he might experience another bout of paralysis if he exerts himself too much with his neck/back region. We knew this when we decided to adopt him.

As a family we talked about whether to adopt Chipper and couldn't bear to part with him. You do have a deeper bond with medical needs dogs, (at least I know that I do), and sending him to another family seemed impossible to us. He loves his brother and sister pups (one of them is NEVER accepting of other dogs but she accepted him right away, as she sensed that he needed our help.

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Chipper with Laurie



Happy little boy who can walk!

Cover Story, continued...

Chipper is now walking outside in his own to potty and really WANTS to be potty trained. He can also run like the wind (he's really fast)! He continues to make us smile every time we see his sweet face, or tail wags. He has the personality of a sweet baby, who loves and trusts us completely.

He still walks a bit "drunken", but it doesn't matter to us, or to him. It's part of who he is, and that makes him PERFECT to us. "Perfection" is unrealistic. Yet we've learned that the imperfections are what we embrace. We are grateful for his spirit and endurance and for the commitment Bichon FurKids made to help him recover his health and strength.

Especially at this time of we are so very grateful to all who donated to BFK so that we could help precious pups like Chipper to regain and live their best lives! May your holidays be happy and healthy ones, surrounded by friends, family and... FurKids!



Another Bash to Remember!

The Bash is always great fun and this year's Bash was no exception! We had vendors to shop with, wonderful baskets of goodies to bid on, raffle items to win, calendars to buy—all to raise money for our furry friends. Bichons and their proud Moms and Dads came from all over California and beyond—from Arizona, Nevada, Washington and Oregon. (You know how FurKids hate to miss a party- and you KNOW how we Moms and Dads enjoy the opportunity to brag about our special pups, too!)

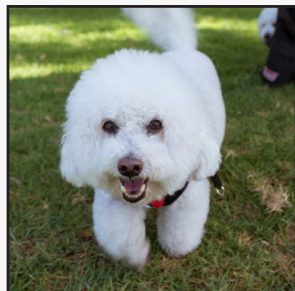
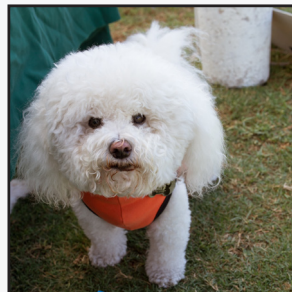
We were so pleased with the weather and the location for the Bash—and appreciate the Parks and Recreation team from the City of Mission Viejo! We had a level area which we fenced off, easy parking, proximity to the restrooms and a bit more shade. Attendees appreciated the location, access to parking and restrooms and the quality of the food provided by the food trucks.

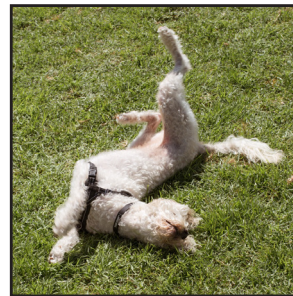
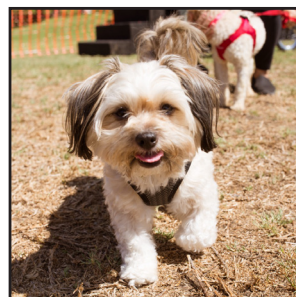
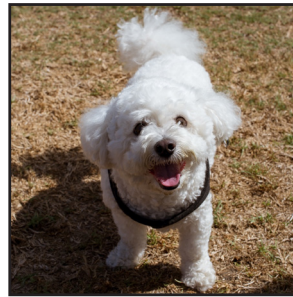
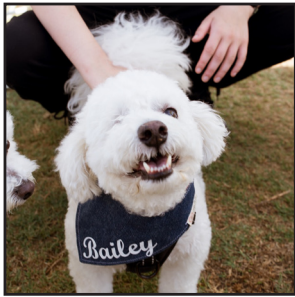
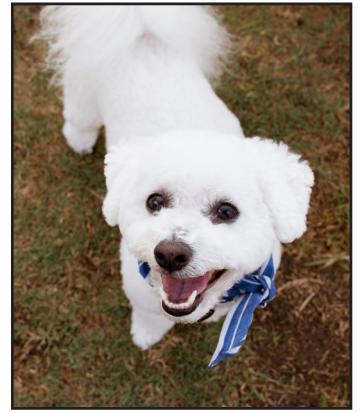
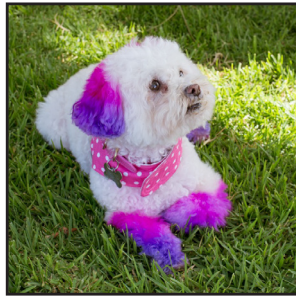
An event with so many moving parts is only possible with great leadership! Our hats off (and so very many thanks!) to the Bichon Bash Chairperson, Cynthia Sassi, who was guided by past Chairs Mary Arden and Michele Ramirez. They made it look easy—but there are thousands of hours of preparation involved in creating an event like the Bash. Our thanks to our amazing MC, Tod Howarth, whose musical talents helped to make the day even more fun and uplifting. We hope that Tod can be convinced to bring his guitar again next year and to share some more of his personal songs (as well as recording artists whose work he plays so well.)

