Chair report ~ 2022

Last year was quite a year. We rescued a record breaking 415 Goldens. This, in part, was due to the establishment of an independent Mission of Love fundraising initiative. This initiative allowed us to separate our international efforts from our domestic efforts and the introduction of sponsoring a Golden also contributed to our overall fundraising success. This put a tremendous strain on our operations teams under the guidance of the amazing Patti Matheis. In fact, this was the first year our placement team had some difficulties finding adopters. This in part was due to the fact we have had no events for the past two years due to Covid. Events always increase our awareness and with increased awareness come adoption applications. This will soon be remedied as events are now back in full swing. Veterinarians are also so busy so getting vet appointments for all our Goldens was challenging at times. We owe a deep gratitude to all our supporting vets. And our transport and airport crews were nothing short of amazing and we’re really proud of the fact that we helped a number of other rescue groups in various capacities. Rescue is one big family and it’s heartwarming to see most of us working together cooperatively.

Of our 415 rescues, 294 were international rescues. With the CDC ban in the U.S., pressure was on the rest of the world to help more and the unfortunate rescue groups around the world were struggling with less help than before. To protect rescue efforts, we increased our health protocols significantly. Our protocols far exceed governmental requirements because we chose to be a leader in this area to avoid any problems for our adopters and potential government scrutiny. With the help of our new board member, Dr. Scott Bainbridge, we created a new checklist for our international partners to follow as well as providing on-site vet services for Goldens arriving on cargo flights.

We have also begun to significantly increase our presence in B.C. and the Maritimes as well as increasing an already significant presence in Quebec. This has been possible partly because we now have adopters far and wide plus existing GR volunteers have moved to other areas of Canada taking with them their enthusiasm to help our Goldens in need. Our long-term goal of becoming a truly national organization is now actually happening.

2021-22 marks the first time in seven years that we sold out our Wishbone Lottery. That has been a long-term goal and we have to admit it really felt good when we sold ticket number 5,000 and in fact, we still had requests for ticket sales after that. And our fundraising efforts have increased with the addition of our 50-50 lottery and several online auctions ~ all beautifully executed. And speaking of money, we are in sound financial shape due to our generous donors and fundraising strategies.

Last year our Guardian newsletter went digital with very positive responses. We can now reach thousands of our supporters and friends with the click of a button (well, it’s a little more complicated than that) but it also allows us to make the Guardian as big as we want, add videos and links, and any other digital magic we choose. This will reap big rewards not only in awareness building but in fundraising as well…not to mention we save over $30,000 annually in printing and mailing costs.

Speaking of awareness, I’d like to mention our impressive social media team lead by the incredible Kelly Blais. This team is simply fantastic. I am stunned at how good our social media presence is considering we are a charity with no paid staff or third-party expertise. This team is responsible for presenting our face to the outside world in a spectacularly professional way. I am blown away by the content and its ‘freshness’.

You know, we have so many amazing teams and each is as important as the next but as I look at last year, I have to admit that the transport team had to really step up. What a whirlwind these superstars had to deal with. The airport administration alone with its ever-changing last-minute details would have foiled the best of us but somehow the team pulled the rabbit out of the hat each and every time that plane hit the runway.

We have made huge strides with our GR store with new products. We have just published our new brochure which has a fresh new look ready to be used at our events now that the world is opening up again.

Well, that’s the year in a nutshell. Looking back, I have to admit I feel a bit exhausted, in a good way. Look at all the wonderful Goldens we have rescued from terrible situations ~ some were blind, some were tripods, some had broken bones, some had missing paws, and many had almost-broken spirits, but all were just loving goofy Goldens with gratitude in their eyes and love in their hearts.

Thank you to all our volunteers, fosters, supporters, and adopters for making each one of these miracles happen.