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1st Quarter 2020 Highlights

During the first quarter of 2020, we were very, very full due to the birth of Cynder's nine puppies right before the holidays. As a result we had only eleven dogs join us: Abraham, Big Boy, Boudreaux, Brandy, Cloe, Harley, Isaac, Joe, Pinky, Ragnar, and Zen.

The following seventeen dogs are very happy in their new forever homes: Abigail, Blitzen, Buttercup, Comet, Cupid, Dasher, Donner, Mouse, Pinky, Poppy,

Prancer, Ragnar, Rosie, Rudy, Russet, Vixen and Zen. And felines Tortie and Tang have also found their forever homes.

Two of our Pyrs recently went to a loving foster homes together: Abraham and Isaac.

Congratulations to the Pyrs and cats adopted in the 1st Quarter as well as those in loving foster homes and thank you to their new families!

"MARCH MADNESS" UPDATE

It has been a year since we took in over two dozen Pyrs from a hoarding situation which we affectionately called "March Madness". Several of these dogs are still with us at AGPR and are being loved and cared for as we continue to find them forever homes:

- Roxy, Bert and Ernie are siblings and are about 16 months old. Each of them still sport a "mohawk hairdo"

and are smaller Pyrs. All three are shy and will require a calm and patient home. They do respond to love and affection.

- Handsome and very shy Beau is working on gaining confidence and is comfortable at AGPR where he knows everyone. He is very attached to his crate...he considers it his "man cave".

Coronavirus Support

We know that everyone is tired of hearing "coronavirus this and COVID-19 that". But the whole situation has had an impact on the rescue. Our biggest concern surfaced when Costco, our dog food supplier, limited dog food purchase to eliminate hoarding. The "rules" seemed to change from day to day. Using the power of Facebook, we put out a request for our local Costco cardholders to help us out. In less than a week's time, we had enough food for two

weeks with promises of more drop offs the following week. Many thanks to all those who helped and offered help - our dog food supply is good through Easter.

Until things return to normal, our boarding customers are non-existent. Diminished income will require watching our expenses more closely until things get back to normal. But we are all safe and healthy and that is what is important!

Lily's Story



Editor's note: While this story is long, we felt it important to provide many of the details. If there were an award for an adoptive family never giving up, Lily's family would be awarded the honor. Please take the time to read it. GPR is so happy that Lily adopted this family! And that her family is taking the time to share their lessons learned.

We adopted Lily (née Cami) in August 2018. She was our first Great Pyrenees, but since we were experienced large dog owners, we figured things would not be too different. This was the start of the many lessons Lily has taught us. First, **don't assume all dogs are the same**. Lily hated being in a crate, despite it being large enough to accommodate a gorilla. She suffered from separation anxiety and being confined in a crate, or even the house while we were at work, caused excessive drooling, destructive behavior, and an anxious preoccupation with windows. Lily was fine in the house while we were at home with her, but without us, this behavior continued.

Even the presence of our older Greyhound, Bart, made no difference. With vet advice, we tried medication designed to treat separation anxiety - no difference. I spent a great deal of time reading about the subject and decided to give CBD oil a try. It helped but only a little bit. We had an animal trainer come to the house for an evalua-

tion, but we had already tried every suggestion she made. I consulted with a behaviorist in another part of the state - no new advice for how to improve the situation. Obedience training? She was not ready for that yet. She spent most of the class with her paw wrapped around my leg, entirely focused on me. After a 6-week course, training went on the back burner. I finally recognized that **she was giving me signs** that this was too much for her at this point, so I listened to her and backed off for the time being. "Sit", "stay", and "down" were not relevant to her needs at that time. Another lesson learned.

We noticed that the only time Lily seemed truly happy was when she was outside in the backyard. This was foreign to us, as we have never kept any of our dogs out in the yard for extended periods of time. Since being in the house made her anxiety worse, we tried letting her stay out back during the day. We noticed she had been up in the top of the windows (drool evidence on the glass) in the house, which made us fearful that she might actually try to go out of the window as some dogs with severe separation anxiety have done. With 6-foot fencing on three sides of the backyard, she quickly figured out the one side that was easy to scale and took advantage of this twice before a late-night emergency installation of a 2-foot vertical extension kept our Houdini Hound safely in the yard.

Yet another lesson we learned from Lily - **some dogs just prefer to be outside**. With this, we decided to try doggie daycare. This would allow her time outside but keep her safe from dangerous overheating. Perhaps the confidence Lily could gain from social engagement with other dogs and the attentive care provided by the staff would be an added benefit. Lily's buddy Bart was not the playful sort, so I took Lily to a daycare where I met with the staff and explained Lily's separation anxiety issue. They were eager to help Lily.

For the first couple of weeks, Lily kept to herself, watching the other dogs versus engaging with them. The staff encouraged her to come out of her shell and eventually she began playing with some of the other dogs. It wasn't too long before she started frolicking and running around with her new canine friends. Additionally, the grooming staff worked with Lily to overcome her fear of water - she now enjoys the spa-like pampering she receives there. The lesson we learned at this point was to **welcome the wisdom of those in the trenches and to enlist their help**.

In early October 2018, I proposed a crazy idea to my husband, Paul: what if we got a dog kennel in the backyard for Lily? This would provide a roof and a place to get out of the weather. He liked the idea and we started searching online for a structure to purchase. We visited some builders' lots in VA and NC, but the prices were outrageous for the size. I came home with a photo one day of a more unique structure I had found - half kennel and half shed. When I showed it to Paul, he announced, "I can build that."