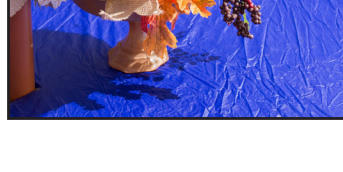
Speaking of next year's Bash (and drum roll please), we are working to secure a coastal location in San Diego county. Several members of the Bash Committee have done a walk-through of a new location and hope to secure it for 2025. We will keep you posted as soon as we've completed the process and will be excited to announce the date and location. Please stay tuned!

More thanks go to all the Committee members who worked tirelessly to do their part in our event. Our sponsors included VCA Eye Care for Animals, VCA Carlsbad, Amgen Foundation, Amy Lumet and Snoopy, Doug Eisberg and LoriAnne Truman. Cherie Bauer and her team made registration go seamlessly. Jeannie Ortman made beautiful centerpieces and signage. Cynthia Sassi, Ty Falmand and Natalie Simmons created social media buzz while Barb Weins captured the event in photos. Another very special thanks to Michael Merrigan whose relationship skills brought us the support of Rainbow Sandals! (If you haven't worn their sandals, please try them. They are made locally and are exceptionally nice to wear.)

As we head into the holidays, we hope that yours will be a safe and healthy one. And as you sit with loved ones (two and four-legged) we hope that looking at these photos will bring smiles to your faces! Give your FurKids an extra special belly rub from all of us and we look forward to seeing you at the 2025 Bichon Bash!









Order your 2025 Calendars in time for the Holidays!



The 2025 Bichon FurKids calendar is ready to order for holiday gift-giving and, of course, as a gift to yourself! This colorful package celebrates every month of 2025 with photos of the adorable FurKids who participated in our calendar contest. It not only makes a great holiday gift, but it's also the perfect birthday or anniversary gift for any bichon lover! And remember, all proceeds go towards the needs of incoming FurKids. The price is \$25 and includes shipping and handling for one calendar.

To order from the Bichon FurKids website:

1. Go to <https://bichonfurkids.org/bfk-calendar/>
2. Click **Buy Now**.
3. Enter the number of calendars that you want to order, then click **Continue**.
4. You will be redirected to PayPal, where you can pay with your PayPal account or pay with a credit/debit card.

To send a check by mail:

- Make the check payable to Bichon FurKids and let us know how many calendars that you want to order.
- Mail the check to Bichon FurKids, 6965 El Camino Real, #105-425, Carlsbad, CA 92009



Drivers Wanted....

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?

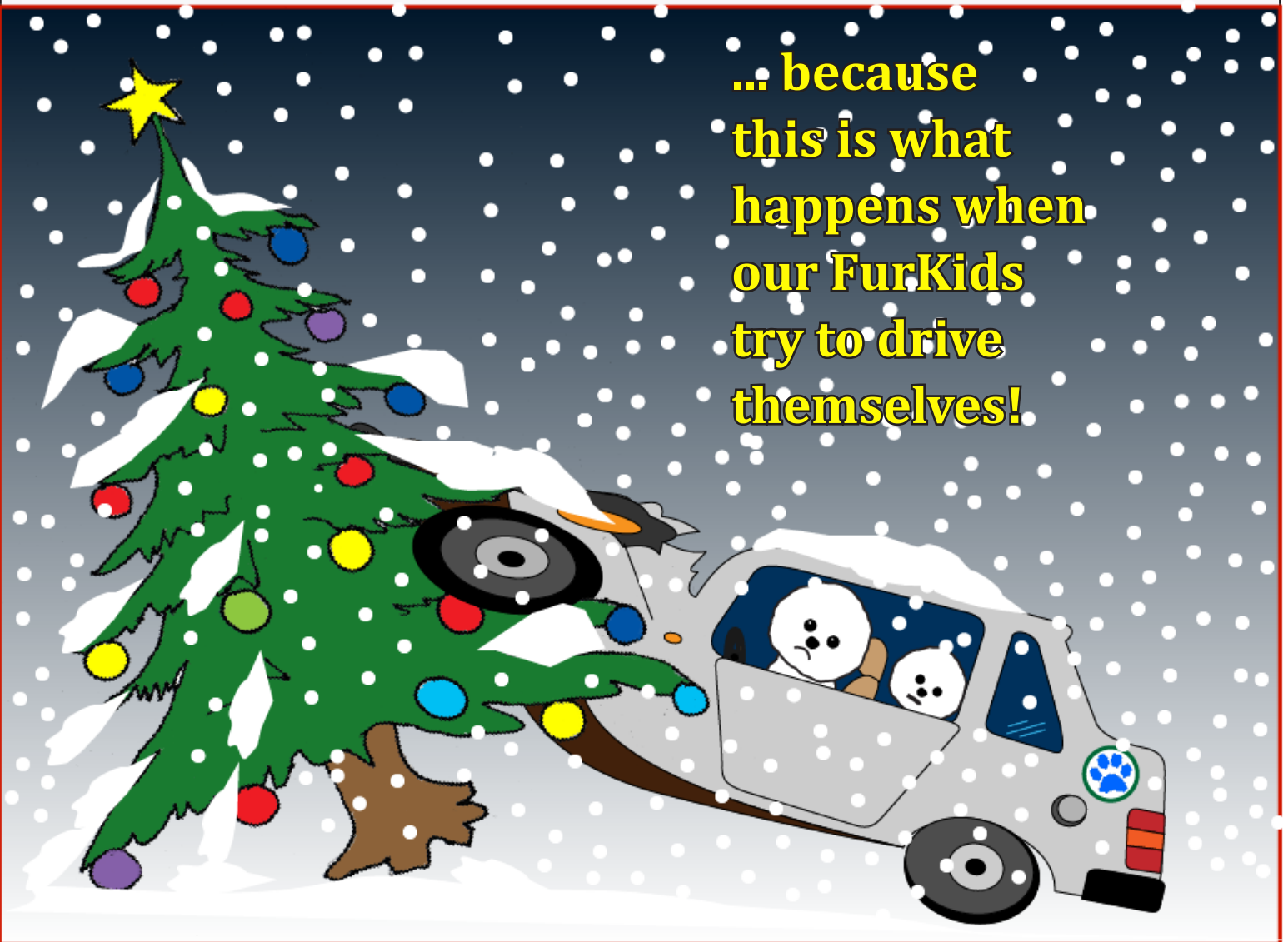
Want to make a New Year's Resolution that helps others?

