

Gordy & Friends Improves the Lives of Local Dogs

BY AMANDA DUDEK

If you have ever felt concern for a dog who always seems to be chained up outside, Kathy Karle-Walsh understands how you feel.

Walsh founded Gordy & Friends in 2013 not long after adopting her dog, Gordon, from Lollypop Farms. She named her organization after Gordon. "When my husband and I adopted him from Lollypop, I kind of went crazy about dogs," said Walsh, referring to the passion she felt to help as many as she could. "I really started Gordy & Friends in 2012, but it wasn't until 2013 that I officially put the information on Facebook."

Gordy & Friends is an outreach organization and nonprofit. "We are not a rescue," Walsh clarified. "Our primary goal is to help dogs who are chained or penned 24/7." Walsh and the volunteers who work with Gordy & Friends were inspired to work in Ontario, Livingston and Steuben Counties where they look for dogs to help as well as some of Monroe County in which they help some families.

"There are lots of dogs in underserved areas where owners need help," she said. "We work right on the spot to improve the life of the dog." Although volunteers and donations came slowly at first, both have increased since Gordy & Friends became a nonprofit in 2015. "It was a lot of hard work, but it was definitely worth it," said Walsh. "More groups are sending us food, dog supplies and dog toys. We have great volunteers and supporters who are very good to us."

Gordy & Friends appreciate the support as they are tackling a very big issue. "People do not know that in New York State, with some exceptions, it is not illegal to leave your dog chained up outside constantly," explained Walsh. Therefore, she pointed out, calling the authorities usually does not change things for the dog, so that's why they help instead of calling others to get involved.

"Gordy & Friends is there non-judgmentally, not to call the authorities, but to change life for the dog," said Walsh. "We would like to see someone go from having a dog that was an outside dog to having a dog that is now living inside as a member of the family. We would love to put ourselves out of business!"

Unfortunately, it doesn't look like that will happen anytime soon. "It doesn't happen overnight, but we are dedicated to the dogs," shared Walsh. "We help with spaying and neutering and vet care. We help by walking these dogs - with permission, of course. We are hoping to model and be a positive example."

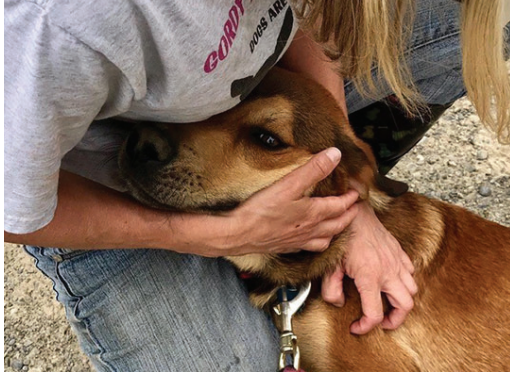
Gordy & Friends also cares about pet owners. "We are not just kind to dogs but people, too, whether this means helping out once or regularly," said Walsh. "We are working toward a social revolution, closing the gap between what is legal and what is best for the dog."

The disconnect often comes from personal experiences. "If you were raising chickens in your backyard, and I told you that you should bring your chickens inside to live in your house with you, you might think that is ridiculous. Sometimes, owners of a dog that has always lived outside and who grew up with their dogs living outside feel the same way."

Still, Gordy & Friends plans to continue helping wherever they can. "We see dogs in all states of need, but one of the saddest things is a lonely dog; it's heartbreaking," stated Walsh. "We are out there just trying to help. Many times, people are very open and happy to accept our help, and we are very thankful. We want to uplift, help and be positive."

Dogs are a lifetime commitment of time, energy, attention, and love. Please consider all of these before adopting one.

- Dogs require time, energy and love, including attention and care.
- Dogs need daily exercise and interaction. Consider 20-30-minute walks as well as playtime and interaction for physical and emotional well-being.
- Do not leave your dog outside chained or penned nor indoors crated or isolated 24/7. Dogs need interaction, mobility and socialization.
- Consider the cost of healthy food and vet care - your dog deserves both, and fresh, clean water.
- Training your dog takes time, patience, and kindness. Never use force or anger; it will not work.
- Spay or Neuter: it is for your dog's health, and it is also humane.
- Consider the grooming needs your dog will have such as fur, nails, flea prevention, etc.
- Please adopt; shelters and rescues are full of dogs and puppies who all need love and a second chance.
- Research the breed that will fit your lifestyle best and accommodate the needs of that breed.



Kathy Karle-Walsh with a dog she is walking. Volunteering to walk dogs is one of the ways Gordy & Friends helps.



Gordon, the namesake of Gordy & Friends



Gordy & Friends gives pet owners options beyond leaving pets chained outside.

We work right on the spot to improve the life of the dog.

- Kathy Karle-Walsh



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