

Collaboration Saves the Day

One volunteer makes the difference for four dogs with the help of networking and Best Friends

There is a beautiful, small red pit bull named Ollie at the [Doggie Dude Ranch](#) in Rockville, Utah. Filomina, the owner, is taking him out to play in the big play yard. She is teaching him basic obedience. He is learning to trust. Soon, Ollie will start another leg of his journey home. Keeley Floyd, a red-headed, Dogtown caregiver at Best Friends, will put this little red pit bull in her red jeep and head south over the Kaibab to the Smiling Dog Rescue in Tucson, Arizona. Ollie is going to stay at the home of his trainer, Eddie Vanture, until he is ready for his forever home.

There is a very sweet, gentle, pure white pit bull named Lady Jazmine (formerly Snow White) who is sitting by Jeannine Fullmer's side. Lady Jazmine is deaf and Jeannine is teaching her hand signals. The animals at the [Fullmer Menagerie Animal Rescue](#) in Salina, Utah, have welcomed Lady Jazmine with open arms and wings. She has met Waylon, the llama; Festus, the 3-legged cat; Drifter, the brand new colt; Helen Keller, the border collie; and the A-Team, a gaggle of geese. Lady Jazmine will have one-on-one training in socialization, obedience, and communication skills.

And there are two puppies (Snow White's dwarfs) playing together at Best Friends. Their new names - Illusion and Mirage - are a testament to the magic involved when people work together to save the lives of animals. These four dog's lives intersect at a less than magical venue, the [Hurricane City Animal Shelter](#). Their individual journeys prove that dreams do come true.

Timing is Everything

The story begins on April 2, when Ollie was out exploring and landed at the shelter. I had been volunteering - walking dogs, socializing dogs, and taking them to adoption events. When I came in to walk dogs that day, Ollie growled at me. It took a couple of days to muster the courage to let him out. Linda Melin, the supervising animal control officer, helped me take him out and get acquainted. Ollie loves treats and I used them generously. It wasn't long before we were out for long walks. We walked through a nearby orchard where he could check out the rabbits, the new

baby foals and practice his conflict resolution skills on the two black labs that charged the fence as we walked by.

Someone once said to me that “timing is everything in life,” unfortunately timing was not on Ollie’s side. Shortly after Ollie’s incarceration, there was an incident involving a pit bull in Hurricane City, Utah. Because of the severity of the attack, Linda Melin did not want to place Ollie in a home within city limits.

On April 19, a pure white pit bull came into the Hurricane Animal Shelter with two puppies: we named them Snow White and the two dwarfs. Snow White was very sweet and gentle – she even let me pet her puppies.

Linda Melin, contacted Lezlie Sage at Best Friends. Lezlie is the Four-Corners Regional Specialist for the Community Animal Assistance Program at Best Friends. Best Friends would take the two puppies: Lezlie sent a list of pit bull rescue websites for Ollie and Snow White. Linda encouraged me to start looking for a home for the adult dogs. The first thing I did was to call all of my dog-loving friends, they were onboard to help.

One of the websites on Lezlie’s list was [Pit Bull Rescue Central](#) (PBRC). Their mission is to offer free internet exposure for pit bulls in need. In order for a dog to be listed for adoption, PBRC recommends that a dog be evaluated by someone who understands the breed and their characteristics.

Evaluation Saves the Day

I sent an email to Lezlie Sage to ask for an evaluation of Ollie and Snow White. Their response was lightning-fast. Best Friends staff Mike Harmon, the [Community Training Partners](#) program manager and Namrata Chand, a marketing manager came to the Hurricane Shelter on Wednesday, April 28. They spent a lot of time with both Snow White and Ollie. Mike said of Snow White: “she is a loving, friendly, non-aggressive dog that does great with other companions.”

Mike’s evaluation of Ollie was honest and compassionate: “Ollie is a scared, insecure dog who doesn’t trust people. Even though it appears that he has not had much socialization with people, Ollie does everything right when he expresses that he is uncomfortable in situations. A big plus for Ollie is that he is food motivated. He is the typical shelter dog – scared and fearful. These dogs have a difficult time making it out of the

shelter alive. Ollie just needs a chance. He needs to learn to trust people and to experience that the world really is not a bad place to live.”