FurKids need your help! 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 want to drive a FurKid" and we'll be in touch.

**... because
this is what
happens when
our FurKids
try to drive
themselves!**



Home Checkers Wanted

This is me, Bijou the Bichon, writing to ask you for some 'assistance' please. Because we want each and every FurKid to go to a safe and amazing home, Bichon FurKids conducts what we call a Home and Yard Safety Check. (We also call it an HSC for short!) It's part of the adoption process for people who want to adopt FurKids like me! (Of course the best part of doing that, from my perspective, is that the people doing the HSCs (we call them "Checkers") get to bring FurKids (like me!) with them to meet the people and families who want to adopt. Now I think that's pretty darn neat – don't you?

To actually do an HSC is pretty easy. It goes like this:

1. There's a checklist to review with the adopter (it includes things like making sure there are no poisonous plants (we have a list) or fence slats that are too far apart (and could be tempting to pups who like to explore the world without their owners).

2. There's also a short report (we provide samples) that help our Placement volunteers know more about the adopters.

3. If there's a pup in the home already, why I get to meet that pup and find out more about him or her too! (That's called a bonus!)

My BFK Aunties say we need "Checkers" everywhere. I think they mean mostly in the Western states (California, Arizona and Nevada) but we also do HSCs for people who live on the East coast.

To become a Checker, you need to complete a short volunteer application (you can find it on our web site at www.bichonfurkids.org). It's short and you can fill it out in a few minutes.)

Or, you can email lindar@bichonfurkids.org and say "I'd like to be a Checker!"

One of our team members will then contact you about our process – and at a later time, be in touch when there is someone in your area that needs an HSC.



Oh, and did I mention that you schedule the visit when it's convenient for you and the adopter? In some geographic areas you might be asked once every month or two, while in other areas it could be more often. Best of all you would be helping pups like me to find safe and amazing forever homes.

We'd sure appreciate having you become a part of our team. Thanks a bunch!

Bijou the Bichon

(and Checker Recruiter)



Flyer for new adopters

This flyer is now being included in the materials that BFK gives its new adopters. It helps these families understand what to expect of their new FurKid, who may be finding himself (or herself) in unfamiliar surroundings with people he does not know very well. By setting the expectations of new adopters (and to remind our returning adopters) we hope to ensure a smooth transition for the dog, a positive experience for the family, and a successful, happy adoption for all involved. Feel free to offer a copy to anyone you know who is welcoming a new dog into their home.

ADJUSTMENT PERIOD FOR A NEW DOG

Every dog is unique, but here is the general rule of thumb for adjustment periods for new dogs after adoption.



3 DAYS

To Decompress

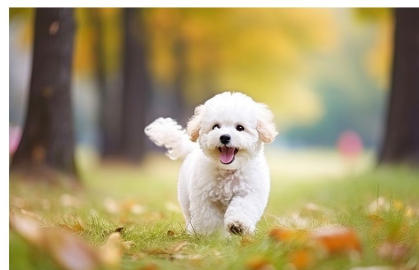
- Feeling overwhelmed
- May feel scared/unsure
- Not comfortable to be "himself"
- May not want to eat or drink
- Shuts down and/or hides
- Tests boundaries



3 WEEKS

To Learn Routine

- Starts settling in
- Feels more comfortable
- Realizes this could be their forever home
- Figures out the environment
- Gets into a routine
- Lets guard down and starts showing true personality
- Behavior issues may appear



3 MONTHS

To Feel at Home

- Feels completely comfortable and at home
- Begins to build trust and a bond
- Gains a complete sense of security
- Sets into a routine



Give Them a Chance