

## A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Every December, as the cold settles in and the year draws to a close, we find ourselves thinking about all the animals whose paths crossed ours - the ones who arrived injured, scared, hungry, freezing, or forgotten. Their stories stay with us. Their faces stay with us. And sometimes, one story surfaces that embodies the past, present, and future we see so often in rescue. This year, that story belongs to Elsa.

Last winter, in the bitter stretch of sub-zero temperatures, we were called about a pregnant dog who had taken shelter in a broken-down shed. Volunteers braved the wind, the snow, and the bone-deep cold to find her. What they discovered wasn't a dog waiting to give birth - it was a mama doing everything she could to protect the puppies she had already delivered.

The cold had taken most of them. But Elsa had curled herself around the last four, shivering violently as she tried to keep them warm enough to survive.

If there ever was an image of a ***Ghost of Christmas Past***, this was it. A mama dog alone in a collapsing shed. Snow blowing through the boards. Her body frail, trying desperately, fiercely, to keep her babies alive.

Her past was harsh and unforgiving. She had no security, no warmth, and no promise that morning would come.

Like Dickens' Ghost of Christmas Past, her story reminds us of what so many animals have faced before they reach our arms: fear, hunger, danger, loneliness. It's the part of rescue we must never turn away from, because it calls us to action.

**The Ghost of Christmas Present** - Elsa's present began the moment she was lifted from that shed and brought into the warmth of rescue. Warm blankets, food, soft voices, and gentle hands.

Elsa and her surviving puppies were given the chance to rest, recover, and feel safe - maybe for the first time ever. Her pups grew older, bigger, and stronger and were adopted into wonderful families. Elsa continued to wait, quietly and patiently, as many mama dogs do.

Her life turned from desperate survival to steady healing. From trembling in the cold to sleeping in comfort. From fear to trust. This is rescue's "present" - the moment transformation begins.



**The Ghost of Christmas Future** - And now, like the final spirit in Dicken's tale, we get to witness the best part - the future!

Elsa has been adopted. She finally has her forever family and will be HOME for Christmas.

We picture her playing in the snow with her new people, tail high and happy, no longer fighting for warmth or safety. We see her bounding back inside to a soft bed and a full bowl, curling up beside someone who adores her. We see her future clearly: warm, safe, loved, home.

Elsa will never again wonder if she will eat, or if water will freeze before she can drink it. She will never again worry about keeping puppies warm in the freezing dark. Her past shaped her, but it no longer defines her.

### The Lesson in Her Three Ghosts

Elsa's story mirrors the journey of so many animals who come into rescue. Their **past** is often painful. Their **present** is where healing begins. Their **future** is rewritten through compassion. When we see these three chapters laid out so clearly, just as Dickens once did, we're reminded of something simple and profound: **Rescue is transformative**. For the animals, yes - but often just as much for the people who step in to save them.

Elsa's past was cold and harsh. Her present is safe. Her future is everything she deserved from the start. And this Christmas, she begins that future in the best place possible - **home**.



490

Animals currently  
in our care

60

Furry Friends  
adopted in  
November



A pet is a   
 forever gift - one that  
 deserves calm, commitment,  
 and the right moment to begin.

Bringing home  
 a new pet during the  
 holidays can be magical -  
 a moment your family will  
 remember for years. But before  
 you make that heartfelt decision,  
 pause and be sure the timing is right.

Pets need a calm space to settle  
 in, routines to learn, and patient  
 guidance as they adjust. A bustling,  
 noisy holiday household can feel  
 overwhelming for an animal trying  
 to understand their new world.

If you're considering adoption this  
 season, think beyond the sparkle  
 of the moment, Pets are forever -  
 faithful companions who will  
 share your life long after  
 the decorations  
 come down.



## ROUGH START – BRIGHT FUTURE

Meet *Lady*,

Lady's story is simple and all too common — a young dog  
 trying to raise puppies when she was barely grown herself.  
 She loved them well, watched them all find families, and  
 now... it's finally her turn.

In foster, Lady has started to blossom. She's learned what  
 toys are for, discovered the joy of zoomies, and found out  
 that a yard can be a place to *run* and just be a dog.

She's gentle, great with other dogs and cats, and has a  
 sweetness that shines through everything she's been  
 through. Now she just needs a family who will see her for who  
 she is — Lady, hopeful and ready for her own fresh start.



