

# The Virtues of Grey Muzzle



Julie Dudley, founder of Grey Muzzle, hugs and nuzzles “Clemmy.”

“Francesca” knows how to work a room. Advanced in years like many of the people she visits, the 12-year-old Chihuahua is a therapy dog. She brightens the days of many she regularly sees at health care facilities, churches and schools, eliciting smiles and accepting hugs, pats on the head and dog snacks in return.

Francesca’s life wasn’t always so warm and nurturing.

Abandoned on the streets of a Cleveland suburb, Francesca had been left frightened, ill and arthritic. Though rescued by The Sanctuary for Senior Dogs, where her future would be protected for life, finding an adoptive family for her still was uncertain.

Senior dogs such as Francesca present a challenge for animal rescue organizations. Among the reasons they end up in shelters or foster homes are an owner’s transition into no-pets-allowed housing, such as a nursing home, veterinary costs, and abandonment or death of the owner.

Besides potentially being overlooked

due to their age, dogs with treatable health conditions suffered from years of neglect have difficulty drawing the attention of potential adopters. Providing care even for basic needs can overwhelm a rescue

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Julie Dudley, Founder, Grey Muzzle

organization with limited means. Until recently, there were few resources to help rescue groups place these senior pets in new homes. The Grey Muzzle Organization in Raleigh, N.C., has quickly become a leader to fulfill that need.

## A Nationwide Impact

As a foster parent for OldDog Haven in Lake Stevens, Wash., Julie Dudley learned intimately about the challenges senior dogs face. The experience changed her views and motivated her to make a difference for older canines. “Before I got involved with OldDog Haven, I had the classic misconception that there must be something wrong with the dog for it to be unwanted and homeless,” she says. “The dogs I fostered quickly changed my perspective.”

When Dudley, who was then a program manager at Microsoft in Seattle, inherited a farm in Wisconsin, she realized she had an opportunity to make a difference for dogs. She sold the farm to raise seed money and, accepting the opportunity for a life change, she moved to North Carolina. There, she used her business skills to benefit senior dog rescues and shelters nationwide by establishing a nonprofit organization to provide grants to them.

Dudley founded Grey Muzzle in 2008, devoting full-time efforts the first two years while growing the organization’s

capabilities. She now divides her time, leading Grey Muzzle as a volunteer and consulting for other nonprofit organizations.

Grey Muzzle is dedicated to assisting groups around the U.S. that have programs specifically designed to meet the needs of senior dogs. Beyond grants, Grey Muzzle is working to become a resource for education and best practices. Three years later, the Grey Muzzle Organization's grant program has helped to fund veterinary and long-term foster care and hospice programs to 29 organizations in 17 states.

"Grey Muzzle's vision is to achieve a world where no old dog dies alone and afraid," says Dudley. "Grey Muzzle grants totaling \$160,000 have aided at least 500 senior dogs. Money that is donated to us contributes to those grants and directly helps senior animals."

To be eligible to receive a Grey Muzzle grant, group applicants must have 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit organization. They also must have or propose a program that focuses on improving the lives of at-risk senior dogs.

Grey Muzzle's three-step grant application process begins with a one-page letter of interest (LOI) submitted using the form provided on Grey Muzzle's website. Grey Muzzle board members assess each LOI for organization and proposed program eligibility, funding needs and priorities.

"We try to balance the geographical distribution of grants, size of organization, rescues versus shelters, and types of programs," Dudley says. "Applicants are encouraged to visit our website, [www.grey-muzzle.org](http://www.grey-muzzle.org), and register to receive updates. Our priorities may change from year to year."

Organizations that pass the LOI screening are invited to submit an application, using the form on the website. Grey Muzzle looks closely at the organization's stability, accomplishments and evidence of financial responsibility. The process includes reference checks, review of financial statements, and adoption and animal care policies. Grey Muzzle representatives conduct an interview and/or site visit.

