



A Community of Caring...One Mind at a Time

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Goose, Oct. 2009

Goose gets a second chance for a good life at Thelma's Place

Canby, OR—

Through no fault of his own, he was abandoned in the woods by his owner to live the remainder of his life in fear and uncertainty. Luckily there were other plans for this 40 pound lab mix, named Goose, because Jeff, a very kind and caring hunter, happened to be in the woods at the same time. He didn't think twice about what he had to do as he bundled Goose up in his truck and took him home to join their three other dogs on the farm. After a visit to the vet they discovered Goose had an arthritic hip and was nearly deaf. However, Jeff was still determined to provide the best home he could for Goose for the remainder of his life.

The beloved dog shared by Thelma's Place and Country Side Living, named Tippy, had just died from a sudden illness. The residents and staff were heartbroken. They knew another dog couldn't replace Tippy but another one might take away the sadness. That's when they heard the story of Goose and the offer to try him out was given. What an amazing addition Goose has been to the residents of Country Side and the participants in the programs at Thelma's Place. He goes from one person to the next getting love and affection and has to retreat to the solitude of his bed from time to time just to get a little peace and quiet. A sharp contrast to the life he could have had wandering in the woods all alone where his days were filled with uncertainty.

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Such is the life of someone who receives a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other dementia. Through no fault of their own, they begin a journey filled with fear and uncertainty.

In Oregon alone there are over 80,000 people who have had their lives turned upside down by a disease that has slowly robbed them of their memories and the ability to complete even the simplest tasks. The person who laughed and played as a child, rebelled as a teenager, competed with others to become the teacher, lawyer, journalist, carpenter, farmer or doctor is gone. Alzheimer's is an equal opportunity disease that shows no partiality to race, religion, age, past employment or gender.

Thankfully, Thelma's Place is in Canby to help individuals and families pick up the pieces from a diagnosis of Alzheimer's. We understand the struggles of the caregiver who has to find ways to provide emotional, physical and financial care for their loved one. Because they didn't receive much training in how to become a caregiver to someone with this devastating disease we provide knowledge and resources to help them.

For the person with the disease, it's so important for them to continue being as active and social as possible and to be engaged in stimulating activities so they can function in their home as long as possible. Minders Keepers is a day program that provides a fun, supportive place every Thursday where they will be with up to 12 other people experiencing memory loss. Their time will be filled with memory games, exercises such as Tai Chi, gardening, art, and an occasional visit from Goose to liven up the day!

Through monthly Community Education, Thelma's Place teaches the value of staying well, both in mind and body, so that we keep our mental capacities as sharp as possible for the rest of our lives.

Caring for a loved one who has dementia is a journey that no family should have to take alone. They have no choice but to continue the journey they've started on but they don't have to travel alone. At Thelma's Place we can't help all 80,000 Oregonians with the disease but with our support and encouragement we can make a difference—one person at a time—one mind at a time!

Goose needed someone to give him a second chance to have a good life. People living with Alzheimer's need someone to give them a second chance at life too without the fear and uncertainty of the disease. Thelma's Place does just that!