The Hurricane Shelter was full and Linda Melin gave me a week to find a home for Ollie. Snow White, because of her sweet disposition, was not yet in danger of euthanasia.

Networking to the Rescue

I felt overwhelmed while trying to find placement for Ollie. I called [Sanctuary One](#) at the Double Oak Farm in Southern Oregon. Sanctuary One is a Care Farm whose mission is to provide a refuge for animals. Sansa Collins, the sanctuary manager, said that they are not yet set up to take dogs but gave me the number of [Save The Pets](#) in Springfield, Oregon. Save the Pets is a non-profit Adoption Center whose primary goal is to eliminate pet over-population in Lane County, Oregon, and serve as a rehabilitation center. Lisa Warnes, the large dog rescue and foster coordinator, responded “he (Ollie) will have a place to stay even if it means I keep him for a few months in a foster situation here in Eugene....regardless he will live and be in good hands”. I had a safety net for Ollie.

I did not have a computer: I did not even know how to get Ollie’s picture to Lisa Warnes. I called Andrea Wenzel for help. Andrea and AJ Wenzel live in Virgin, Utah, and they foster hard-to-handle dogs and have a small business boarding dogs. Every morning their dogs get to go for a run in the mountains. I’ve gone with them. It’s like heaven: the mountains, a pack of dogs, and good friends.

Andrea helped me set up a link to Ollie’s picture and gave me her distribution list of rescues. With Andrea’s help, I sent out a plea for Ollie’s life that came from the bottom of my heart to all the groups on Andrea’s list.

I also remembered that a friend of mine, Leslie Cook, had a daughter, April Cook, who owned [Dogs on the Run](#) in San Diego. Dogs on the Run has been doing in-home, pet care service including dog walking, pet visits, overnight care, pet taxi and dog training, since 2003. April sent my email plea for Ollie’s life to 1600 people.

The next night Ami Carpenter, professor at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies in San Diego, California, called me. She had received

April's newsletter and wanted to give Ollie a home. Because Ami was an individual and not a rescue group, I suggested that Ami call Mike Harmon.

Mike stepped in. From then on he was always orchestrating behind the scenes. Lezlie Sage had said that Best Friends would do the evaluations and help with the transport – but Mike Harmon did much, much more.

Every day I continued to walk Ollie and bring him treats but my heart was breaking. I knew that he needed one-on-one attention. Luckily the email plea did the trick and the phones started ringing and emails started streaming in.

The Right Match

Jeanine Fullmer was interested in taking Ollie to her [Fullmer Menagerie Animal Rescue](#) in Salina, Utah. I talked to her about Ollie's fear issues and suggested that she might take Snow White instead. After she talked to Mike Harmon, she decided that Snow White was a good fit and could benefit from one-on-one training. Best Friends arranged her transport and a member of Best Friends took Snow White to Dr. Ekins in Delta, Utah, to be spayed before she went to her new home. Jeannine renamed Snow White: she is now known as Lady Jazmine – because, says Jeannine, of her pure white color, her sweetness, and her lady-like manner.

On Sunday, May 2, I received an email from Rica Powell of [Smiling Dog Rescue](#) in Tucson, Arizona. It was short and very sweet “We will take Ollie at Smiling Dog in Tucson. Please contact me at 520-977-8000.” I cried with joy and then called Mike Harmon. We had a backup that had room for him - and Ollie would not have to travel so far.

Rica Powell of Smiling Dog Rescue (SDR) began her rescue efforts many years ago by rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing one dog per month. More recently, she started working with the PIMA Animal Control Center in Tucson. To date SDR has rehabilitated and re-homed over 600 homeless pit bull type dogs in Southern Arizona. They advocate spay/neuter and responsible pit bull ownership. Rica Powell told me “One person CAN make a difference”. Rica and her partner Elise Webber intend to start a sanctuary for bully breeds in the Tucson area.

