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## **Bethany woman spends her time rescuing forgotten canines**

**By: Bridget Albert, Editor**

**BETHANY - When you walk up to Donna Ives' home, you take a second look because there in the window next to the door sits Dana. The black-Lab mix is a Louisiana rescue dog. When Ives' learned what the critter has been through her heart broke. Ives said she had a lot of respect for the woman who actually rescued the Lab from a less than quality life. In fact her admiration was so strong she named the youngster after her.**

Dana, the rescuer, walked past the dog every day, Ives said. She would talk to her while she viewed the shoddy life the Lab was forced to live in. Dana, the dog, Ives said, was tied outside standing in water with no shelter day after day. Dana, the rescuer offered to buy the animal a doghouse, food, take her off the owner's hands. Finally, Ives said, her persistence paid off.

Dana was the Ives' family's introduction into Labs4rescue, a nonprofit organization that takes the necessary steps to protect the fur balls and make sure they have quality to their lives.

Dana certainly has quality to her life. She has three very large felines; Matthew, John and \*\*\* to tease and play with daily. Ives has had Dana for about a year and said she can't imagine her life without the bundle of energy.

But Ives hasn't stopped with Dana, who is her permanent dog. She also fosters animals while their forever homes are being sought.

"I started fostering after the hurricanes," Ives said. "They were desperate for foster homes," Ives said.

So far she has fostered seven dogs to Nila who left her last week with her forever family.

Nila was only with her for a few days. Her pictures were on the Labs4rescue.com Web site and an interested family in New York was eager to meet her. Once they saw her they fell in love with her, Ives said.

Her foster guests usually come to her via pet transport from the south. "The transport leaves Thursday night and we pick up on Saturday at various points on the way," Ives explained.

Animals in those parts such as Louisiana, Missouri and Tennessee who end up in animal shelters are only given three days for their owners to claim them Ives explained. Then they are euthanized. "Labs4rescue goes into the shelters that destroy animals after three days and

rescue as many labs and Lab mixes as possible," Ives explained

When asked why she has gotten involved in rescuing Labs Ives said it was a natural transition for her.

"I love dogs, my whole family is animal lovers - including my grandchildren," Ives said adding that by fostering she has found a way to help that modes well with her life.

Ives comes from a family that loves animals her sister Julie Collier, Wingmasters, rescues birds of prey. She recently sponsored a fundraiser for one of Ives' Labs.

"You can choose the dogs to foster. Right now I like to foster older males who are more compatible with the house dog Dana," Ives explained.

"I try to choose a foster that will harmonize with my home situation," she said.

When you visit the Labs4resuce Web site there are many ways to help the canines such as fostering, donating, adopting youngsters to seniors. The Killingworth-based organization also outlines every possible bit of information one needs on the breed. To foster you must qualify. There is an application process along with a home visit. The foster family provides food and there is no reimbursement. However, if the animal needs veterinary care Labs4rescue takes care of such bills.

According to the Web site Labs4rescue is a volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a new life for rescued or displaced Labrador retrievers and Labrador-mixes. All Labs4rescue dogs undergo an initial veterinary screening, treatment as required and then they are placed in loving foster homes for nurturing and further evaluation. All Labs offered for adoption have been vaccinated, spayed/neutered, started on heartworm prevention and have received treatment for any prevailing medical or health conditions.