Late October 2018, Paul started the foundation for what would become a 10x20' known as "Lily's hut". During the course of a few months, Paul was able to provide Lily with a safe, comfortable kennel that allowed her to be outside like she wanted. We bought a Kuranda bed to keep on the porch. But the confinement issue started creeping up on us again, and somehow, she managed to escape through the kennel fence gate one day and was hanging out in the yard when we got home. With summer heat and humidity approaching, we purchased a portable AC unit for the interior portion. However, our Houdini Hound decided to jump through the screen of one of the side windows, which was open to circulate fresh, spring air. Paul replaced the screen and we decided the AC would not be safe to install.

Paul added some “maximum security” enhancements to the fencing on three sides of the kennel porch, but we noticed she was bending some of the wires with either her body or her teeth. We arrived at the conclusion that the fencing needed to come down. She would still have access via the doggie door to an interior area and a porch made of composite decking to keep her dry and off the cold ground. Through all of these, we put two locks on the back gate at the driveway anytime she was outside and we were not home.

We had almost solved the problem, but the summer heat was coming fast. We noticed Lily loved sleeping on the concrete floor of the garage, so we started opening the side door of our detached garage to give her another place to get out of the weather. Although she loves that cold floor, we purchased a collapsible, accordion-style bed to set up in the garage, angled to where she can look out into the yard. This seemed to be the final piece to the puzzle. She goes to daycare two or three times a week, and when she is home, she is out back with multiple beds, water bowls, locks on the gate, and a roofed porch and garage to give her options from the weather.

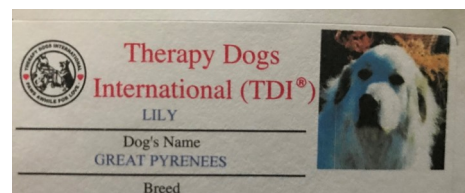
But there are still days when the weather is really bad, and I want her to stay inside with Bart. That is

where calming chews come into play. **I did a lot of research** on these and found some on Amazon to try. These have been so helpful! They help during fireworks and allow her to be inside without destroying things or feeling stressed. She stayed inside two days in a row recently during a very rainy spell and was a model citizen.

I started back with obedience training in fall 2019 with the lofty goal of getting her therapy certified. I have been volunteering with dog therapy since April 2007 and Lily's sweet nature would be perfect for it. But getting an independent-thinking Pyr to see the point of doing a down-stay would prove to be harder than I imagined. **We worked with different trainers and attended classes** to slowly build on an obedience background. Having tested twice before with a Bernese Mountain Dog and a Greyhound, I was focused solely on training for the therapy test. On December 22, 2019, Lily passed both the AKC Canine Good Citizen Test and the certification for Therapy Dogs International. Once her credentials are received, we can start working with some of the organizations with which I am already affiliated with because of Bart, such as the USO's Canine Comfort Crew and the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD) Buddy Brigade.

The point of sharing this story is to highlight the importance of patience with regards to allowing dogs and owners to get used to each other, and to understand that no two dogs are the same. We have made accommodations for Lily that were never needed for our other dogs, but, at the same time, we learned that having a dog outside doesn't make someone a bad person. This was a new concept to us, and utilizing the right preparations and modifications allowed us to keep Lily in our family while making her feel happy and safe. There were times that we contacted Celeste and Victoria, begging for advice because we were convinced we would have to return Lily to AGPR. While it was sometimes extremely difficult, we **never gave up and kept working to find solutions.** **She is worth all of the effort we put into this relationship, and we know she will make a big impact as a therapy dog.**

Great news! Lily received her credentials in February. She is now an official Therapy Dog! Congratulations to Lily and her ever persistent family.



AGPR Bonded Pairs

Editor's note: We do not understand why these two bonded pairs are still with us! While we absolutely adore them, they need to be in loving homes where they can enjoy their people and have lots of time to romp and play. Please, if you have room in your heart, consider adopting a pair.



Atlas (left) and **Akira** (right) joined AGPR in May 2019. Atlas is a big and very handsome Pyr and Akira is his girlfriend. Given Atlas' size and enthusiasm, he needs to go to a home without small children. And the bonded twosome would love a nice big yard (with a secure fence) to protect and keep free of critters. And a pretty big sofa to chill on inside.



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Email your photo and/or story to
the address above. Include
your name and your Pyr's name
as you would like it printed. All
submissions will be edited for
style, clarity, and length.

Upcoming Events:

~ On hold due to Coronavirus ~

*AGPRescue is a 501(c)(3) organization -
all donations are tax deductible.*

AGPR Bonded Pairs (cont'd)



Albert (left) and **Tyler** (right) are brothers and are a bit smaller than your average male Pyr. They used to be working dogs (livestock guardians) and have decided that being inside with air conditioning is a better way of life. They are very fortunate to have been able to retire at a younger age so they can enjoy themselves.

The boys are bonded, came to AGPR on February 2019 and need to find a home together. Albert wants everyone to know he is the boss (regardless of what Tyler will tell you).

Helping our Pyrs by Shopping



Details on how to sign up for AmazonSmile and Kroger have been posted on our website: <https://agprescue.org/fundraising/>

Thank you for your support!

*For more information on how you can help, e-mail us at AGPR-news@verizon.net.
Thank you.*