

Compassion Story of the Month

With Brattleboro voting overwhelmingly to become part of the international Charter for Compassion, the Reformer and The Commons have agreed to publish a "compassion story of the month." This is the twenty-sixth. Information on submissions from Brattleboro area residents is offered below.

GYPSY

By Tom Zopf

Four years ago, I met and adopted Gypsy, a medium size beagle hound, from the Windham County Humane Society in Brattleboro. My wife had died the year before and I was seeking some companionship. Although my landlord, Brooks House, did not allow pets, they did make an exception for Gypsy when I showed them a note from my doctor confirming my need for a companion dog.

Gypsy was one of twelve dogs sent from Puerto Rico to Brattleboro. She was accompanied by the following statement from the Amigos de los Animals:

"We found Gypsy hunkered down in a lady's garden box with 8 new born squealing pups. She was such a good momma and we figured that she had been dumped like so many pregnant females, left to her own devices. She was so skinny and pitiful as she worked hard to keep her underweight babies alive, so we took her and her pups directly to the vet where she was kept on IV fluids, lots of good food and vitamins for a week to stabilize her and her pups. Then we brought the family home and watched the pups grow into beautiful beagle looking things. Gypsy finally started to gain weight and once her pups were adopted, we were able to sterilize and vaccinate her."

Three years ago, on the evening of Saturday, May 28th, around 9:00 p.m. I took Gypsy out for her evening pee behind the Brooks House. A skateboarder came around the corner and scared her. She took off through the tunnel pulling her leash out of my hand, and then ran up High Street. I went up High to Oak and some people there said they'd seen her heading up the hill. Hoping that she might have followed the trail that we usually take, I went down that path but found nothing. I headed home, *hoping* that she had found her way back. But nothing. I sat in the atrium until after midnight, hoping to see her looking for an entry into the building.

Immediately the community responded. A good friend immediately printed announcements that were posted on social media and tacked on telephone and power poles by friends, including homeless neighbors. I notified The Commons on Tuesday, and they inserted a notice with a photo of Gypsy inside the front page in the paper the next day. Over 150 people reported sightings of Gypsy. Eventually, have-a-heart traps provided by the Humane Society and the Town of Brattleboro were set. One was placed near the pond next to the old reservoir hoping that Gypsy might be seeking drinking water in that area. The same

friend who printed the lost dog posters set the trap, baited it daily with a rotisserie chicken, and posted an action camera nearby.

Around 7:30 a.m. Gypsy was seen entering the trap. I was notified immediately and hurried to the site of the trap. Upon seeing me Gypsy eagerly started wagging her tail. We took her, still in the trap to my apartment where we let her out and celebrated. Over 100 people sent their congratulations.

In its June 29, 2016 issue, The Commons published a letter I wrote about Gypsy. The letter concluded:

Twelve days later, she was home again.

She is home because Brattleboro is a special place, and it is for this that I am thankful.

I especially thank Scott Whitehill, who organized and masterminded a search. So many people were involved: supporting, reporting sightings of Gypsy, distributing and posting flyers and notices.

It was a true community effort, including by the Humane Society, which offered a generous reward; The Commons, which provided an ad; the police, who remained on the lookout and loaned a trap. A special thanks to Tom, Mike, Wendy, Marty, Kathleen, Steve, Cory, Cathy, Amanda, Scotty, Kevin, Donald, Tim, and many others.

Gypsy is home and happy, and so am I.

Thank you, Brattleboro.

Note from Compassionate Brattleboro: Tom Zopf, here the recipient of compassion, has, over his lifetime, been a major dispenser of compassion, addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged in countries like India and Congo. We are honored to have him living with us in Brattleboro.

Submissions, from Brattleboro area residents, for future publication, not to exceed 650 words, should be emailed to: compassionstory@gmail.com or mailed to: Compassion Story of the Month, PO Box 50, Marlboro, VT 05344. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. Earlier submitted stories will automatically be considered in subsequent months.