



FIDO-FRIENDLY SUMMER TRAVEL

Bennington Properties

PARADISE FOUND

— Year Round
in Sunriver

Anyone can foster a

CANINE TRAUMA SURVIVOR

Meet your 2017
Willamette Valley
COVER MODELS
and the winner is

Smiggy

**BENNINGTON
PROPERTIES**

Official Issue Sponsor

Anyone can foster a canine trauma survivor

Stephanie Wescott • Spot Magazine

Sixteen-year-old Ryan kneels on all fours. He has a ball in one hand, moving it back and forth, slowly then quickly like a small rodent, enticing Alex to play. Alex tracks the ball with his keen brown eyes, and after several passes, pounces. Ryan keeps ahold of the ball as Alex gnaws away, and coily reaches around to place a gentle hand on Alex's back leg.

"It's the first prolonged contact I've had with him," Ryan says. He moves slowly with Alex, trying to pet him now and then to help him get used to contact with people. Ryan sets up opportunities for Alex to gain confidence, but mostly he lets Alex make the first move.

Despite some of Alex's fox-like physical traits he is not a wild animal. He is pure canine: a Jindo mix. But he's not like the other dogs in Ryan's house — he's not from a local shelter. He's from an organization that raided a dog meat farm half a world away in Korea. Five thousand air miles and 650 miles by road is a long way to travel, but letting Ryan rest his hand on Alex's back leg is further than he has ever gone before.

"I know he trusts me," Ryan says. "He follows me around, and he's at a point where he'll let me pet him more consistently — for five minutes or so."

Ryan let Alex stay in the safety of a crate in his bedroom for the first week he was in the house, away from the ruckus of his American dogs and the chaos of family life downstairs. Ryan gave him incentive to explore his new world by moving his food bowls first outside the crate, then a little farther from the crate every day.

"He won't go down the stairs though," Ryan says. "He looks at me with a 'Come back!' look, but he just can't do it." One day he will.



Alex isn't the only dog in the household who hails from a Korean meat farm. Ryan and his mom Dawn committed to foster-to-adopt Alex through My Way Home Dog Rescue, but when a flight delay caused Alex to miss the scheduled monthly transport they agreed to foster Jack, who arrived early, and also take in Alex the following month.

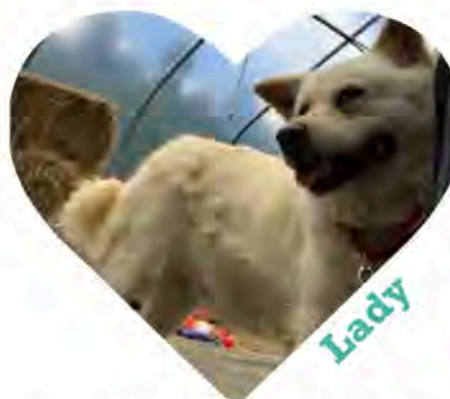
Jack, like Alex, was rescued by Nami Kim and Save the Korean Dogs Organization in Gimpo City, Korea. Nami has been negotiating with illegal dog meat farm owners for over five years to take their dogs and re-home them in the US and Canada with the help of international organizations. Nami partners with START Rescue in California, which transports the dogs to shelters and rescues like My Way Home outside Portland, Oregon.



Dog meat has been consumed in Asia for centuries; it has only been in recent years that the industry has received worldwide attention — revealing not only its brutal methods of slaughter but the inhumane conditions in which these animals live. And while the consumption of dog meat is not illegal in Korea, it is unlawful to treat any animal inhumanely.

Animal protection laws prohibit some of the cruel methods by which the dogs are slaughtered, but because of a belief that adrenaline makes dog meat tenderer, dogs are often hanged, electrocuted, and skinned alive — in front of others. While living in stacked rusted wire cages, it is likely Alex and Jack witnessed many dogs executed this way — some their own siblings.

Dogs from meat farms do not know a kind human hand until the rescuers come for them. They know nothing of toys and dog beds, a morning jog with a human companion, a leash to keep them safe



on walks, or the feeling of home, snuggling by the warm glow of a television set.

They have lived their lives with other dogs, stuffed into cages, some quarters so cramped that they cannot move. They eat, sleep, and defecate all in the same space. Their only contact with humans is to be thrown food, by the same hand that will one day take their lives. The idea that a human may want stroke their fur to show affection is something these dogs have never imagined. For them, humans are a species to be feared.

So it is not just a new country that Alex, Jack, and others like them are acclimating to. Their entire life and all they've ever known is in upheaval as they slowly accept that they are safe from pain and horrific death, and that the humans with them now mean them no harm.

Jack goes to work with Dawn, a vet tech. He is surrounded by others of his kind, and there he witnesses humans helping animals, not hurting them. Still wary of strangers (even of Ryan), he's slowly learning to trust. Alex has found his forever home with his trusted human Ryan. Jack, however, is still looking to find his own human guardian.

From all outward appearances, Alex and Jack are like any pair of canine friends, playing and romping. Although they never played at the meat farm, it seems that play is an innate gift imbedded in the heart of every dog. Their common history creates a level of understanding and trust between them that we humans can never truly grasp.

