**2019 Annual Chair Report – Message from Viive Tamm**

Good evening and welcome to our 2018-2019 Golden Rescue Annual General Meeting. You know, every time when I sit down to review what we’ve accomplished in the last year or so I always wonder ‘where has the time gone?’, ‘what have we accomplished?’, ‘did we accomplish our goals?’, ‘did we move the yard sticks forward?’. And every year I wrack my brain trying to remember what we’ve done. Then I think of our Goldens and some of the trials and traumas we and some of our precious Goldens experienced. For example, dear sweet Maya #2642 who was picked up a day or two before she was to be euthanized. It took us a year and a half to find her forever family. We NEVER gave up on Maya. We knew the perfect family was out there somewhere. We just had to find it. So, that’s what we do! That’s what we accomplish!

Yes, we achieved a number of our goals. We started lots of new initiatives, created and expanded teams, and created new fundraising and awareness events; however, the most important thing we did, over and over again, was rescue Goldens in need like Maya.

In 2018, we rescued 235 Goldens, the second highest since our inception. We are only half way through this year and we have already rescued 175 of our beloved breed.

One thing I’m so proud of is the feedback we get from our supporting vets. We are often told they love Golden Rescue because we will do whatever it takes to help our Goldens…regardless of cost. That is part of who we are and, as long as our fundraising efforts stay successful, we will continue that way.

We are very aware that rescue is expensive and that’s why we have a special focus on fundraising day-in-and-day-out. And as we grow and expand, so does our need for funds.

Sometimes when I think of our mantra ‘rescue has no borders’ and the number international Goldens we have brought to Canada who have needed our help, I feel overwhelmed because there are so many more who need saving. What can we actually do to make a difference since the problem is so vast? We just can’t despair because what we can do is rescue one Golden at a time. Between cargo and flight parent flights, we have met 116 airplanes with 560 Goldens from Istanbul, Cairo, and Mexico City. It will never feel like enough but it has given 560 Goldens an incredible new and good life.

We believe that because of all the publicity surrounding our international rescues, this publicity has put us on the map, which is helping one of our primary goals…to grow in Canada. We now have adopters in most provinces. Our network in Quebec is growing in leaps and bounds. Our operations team has volunteers in Halifax, Montreal, and Calgary and we recently had our first foster family in B.C., although somewhat humorously, they were a foster failure. One of our goals is to become national and it is so encouraging to see it actually starting to happen. We had our first event in Quebec last year and there are a number scheduled for this summer. We even have an event planned in New Brunswick this summer. We have even rescued a Golden from a small rescue group in New York and we have had a couple of adopters from the U.S.

All of this could not happen without the hard work of so many dedicated and hard-working volunteers, including you here tonight, and my fellow board members (who you will hear from shortly) and all our supporters and donors. Simply put, the over 3,100 Goldens we’ve rescued together would not have happened without you.

In closing, I’d just like to say that our Goldens are the bridge between us and the beauty of all that is good. They innocently show us what's missing in our lives and they make us laugh every day. We can and do learn a lot from our Goldens. So many of the lives we’ve saved have endured awful pasts, yet they eventually bounce back and love again unconditionally. Yes, we rescue and heal them and find them safe and loving forever families but what they give back to us is truly immeasurable.

Thank you!