

**GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2010**



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

2010

At our January and June Board meetings in 2010, we reviewed the goals we had set for 2009, how they had been met and what we should focus on in the current year.

One of our goals for many years has been to put together an Organizational Chart, showing all the Coordinators currently volunteering and keeping GSRNE working smoothly. This was accomplished in 2009, and a meeting of all coordinators was held for the first time; each received a questionnaire ahead of time so we could get better acquainted and do some brainstorming at the meeting. There were many good ideas and suggestions presented and some have led to updating procedures.

We talked about making our Adoption Application accessible from our Website without losing the ability to prescreen applicants. Our Webmaster, Chris Harriman, was able to set it up so that an applicant can only access that page after talking to a Hotline volunteer, passing the prescreening and then receiving the information that will take him to those pages. Our Hotline volunteers no longer have to print out and assemble the application and information pages and send them through the regular mail, unless the caller does not have a computer.

One of the ways we get the word out about GSRNE is to have our volunteers attend events like Pet Rock and the Belchertown Fair and staff information tables to talk with people about our rescue. We've been trying for years to create Events Teams in each of the New England states, and we've made great strides in accomplishing this. In New Hampshire, we have a Dynamic Duo, Jill and Jim Cuddihy, who were out at events for 4 or 5 weekends in a row. We have Fred Davis, in Central MA, who has put together a hard-working group to cover events in that part of the state. In 2009, we asked Sandy Billings to create a CT Team, and she really has done a wonderful job and has a dedicated group of volunteers who represent GSRNE at CT events. Lauralee Davis and Chrysan Corcione coordinate events in Eastern MA in addition to being the coordinators for the entire events team.

Another goal for 2009 was to create a Facebook page for GSRNE, and one of our talented members, Sharon Keenan, undertook that task and has exceeded our hopes and expectations. The Facebook page is really eye-catching, with our adopted boy, Champ, there to greet our friends. The information is updated frequently, and many friends comment regularly; when I took a look yesterday, we were up to 900 friends at the end of 2010 that had joined in order to keep up with GSRNE news and other animal-related articles.

We are looking forward to another great year working with the many talented volunteers who help GSRNE. Fundraising will be a priority as well as looking for ways to involve more people in the process of providing great "forever" homes for our dogs..

Message from the Board of Directors about our philosophy:

**1) We are about quality and not quantity.** We placed 32 dogs last year.. our second highest amount. Each dog is in a foster home for a minimum of a month (though usually it is closer to 2-3 months) allowing the foster team, board and adoption team to get to really know the dog and the environment needed for the dog to thrive. GSRNE is a niche that is 50% about the dogs and 50% about people. This includes our volunteers, foster homes and adopters. It also includes dog education for ourselves and the public, and room to grow for anyone within the organization. We never want to sacrifice quality but will keep striving to grow in a slow balanced manner. Our intake standards are rigorous, the foster home support and training very professional, keeping in mind the skill levels of our foster homes and adopters.

**2) Our "rules" for fostering, adoption etc. have been learned by our mistakes and successes during the past 12 years.** We know from experience that it is hard for German Shepherds to cope well in a shelter environment and it can be very difficult to get a sense of what they would be like in a home environment while in the shelter. That is why we are committed to our foster home program, which is the linchpin to our rescue dog to adoptive family matching program.

Even dogs that come in from owners are dogs that are unknown to us except for the snapshot that we get during evaluation. Our commitment to the dog and our adopters is to get the right match for the life of the dog. We rarely have dogs returned to us because of our thorough fostering program.

We developed foster home guidelines to maximize the safety of the dog and the foster home. German Shepherds are large, powerful dogs that potentially can do a lot of damage to a person or another dog. Our foster homes and their dogs are important to us and rely on us to keep them as safe as we possibly can. We are also very cautious because we want every rescue dog to succeed.

In our foster homes, we focus on helping the rescue dog learn the basics of how to be a family dog living in a home. Many have been isolated and need that initial orientation of how to play with a toy, have basic manners and appropriately interact with other family members (human, dog and/or cat). One of our primary joys is to watch the blossoming of these rescue dogs, comparing what they were first like when evaluated them to the magic day when they happily go home with their new families. With the vast majority of our German Shepherds, you would not recognize it is the same dog.

