Chair Report

2022 was Golden Rescue’s busiest year since its inception. We rescued 525 Goldens. This was a daunting task made possible by the herculean efforts of our volunteers to get as many Goldens out of Cairo and Istanbul as we could before the CFIA ban took effect. This monumental task took its toll on all of us and left our dedicated volunteers exhausted and, in some cases, burnt out. Our most ardent appreciation goes to everyone involved. There is no doubt that these beautiful creatures wouldn’t have the wonderful lives they do now without the selfless actions of our volunteers.

The CFIA ban has monopolized our time since the announcement last June. We, of course, have been fighting the ban on many fronts, including petitions, direct conversations with the CFIA, the formation of a coalition of 20+ Canadian rescue groups, and personal pleas to our MPs across the country. It is unclear to us why the ban is in effect. The CFIA claims that it is to stop the spread of rabies; however, this alone cannot be the government’s reason as rabies is 100% preventable. Our position is that we are not trying to reverse the ban. We are suggesting the CFIA adapt existing protocols to ensure safe entry of all international dogs to Canada. We, perhaps, have one of the most stringent entry protocols in the rescue community and yet even with our comprehensive protocols, we had some Goldens arrive with infectious issues. So, we are definitely in favour of stricter protocols and will work with the CFIA, if allowed, to develop a new way forward. Having said that, we have had domestic Goldens who have arrived with infectious diseases so no matter how hard we try, there will be occasional health crises. In the rescue world, domestic or international, there is no such thing as 100% certainty. BUT, we have to keep trying as it’s the only hope these precious Goldens have of living their best lives…which we can give them. Not helping them is condemning them to a life of misery or death.

In other news, 2022 was the first time in three years that we were able to organize events. We were also able to finally have our picnic which was another huge success. Not being able to host events hurt our ability to spread the word about rescue in general and Golden Rescue specifically, which of course reduced our adoption and foster applications. Right now, we are in desperate need of fosters as our domestic rescue efforts have ballooned in these post-Covid years as we expected.

In 2022, our efforts to become a national rescue organization really progressed. We have been strong in Ontario and Quebec; however, we now have a foothold in most provinces particularly in B.C., Alberta, and the Maritimes. In fact, we have just developed a ‘foster anywhere’ program. Because our need for fosters is so great in Ontario, we have literally run out of fosters. Yet we have willing fosters in other provinces. So, we have developed a national transport team that will take our Goldens in need to any province where we have available fosters.

Although 2022 put a big strain on our financial resources (rescuing 525 Goldens was a huge financial drain as you can imagine), I am happy to report, due to successful fundraising programs and generous supporters and sponsors, our balance sheet is healthy. We were even able to postpone our Wishbone Lottery in 2022, without a big financial effect, as we felt many supporters were so exhausted that we couldn’t add yet one more thing to everyone’s very full plate.

We were also able to vastly improve our general store. The new store website is fantastic and we have partnered with Shopify to simplify the ordering procedure. If you haven’t visited the store lately, please take a look. I’m sure you will be thrilled.

Our amazing social media team goes from strength to strength and was integral in in the search for Rocky earlier this year. We continue to get positive feedback on our social media efforts and our followers continue to grow.

Also, in 2022 our Guardian newsletter went 100% digital. Not only has this saved us over $20,000 annually (no printing and mailing costs…not to mention it’s environmentally better) but because of the ease of distribution our Guardian now goes out to over 50,000 Golden lovers.

We have made big strides in streamlining our data thanks to our data team. Working with Salesforce, they have simplified and made our data more accurate. This is a such an important function as it is vital to our communication with our thousands of supporters.

We continue to build our volunteer teams and build new ones. Every time we encounter process issues, we review our existing teams in an attempt to keep our administration current. For example, we created a new home visit team to support our placement and foster onboarding teams.

Yes, 2022 was a record-breaking and sometimes heart-breaking year for Golden Rescue. It was a year none of us will forget any time soon. Despite all our challenges, our volunteers and supporters rose to the challenge and 525 goofy Goldens are grateful to all of us. How on earth did we do that? Love, passion, and care are certainly a powerful combination. On a personal note, our own Kili #4171 came from Cairo just before the ban. I can’t imagine her life or ours if we hadn’t gotten her out of Cairo. So, to our incredibly dedicated Golden lovers, we love you and we thank you!