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Locals get rolling on mission to help pets with special needs

NEWS, TOP STORIES

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 John Lizotte works to put his dog, Ranger, in his wheelchair. The special needs Border Collie inspired John and his wife, Noel, to establish the organization, Rescue Rollers, to help other animals in need of a wheelchair. (Kimberly Gasuras | Galion Inquirer)

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GALION — Adopting a special needs dog has inspired a Galion man to form an organization to help others.

Last fall, John Lizotte and his wife Noel adopted Ranger, a border collie from Texas. Ranger needs a wheelchair to get around.

“I have worked with Ranger and his mobility so much that he bulked up and outgrew the wheelchair he came to us with,” John said.

John donated that wheelchair to a woman who lives out of state. She uses it for special needs dog, which spurred John to take

action to start a non-profit organization, Rescued Rollers.

“Rescued Rollers has a simple mission: To give free or low-cost pet wheelchairs to animal rescue organizations, shelters, and individuals who otherwise cannot afford them. We do this by refurbishing wheelchairs that are donated by private owners, or by purchasing wheelchairs for these dogs through the generosity of our donors,” said John.

He said the focus on animals in shelters or rescue organizations is to save animals that may otherwise be euthanized.

“The average cost of a medium-sized wheelchair for a dog is about \$500, and specialized chairs can be much more expensive,” he said. “Shelters and rescues have to take into account the medical costs of pulling or saving a dog and if they need to purchase a wheelchair and this puts the special needs dogs at a distinct disadvantage due to costs alone.”

The immediate needs for Rescued Rollers include financial donations.

“We have repair/refurbish costs, as well as shipping expenses to get the carts to and from where they need to be. You can help reduce our costs by making a donation. We are an all-volunteer, non-profit,” John said. “Every penny of your donation goes directly to our mission of saving dogs and giving them their mobility back.”

Another need for the organization is wheelchair donations.

“If you or someone you know has a pet wheelchair that is no longer being used, please consider donating it to another dog in need. We already have dogs on our waiting list for wheelchairs,” John said. “We also have ongoing needs for volunteers to watch local Craigslist or garage sale sites for unwanted pet wheelchairs, respond to these ads with our contact information, and let them know they can donate their cart to a wonderful cause. Ideally, we’ll have people all over the country watching for wheelchairs.”

John said he and Noel already have a lot of great people and rescue organizations from all over the country working with them to help give special needs dogs their mobility back.

“But we need more help. If every person just took one little step to make things better, can you imagine how much good would come of it,” John said. “Together we can change the world.”

To contact John, call 419-631-3927 or email him at John@RescuedRollers.com. For more information, visit <http://www.rescuedrollers.com> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/RescuedRollers>.