With each dog, we learn more and are flexible enough to change our guidelines as needed.

**3) We only take in dogs from New England.** We can not help all the dogs that people report to our hotline, however, each call is returned. Each dog is networked the best we can to see they ARE helped. Chris and Jackie have built a great rapport with other rescues/shelters to continue to save as many as we can. Remember the starfish story. It is the story of rescue. We can't help them all, and try to concentrate on those that we can help.

**4) Caring for our dogs:** The Board weighs decisions based on how we would treat our own dogs. Once accepted into GSRNE, if a dog is found to have medical problems we will discuss treatments etc. with qualified, top vets to learn as much as possible. If we can afford to treat the condition, and it makes sense, we do it. If we cannot restore the dog to a good life, then we do the humane thing and have it PTS. We are always there with the dog if that's necessary. We believe that as a rescue we need to

model the behavior that we'd like to see in the public and that includes not only how we treat our young healthy dogs, but our seniors and sick dogs, too.

5) **We try to take in a balance of dogs**....all ages from pups to seniors, all colors, males, females etc. We need to have a qualified foster home in order to bring a dog into the rescue. First time foster homes generally need "easier" dogs and learn as they go. We know that as a foster home, they'll fall in love with the dog, but hope that they will allow the dog to go to a wonderful adoptive home so they will continue to foster. As the foster home's skill levels increase they are able to help out dogs that may need more work, which is the majority of dogs that need our help. They also know the ropes better and need less help from the foster home coordinator.

6) **We keep our strict fencing policies** because we've had instances where dogs have gotten loose. All dogs are a flight risk at first. We know that insurance companies require chain link/stockade for approval so that's what we want. Hidden fences aren't acceptable because they can fail for a large breed dog or at times a dog will run through the electric fence if there's a high enough stimulus. They also don't protect the dog from other dogs, humans, or attacks from wild animals.

We are not saying that people that do not have a fence attached to their house will NOT provide a good home. We are NOT saying that there aren't many, many good people who would provide great homes. We are saying that for a GSRNE rescue dog, we want to optimize each dog's chance to success by accepting candidates that meet OUR criteria.

8) **This IS a lengthy process from intake thru adoptions.** Each dog takes it's OWN time. Some dogs can be posted quickly, and others take time. We may bring in a dog thinking it will act/react one way and find out after a few weeks in the foster home that other issues have arisen. We have more adopters than dogs...and some adopters don't get dogs, because it's about fulfilling the dog's best interests, not the person's.

9) **All growth should be balanced and fair.** We are open to new ideas, plans, etc. and ways to improve our service to German Shepherd Dogs. We are accountable to our members and try to make decisions based on our diversity and goals. Sustainable growth needs to be done slowly. We need to make sure that we have volunteers that are trained and willing to do more work before growing areas though. For instance, let's look at foster homes. It doesn't help to get 10-12 applications for new foster homes if we don't have enough volunteers to do prescreening, home visits, home set-ups and coordinating. Bringing on a new foster home takes tremendous time to train them, to be sure that they are following safety rules, and to help them with any problems that come up. Having more foster homes would mean we need more money to support the number of dogs, hence more fundraising. It would mean that our medical coordinator has more work making sure the dogs are getting what they need and require, our photographers need to travel more; our Foster Dog Training director needs to travel more, too, to help with training problems. Our website people have more work to write up dog descriptions and get the photos redone and online. There is so much work that goes into every dog that comes into GSRNE.

10) **Communication is critical.** We are an all volunteer, non profit group with no facility where people meet each other. We cover all of New England. Communication and organization is always a challenge which we will continue to improve.

11) **Future Planning:** We are focusing on getting more professional with our business activities, annual reports, volunteers and organization. We feel we have a good solid plan for our dogs in place.