Cheryl, founder of the foster-based My Way Home Dog Rescue, is fostering two Korean dogs herself: Lady, who arrived with Jack, and Ella, who accompanied Alex. They, too, are learning to adapt to a new, loving life.

Lady is a five-year-old white Jindo mix. Although shy, her old soul has adapted well. She's learned a lot from her American housedog friends. She no longer fears for her life every second of the day, but is still

cautious of strangers. Cheryl has been able to pet her, but Lady would rather adore you from afar than cuddle up beside you. Looking into her soulful eyes you wonder if she's figured out the mysteries of the world and would tell you if only you spoke dog. Lady enjoys the company of other canines, and would like to find a home where she can just be herself: a quiet, introspective member of the family.

While Lady's peaceful soul and wisdom have helped her adapt, Ella's innocence is the foundation of her strength and beauty. At only eight months old, she'd like nothing more than to play with her new American canine friends. Having endured the same traumatic past, she still will not allow anyone to touch her except Cheryl. Also a Jindo mix, she will most likely grow into a contemplative adult like Lady, who chooses one person to call her own but will always enjoy the company of other dogs.

Dogs from meat farms do not know a kind human hand until the rescuers come for them

Fostering or adopting a dog who has spent her life in a cramped cage on a meat farm is a lot like fostering or adopting a breeder dog from a puppy mill. Although puppy mill dogs are raised for human commerce and not consumption, their living conditions are equally appalling. They too often live in stacked rusty wire crates in warehouse-barns full of the barks and cries of hopelessness. They are forcefully impregnated, give birth, and raise puppies over and over again, receiving little or no care for their medical needs or welfare. The rescuers come for them find beautiful souls hidden beneath matted fur — dogs who have never experienced grass beneath their feet or the touch of human kindness.





Jack

The call for animal protection is growing louder. People are fighting in courtrooms and congresses to create legislation, while others fight on the front lines, physically removing victims of cruelty from horrific conditions. With every mission that succeeds — whether it be large-scale operations dealing with US puppy mills, the Asian dog meat trade, or local victories of animals saved from hoarders or dogfighting rings — the need for help becomes greater. Our job doesn't end when the slaughterhouse is shut down or the hoarder goes to jail. Each and every victim of these traumas need us to heal and rehabilitate them.

Those considering adopting a dog typically imagine the many heart-warming milestones: when he recognizes his name for the first time, when he masters Sit, when she comes when called with an urgency that she cannot live a single second without you. You think of waking up with a dog at the end of your bed, and of hiking in the mountains together. But when you adopt a dog like Lady or Ella or Jack, a dog with a traumatic history, those moments may not happen right away — or at all. But you get something else.

Before she learns Sit, you'll get that moment of pride as she descends the staircase for the first time. Before she recognizes her name, she'll choose to lie across the room and gaze at you instead of hiding under the bed. Maybe one day you'll hike together, but first, the moment she willingly lets you clip on her leash for a walk is a day you'll remember forever.

Fostering any dog is a journey of discovery. Being a foster dog parent is decompressing a dog from his or her prior life. Some are easier than others. You teach them their name and some skills, but mostly you teach them what it is to know human love and kindness. In this, being a foster for a trauma dog is the same. It just takes a little more patience and time.

These dogs have experienced the worst of humanity. Yet every day, they give us an opportunity to prove that we are not. Despite all they have been through, there is a seed of hope within their hearts that not all people are bad; that maybe, just maybe, humans are inherently good.

"We definitely have a connection," says Ryan. "Might seem like a one-way connection, but it's a connection." Ryan has grown attached to Alex, and while it's subtle, Alex is clearly attached to Ryan. Alex doesn't jump into Ryan's lap, but he looks to him for all things — for comfort, for knowledge, and for love. Alex has never had that with any human being.

Opening your home to a trauma dog involves opening your heart and mind. They might have unusual quirks, but despite their history they are dogs: resilient and ever-hopeful. For some of them, it will be your own dog who does the true teaching. For others, you will be their one true advisor. You need no special skills to foster or adopt a trauma dog. The human heart already comes with the necessary components: love, patience, and devotion.

Please consider opening the door to your heart and your home. Dogs who have suffered trauma might be hesitant at first, but they will eventually come in. They need you, and you need them: to show you the resilience of a soul, that hope never dies, and that patience and time heal all.

The call for animal protection is growing louder. People are fighting in courtrooms and congresses to create legislation, while others fight on the front lines, physically removing victims of cruelty from horrific conditions.

If you (or you and your dog) are interested in adopting or fostering, please contact My Way Home Dog Rescue. You can also learn about volunteering through START Rescue, which coordinates travel and placement, and about Nami Kim and her work at www.savekoreandogs.org.

Those outside Oregon and California can help as well. Contact your local shelters and rescues who have taken in dogs from puppy mills and fighting rings. Research the organizations taking in dogs from the meat trade or hoarding situations. Contact them and let them know you would like to help.

Prove the dogs right: that we, as a species, are not a lost cause. For every one person who causes them harm, there are thousands more ready and willing to heal them. 🐾

Stephanie Wescott is a freelance writer whose mission is to save animals' lives through story. Although based in Burbank, California, you'll most likely find her on the open road with her canine partner Tucker, searching for trails to hike and stories to tell. You can follow their tracks and read their tales at alltuckerredout.org.

