

Cole, My Success Story

By: Bonnie Reilly, HSCC Foster Coordinator

On May 2nd a purebred 4yr old male Husky, named Cole, was surrendered to the Caroline County Animal Shelter due to an alleged "bite". Theresa, the Shelter Technician, was determined to get him adopted. Staff from the Humane Society of Caroline County went to the shelter for a tour at the same time that Cole was surrendered, got to meet him, and a lot of us really liked Cole and wanted to help. We all sent emails, made phone calls, and did whatever we could do to pull Cole from the shelter. No Husky rescue by law could take him due to the "bite".

Vicky Grier, HSCC Board Chairperson, and I drove to the shelter on Monday, May 21st to "rescue" Cole just hours before he was scheduled to be euthanized. He jumped into the backseat of Vicky's SUV and off we went to my house. We put him in the kennel where he stayed until dark and then Bill and I brought him into our house with our dog, 3 cats, a ferret, and fosters of 1 dog and 5 kittens. He stayed in the house for a few days until he bit off the tip of one of the foster kittens' tails (ouch!), so he was banned to the sunroom for 2 days. Then when we let him back into the house we realized he was food aggressive and the fun started. We took in another foster dog and when he snapped at the dog during feeding time, Bill corrected him and he growled, snarled, and snapped at Bill so he was banned to his bed for a few hours. Bill and I started to discuss it and realized that between the two of us feeding we were not aware that he was really not eating and was probably very hungry. We went to the store, bought Alpo canned food and the food aggression stopped immediately and completely. Cole became very friendly, very personable, and very playful!

We brought into our "Ark" 2 more kittens and 3 more dogs, and he got along with all, but we never let him near the kittens. So when we took Cole out, he had to go out the front door and around back to the lead and brought back in the same way. The other dogs could go through the sunroom to the back which was a lot easier and faster. The sunroom is where the kittens live all day until night then they go into the office. The office door had to be locked at night so Cole could not get in to the kittens. From that day on there was no aggression of any kind and he turned out to be a great dog.

I put our fosters on Petfinders and Rescue Me. That is where his adoptive family saw him who called me on June 14 and asked if they could meet Cole. I said sure, the next day I was free but they wanted to come that evening so we made arrangements for them to come and meet Cole on Thursday, June 14th at 5pm. They live in Midlothian right outside of Richmond. They have a 2 1/2 year old male Husky named Suko that they brought with them and when they arrived we put Cole on a leash and took him outside to meet them and Suko. Cole and Suko almost immediately started "talking" to each other. They were friends from the start. The family brought all of Sukos records and vet bills along so we could see them. She had the "biting" and food aggression problems with her other Husky so she was very familiar with what I was telling her. The family worked with the dog and they no longer have those problems and were more than willing to work with Cole.

They spent a little over 2 hours here with Cole and took the adoption forms home. They emailed the forms to me as well as sent a copy to the Humane Society address. I checked their personal references, rescue references, and their vet references and could not have found a better match for Cole. When we did the home visit, we were more than impressed with the home atmosphere, the fenced-in yard, the pool, and how happy and comfortable their Husky was there. We did not take Cole to the home visit. I called the family yesterday to tell them that everything checked out and the adoption had been approved and when did they want to come to pick up Cole. They said tomorrow. So at 11:30am the next day the dad and the two girls came to take Cole home.

Although I hated to see him go, and I cried the entire time, I knew that between everyone that helped pull him from the Shelter, Theresa from Animal Control, myself and my husband and his new family-----Cole finally got the fair shake that he so much deserved. He really is a great dog and I will miss him immensely but have made arrangements with the new owners to keep in touch, send pictures and for us to visit from time to time. My house is now quiet with 6 dogs and 8 cats, but Cole is sadly missed especially by me. I did it! I saved his life once and gave him a chance at a whole new one. This is why I do what I do. At times, when you guys think I am crazy (and I do too), and when we all know that I am overwhelmed, I keep at it because I know that someone will want these precious creatures, I just have to wait for that day to come for each and every one of them.