12) **We are a unique group of volunteers who call ourselves German Shepherd Rescue of New England... and we're proud of it!**

GSRNE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010

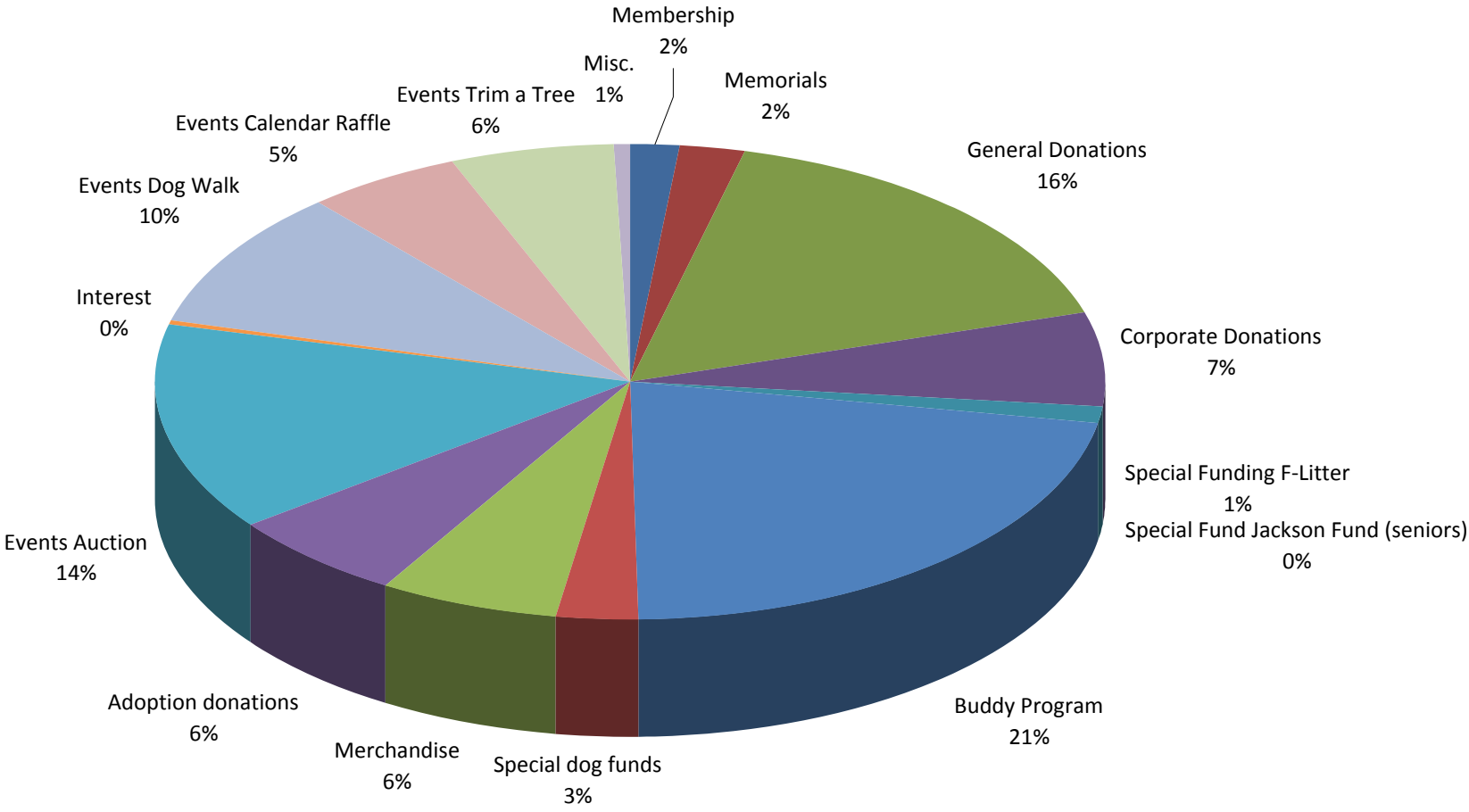
Karen McCall President

Chris Harriman

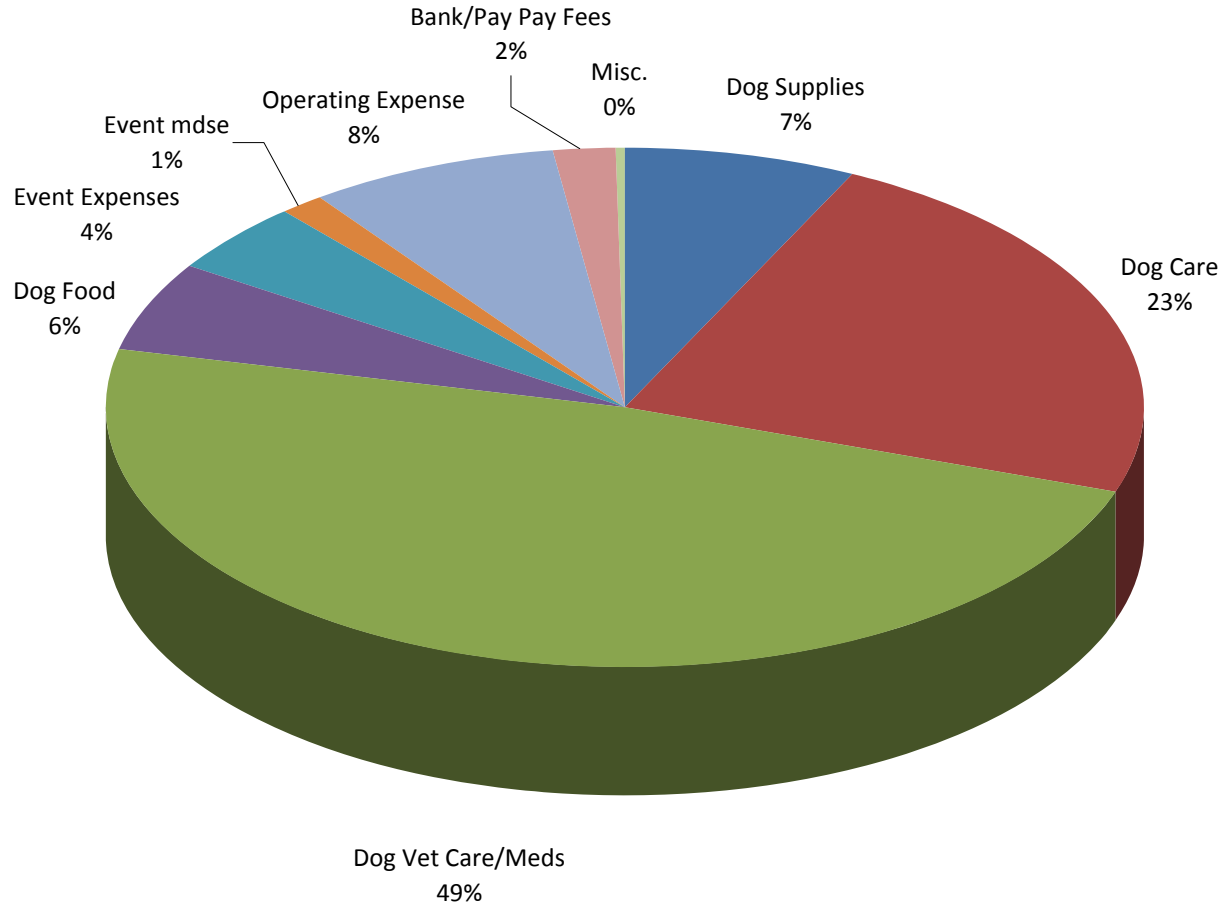
Jeannie McMahon

# 2010 GSRNE Income

## \$88,894



# 2010 Expenses as Percentage of Total \$90,743



## General Hotline Calls for 2010

<b>Types of calls</b>	<b>Total of each type</b>
Owner wanting to surrender dog	75
Owner with behavioral/aggression questions:	20
Owner with medical questions:	18
Owner out of N.E. area	5
Friend calling on owner's dog	0
ACO/Shelter wanting to place dog:	80
ACO/Shelter with behavioral/aggression questions:	0
ACO/Shelter out of N.E. area	14
Citizen reporting stray dog	2
Citizen reporting dogs in shelter	17
Citizen reporting abuse, cruelty, neglect:	6
Person looking to adopt out of N.E. area	0
Adoption calls forwarded to adoption folks:	41
Foster calls & emails	90
Volunteer calls forwarded to volunteer folks:	11
Financial calls forwarded to Treasurer	3
Donation calls to donation folks:	10
Other Rescue (s) looking for help:	18
Misc. calls:	40
Lost dog:	4
Working Dog Related:	12
Event Related forwarded to Events Team:	19
<b>Total calls/emails in 2010</b>	<b>495</b>