Mike Harmon continued to work with Ami Carpenter in San Diego, but her home owner's association was being uncooperative. Mike determined that Ollie's best offer was Smiling Dog Rescue.

We needed a temporary home for Ollie until Best Friends could arrange to transport Ollie to Tucson. Mike decided on the [Doggy Dude Ranch](#). I was thrilled. I had been there last summer and wanted to move in myself. The dogs all had big play areas and a giant pool and lots of attention. The Doggy Dude Ranch provides day-care, overnight, and training for dogs. It is 3.7 miles from Zion National Park in Rockville, Utah, and is run by the owner, Filomena. Filomena agreed to take Ollie but he would need to be neutered and have his shots.

On May 7, I took Ollie out of his cage at the Hurricane City Animal Shelter for the last time. This time the door clanging shut was music to my ears: Ollie was going home – well. The Washington Family Veterinary Clinic in St. George, took good care of Ollie. Mike Harmon met me that afternoon and we transported him to his new home. As Filomena took him from me, the tears spilled over. I offered to come and walk him but Filomena assured me that this “wasn't her first rodeo”. I had to let go and let her do her job. I called several times over the next two weeks. At first, Filomena was the only one who could handle Ollie. She worked with him: teaching him to sit, lie down, and wait for his food. Within a week, with positive training, Ollie warmed up to all of the Doggy Dude Crew.

Their New Chapter Begins

I received a call a few days ago from Mike Harmon: Could I pick up Ollie from the [Doggy Dude Ranch](#) on Friday, May 21, and transport him to Fredonia, Arizona, to connect with his ride to Tucson, Arizona. I was thrilled at the opportunity to see Ollie again and help him on his journey home. On Friday, April 21, Keeley Floyd, the Dogtown Caregiver from Best Friends, loaded Ollie into her red jeep. It was bittersweet for me as I watched Keeley and Ollie start over the Kaibab, but I knew that Ollie was in good hands and on his way to his forever home

It still feels like magic to me – having Ollie headed to Tucson and Lady Jazmine (Snow White) at the menagerie and the puppies – Illusion and Mirage - at Best Friends. And maybe there was some magic – but mostly, just a lot of caring people who did what they could do.

Saving Ollie, Lady Jazmine (Snow White) and her two puppies has been an incredible journey filled with love, tears, reconnecting with old friends, making new friends and learning about a breed of dog – the pit bull – that has been maligned and misunderstood. Mike Harmon has been like a conductor – bringing us all together and encouraging us to work together in a peaceful and productive way.

I want to express my gratitude to all who helped Ollie, Lady Jazmine (Snow White) and her two puppies find homes. A special thanks to Best Friends for taking Lady Jazmine's two puppies, for evaluating Ollie and Lady Jazmine, for transporting them to their new homes, and for their generosity in paying for the costs to neuter, board and train Ollie.

Contact Information for the Rescue Groups involved in the rescue of Ollie, Snow White and her two puppies:

[Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm](#)

13195 Upper Applegate
Jacksonville, OR
435-772-3105
info@sanctuaryone.org

[Fullmer Menagerie Animal Rescue](#)

182 East 200 South
Salina, UT 84654
435-529-1307
fullmermenagerieanimalrescue@yahoo.com

[Save The Pets Adoption Center](#)

3000 Gateway Ste. 202
Gateway Mall
Springfield, OR 97477
lisawarnes@efn.org

[Dogs On The Run](#)

877-858-8738
info@DogsOnTheRun.com

[Doggy Dude Ranch](#)

800 E. Main (on SR9)
Rockville, UT 84763

541-899-8627
info@doggyduderanch.com

Andrea and AJ Wenzel
435-635-1468
amwenzel@live.com

[Smiling Dog Rescue](#)
Tucson, AZ
520-977-8000
SmilingDogRescue@gmail.com

[Hurricane Animal Shelter](#)
Hurricane, Utah
435-635-8314

[Best Friends Animal Society](#)
Kanab, UT 84741
435-644-2001