Once Grey Muzzle approves an applicant for funds, the organization can apply for a specific amount of support, which may be for a program related to senior dogs or veterinary expenses associated with senior dog rescue, fostering or hospice care. Funded programs must benefit senior dogs exclu-



Deborah Workman, who founded the Sanctuary for Senior Dogs in Cleveland, sits with "Francesca," who was rescued by the Sanctuary and trained to be a therapy dog. The Chihuahua regularly comforts residents at nursing homes.

sively, have well-defined goals and measure the program's success. Approved organizations are eligible for funding renewal without having to reapply, though they must submit a report documenting how the funds made a difference for senior dogs.

"We have two funding periods each year," says Dudley. "We accept applications in the spring and fall. After several months to review the applications and go through the process, we award the grants in June and December."



Maria Stoerle, foster coordinator at the Cumberland County (N.J.) SPCA, created the Red Collar Society last year to promote adoptions of senior dogs like “Agatha.”

### Peace of Mind

German Shepherd Rescue of Northern California (GSRNC) works with shelters in the San Francisco Bay area to evaluate, rescue and place German Shepherd Dogs into adoptive homes. GSRNC, a Grey Muzzle grantee since 2009, has used its grants to establish and maintain a hospice program called the Thulani Program, which is coordinated by Bob Jachens, a longtime GSRNC volunteer.

Jachens’ idea for the Thulani Program emerged as a result of two incidents. When

Jachens went to a shelter to evaluate a senior German Shepherd Dog with advanced degenerative myelopathy, a progressive neurological disease, he determined that although the dog had a good quality of life, the nature of the disease made the dog unadoptable under the existing system. Jachens had no alternative but to take the dog on a long outing with another volunteer before going to a veterinarian who euthanized the dog. “That episode troubled me deeply,” Jachens says. “The experience stayed with me.”

Subsequently, a shelter contacted Jachens about a 3-month-old puppy that was a victim of abuse. Jachens identified a foster home, then learned the puppy also had a heart murmur and a poor prognosis. When Jachens notified the foster home of the situation, their response surprised him. “They said, ‘We will keep the puppy and give him a good life, however long that may be,’” says Jachens. “Thulani,” the puppy named for the South African word meaning “be comforted,” lived happily for several months in foster care.

“There are people who are emotionally strong enough to handle these situations where our goal is to provide loving, end-of-life care,” Jachens says. He began to build a list of prospective foster homes for hospice care. The Thulani Program pays all costs, including veterinary care, through support by Grey Muzzle and donations.

Two and a half years later, the Thulani Program has served 20 dogs, including “Hawkeye,” a retired drug-detection dog who at age 13, despite a distinguished career as a civil servant, was about to become homeless. His law enforcement handler’s health made him unable to care for Hawkeye, and their home had been sold. Hawkeye lived out his remaining months in foster care through the Thulani Program.

“Grey Muzzle funding has provided stability for the hospice program,” says Jachens. “The Program has given the GSRNC shelter evaluators peace of mind, knowing that they can find a place for even the most vulnerable dogs.”

Another organization that welcomes the support of Grey Muzzle is the Cumberland County SPCA, which serves the rural,

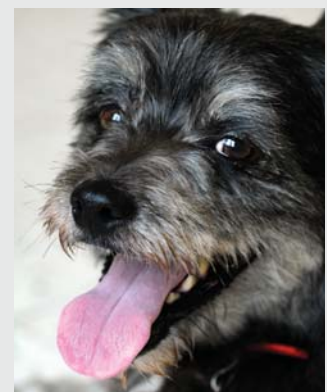
## Supporting Senior Dogs

The Grey Muzzle Organization supports programs dedicated to the well-being of senior dogs. Below is a summary of what Grey Muzzle grants fund and do not fund. For more information, visit [www.greymuzzle.org](http://www.greymuzzle.org) or contact founder Julie Dudley at 919-529-0309 or [grants@greymuzzle.org](mailto:grants@greymuzzle.org).

