

HEIDI'S STORY



On a Thursday morning, March 2001, while driving into work on a desolate back road where dogs and cats are dumped, as are other animals, and there is no hope for their survival, I found three adult female German Shepherd Dogs that had been deserted there.

In reality, there is no hope for any animal dumped in this area; just a horrible death of starvation, being hit by a car, or having an alligator get it as it seeks water from the pits.

It was evident that all three dogs had been used for "backyard" breeding and were no longer needed. This could have been because each one was heartworm positive - Heidi the least infected. All three were extremely thin, frightened, and unsocialized. I stopped that night with food for them and I went down in a ditch to feed them (some people told me I was crazy but I could feel there wasn't any danger from them). I feed them twice daily through the following Monday morning.

That first night I sent out literally dozens of e-mails pleading for help to catch them because of the dangerous area they were in. The ONLY person that responded was Dennis McCullough from Hillsborough County Animal Services. He came out with others the following Monday and they were able to dart two of the girls, but missed one - which turned out to be Heidi.

That evening, I went by that area and I was able to get her into my car and home. From that evening forward her name was Heidi and she was our girl. She was sensitive, gentle, and seemed to know and understand whatever we wanted.

In July 2001 I underwent a second lung cancer surgery. Heidi was by my side 24-7 until my full recovery some five weeks later. She sensed what I needed and would get a member of the family to come to me if I needed something. It is hard to explain but it was like she could read my mind. The night of September 10, 2001, which was the evening before the horrible and ill-fated September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States, Heidi died suddenly of an aneurism.

I truly believe and I have always felt, as does my family, that Heidi was an Angel sent to me when I needed her the most and once her "job" was done with me, she was needed to help lost souls cross over that next morning. I was graced with having her in my life for five and a half months. What an impression she made on me and now so many others.

In her honor and memory, Heidi's Legacy: Dog Rescue was started to save other wonderful companions.