## **Adoption and Home Visit Statistics for 2010**

### **Adoption Hotline information**

Calls Received: 912

Number of Applications sent: 278

Disqualification reasons

No fence: 228

Children under 7: 64

Other reasons: 337

### **Home Visit information**

Adoption applications received: 116

Home Visits done: 57

Repeat Adopters: 5

Foster Home adopted dog: 7

Dogs adopted in 2010: 32

## **Foster Home Statistics for 2010**

### **Foster Hotline information**

Calls & Emails Received: 90

Number of Applications sent: 21

Process placed on hold: 56

- No fence (in need of homes with fences)
- Fostering for another rescue
- Waiting for response from inquirer

Declined due to GSRNE requirements & policies: 11

- Pet(s) not spayed or neutered/not a breeder or competing
- Current pets unmanageable/aggressive/not friendly
- Yard not suitable for a pet

Declined for other reasons: 23

- Decided that a GSD wasn't the right fit
- Adopted from another organization
- Decided fostering was not for them
- Inquirer was directed to Adoptions or Intake

Approved Foster Homes: 10

## Volunteer information 2010

I have interviewed 277 volunteers since I began coordinating 5 years ago. It's been a privilege to 'meet' many talented and willing people. Not all these people were able to get involved. Some lived in areas where we don't have a lot of members to train and include them. My hope is that someday, we'll have thriving teams throughout New England so no one is "lost". I have added new people to my team and will keep expanding until every person has a job who wishes to help us! Thanks to you all for making GSRNE a great group of dogs AND people!

Jeannie McMahon

<b>2010 Volunteers</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>New for 2010</b>	
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Maine</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

### **New coordinators and assistant coordinators added**

<b>Craig Hanson</b>	<b>Foster Dog Supplies</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>
<b>Pat Catania</b>	<b>Adoption Reference</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>
<b>Dee Zaccagnini</b>	<b>Foster Home</b>	<b>assistant Coordinator</b>
<b>Jessica Podkulski</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>assistant Coordinator</b>
<b>Tina Russo</b>	<b>Adoption</b>	<b>assistant Coordinator</b>
<b>Diane Gittlen</b>	<b>Graphic Design</b>	
	<b>SharePoint</b>	
<b>Colin Brennan</b>	<b>technology</b>	
<b>Erin Rizzo</b>	<b>Photography team</b>	
<b>Gina D'Antuono</b>	<b>Newsletter team</b>	
<b>Tony Rizzini</b>	<b>Publicity</b>	
<b>Alicia Graef</b>	<b>Blurb Books, EBay</b>	

**Thank you to our evaluators, foster homes, hotlines teams, transport teams, home visits teams, adoption teams and many other supporting volunteers who made the placement of each dog possible.**

## **ADOPTION INFORMATION 2010**

**AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME IN FOSTER CARE:**

**4.5 Months**

**TOTAL DOGS ADOPTED: 32**

**Female: 13**

**Male: 20**

**AVERAGE AGE OF DOGS AT TIME OF ADOPTION:**

**3.0 YRS OF AGE.**

**Oldest Dog: 9**

**Youngest Dog: 3 months**

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF DOGS ADOPTED PER MONTH: 2.7**

**MOST DOGS ADOPTED IN ONE MONTH: 7 (JANUARY)**

**LEAST DOGS ADOPTED IN ONE MONTH: 1 (JUNE)**

**DOGS ADOPTED and GSRNE number : #278- Strider, #279- Freddie, #280-Candy, #281- Snow White, #282- Dutchess, #283-Otto, #284-Frieda (Now Maggie) , #285- Parker, #286- Ferri (name changed to Maggie "Moo"), #287-Champ, #288- Zoe, #289-Hayden, #290-Rock (working dog),#291- Galen, #292-Daisy, #293-Flint, #294-Harley, #296-Shayne,#297- Zak,#295- Dakota, #298-Luke, #299- Danika,#300- Alex, #301-Brooke, #303-Trixie, #304-Kasper(Name change to Coda), #302- Simba,#305- Nela, #306-Cutter, #307-Killian, #308-Bella , #309- Brady.**