Grey Muzzle funds:

- Adoptable dogs’ veterinary care
- Veterinary costs associated with transporting at-risk senior dogs from shelters to adoptive homes or foster care
- Hospice and long-term foster care
- Community programs to keep dogs with owners

- Programs that help senior citizens adopt senior dogs
- Therapy dog training
- Purchase of orthopedic beds for senior dogs in shelters
- Salaries
- Promotional materials
- Events
- Building capital or renovation
- Grants to individuals



“Shelley” is a Schnauzer mix at the Cumberland County SPCA.

impoverished area of Vineland, N.J. The shelter has experienced a significant increase in senior pets due to the poor economy in recent years. Owners are unable to afford the pet's veterinary needs. "Many of these senior dogs are adoptable, if we can resolve their veterinary issues," says foster coordinator Maria Stoerrle.

Using a Grey Muzzle grant, Stoerrle created the "Red Collar Society" in 2010 to promote senior dog adoptions. The funding has covered a variety of veterinary needs for 62 Red Collar Society dogs, providing for surgeries, arthritis medications and special diets. Of the six dogs currently in the program, three are in hospice care with their expenses covered by Grey Muzzle funding.



"Monte," a Miniature Pinscher-mix, has diabetes. A Grey Muzzle grant paid for his veterinary care.

"Monte," a Miniature Pinscher-mix, is one of the Red Collar Society's success stories," Stoerrle says. "When Monte arrived at the shelter as a homeless dog, he was a bag of bones. Blood work showed he has diabetes, and Grey Muzzle funding covered the costs of his follow-up care, including insulin and a special diet."

A family familiar with diabetes adopted Monte. "He is bringing lots of love and laughter to his new family, and we are so glad that they found each other," says Stoerrle.

### Mutual Benefits

Another Grey Muzzle grantee was inspired by executive director Deborah Workman's shepherd-mix "Zelda," who overcame serious health challenges to live to age 17. After Zelda passed away, Workman began fostering older dogs from the local shelter, eventually forming the Sanctuary for Senior Dogs in Cleveland.



Dudley poses with "Carmel," a dog from Saving Grace Animals for Adoption in Wake Forest, N.C., for which Dudley volunteers.

The Sanctuary has around 25 senior dogs in foster homes with about half eligible for adoption and half in long-term or hospice care.

Part of the Sanctuary's mission is to change the public's perception of senior dogs. "Many old dogs are healthy, energetic and playful," Workman says. "They make excellent companions. They are already trained and have excellent house manners. Most importantly, older dogs seem to understand that they have been given a second chance and are forever grateful."

Grey Muzzle supports Companions, the Sanctuary's program for training some of its senior dogs, such as Francesca the Chihuahua, as therapy dogs. This program began in 2001 with one of the Sanctuary dogs, a 12-year-old Labrador/Golden Retriever-mix named "Georgia."

"We enrolled Georgia in therapy dog training, and she quickly became an ambassador for older dogs," Workman says. "For two years until her death, Georgia brought smiles and joy to the community. She opened my eyes to the potential for educating the public on the worth of older dogs."

Workman subsequently trained a large, mixed-breed dog, "Burt," for therapy dog work. Burt's visits to an adult day care center made such an impression that his passing was marked with a funeral

service attended by many of the center's residents. "It showed me how much he touched people," Workman says. "It shows the value of caring for these dogs and helping them share with others."

Seven Sanctuary dogs have served as therapy dogs. Grey Muzzle funding covered training and veterinary expenses for four of them. "The therapy dog program has benefitted the Sanctuary through increased visibility, publicity and donations," says Workman. "It demonstrates the worth of older dogs, showing they have so much to give. Their spirits are an inspiration to everyone who meets them."

Workman offers advice and encouragement for others who rescue senior dogs. "Believe that senior dogs are adoptable," she says. "If you focus on their virtues and get them in the public eye, such as through therapy dog work, you will see adoptions go up."

The guidance and financial support of Grey Muzzle help make such efforts possible. The number of senior dogs Grey Muzzle supports is notable, but so is the number of people who benefit from relationships with these dogs. "We have a lot to offer old dogs, and they have a lot to teach us," Dudley says. "It's a mutually beneficial opportunity to care for a senior dog and appreciate the special gift he or she has for improving the quality of our lives." ♦