## ADOPT

### Adopted Dogs

Bruno, Stormy, Peanut,  
 Tiny, Draco, Rosie,  
 Phoenix, Teddy Bear,  
 Ophelia, Pappy, Duke,  
 Charlie, Bernie Mac, Bear  
 aka Big Papa, Turbo,  
 Toffee, Wayne, Bella,  
 Brody, BugZ, Mia, Bean

### Adopted Cats

Candy, Mallow, Franklin,  
 Rudy, Rosie, CrissCross,  
 Sprout, Trixee, Stutsman,  
 Auron, Stormie, Foxie,  
 Sandy, Thackery Binx,  
 Hissi, Uno, Sonny, Kitten  
 12480, Kitten purple,  
 Pudge, Pongo, Junior,  
 Dorian, Gemini, Burleigh,  
 Roarie, Silas, Ember,  
 Pembina, Eevee, Socks,  
 Matilda, Gladys, Louie,  
 Tiny, Eleven, Cass, Lia



If I had my own Christmas  
 song, it wouldn't be about  
 partridges or pear trees—just  
 the simple joys my rescue  
 dreams I'll know one day.

*On the 12 Days of Christmas,  
 the rescue wished for me -*

12 Cozy Snuggles

11 Treats for Tasting



10 Soft Beds Waiting

9 Brave Steps Forward

8 Happy Zoomies

7 Friendships Blooming

6 Toys-a-Tumbling

5 Wagging Tails...

4 Gentle Whispers

3 Belly Rubs

2 Hugging Arms

1 A Family to  
 Call my Own





## WHEN THE COLD COMES

For some, the **first snow is magical** — kids racing outside to leave the season's first footprints, others pausing to admire its soft sparkle and peaceful hush.

But for many animals, winter is something far different. **It is a fight for survival.**

As temperatures drop and food, water, and shelter vanish beneath ice and snow, the animals living on the edges of our community face dangers they were never meant to face alone. We see it every year: dogs searching for shelter, cats curled beneath porches for a hint of warmth, pets abandoned in fields and alleys with nowhere to go and no one coming for them. No matter how fast we move or how hard we work, we face a truth that breaks our hearts daily: **We can't save them all.**

So, we hold the ones we *do* save a little tighter. We wrap them in blankets, feel their shivers slow, and whisper the words they've longed to hear: *You're safe now. You belong. You're loved.*

Those moments remind us, even when the days are long, the nights are bitter, and the need feels endless, why we show up.

But winter rescue is bigger than any one rescue team. As the cold deepens, the calls multiply, foster homes fill, and volunteers stretch themselves as far as they can. We are giving all we have...

This is where **you** can change everything.

### How You Can Help This Winter

**Foster:** A warm corner or spare room can mean the difference between life and loss.

**Volunteer:** Even a few hours helps us answer more calls and save more lives.

**Donate:** Blankets, food, supplies, or funds go straight to animals in crisis.

**Report animals in distress:** If you see an animal struggling, please speak up — your call could save a life.



**Share our mission:** Help us reach the next foster, the next volunteer, the next person willing to help.

Winter is harsh. But **kindness is powerful.** And together, we can be the warmth they are searching for.

Thank you for helping bring hope to the coldest months of the year.



## WHEN IS IT TOO COLD FOR PETS?



Pets feel winter just like we do: freezing paws, chilled ears, and biting wind.

**40°F–50°F:** Most pets are comfortable, but small or short-haired pets may get chilly.

**32°F–40°F:** Use caution. Limit time for small, senior, or thin-coated pets.

**20°F–32°F:** Risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Keep outings brief and supervised.

**Below 20°F:** Too cold for most pets—very short bathroom breaks only.

**Below 0°F:** No pet should be outside.

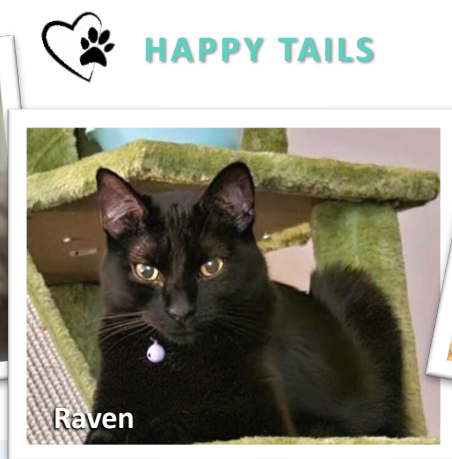
### Winter Tips:

- ✓ Supervise outdoor time
- ✓ Use coats/booties for vulnerable pets
- ✓ Watch for shivering, paw lifting, or anxiety
- ✓ Bring outdoor cats inside

**If you wouldn't stand outside without winter gear, your pet shouldn't either.**



Ladle



Raven



Penny & Pebbles



## HAPPY TAILS





## UPCOMING EVENTS



### B-I-N-G-O

Every Thursday, 6 p.m.  
GIDEON'S BREWING COMPANY  
Great Prizes | Cash Play only

### BLACKJACK

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays | 6 p.m.  
DJ's Pizza & Lounge | 70 Santee Rd | Lincoln

### PETSMART MEET & GREET

Every Saturday | 11am – 2pm

### DOG TRAINING CLASSES

With Trainer Nancy Gerhardt  
Basic | Intermediate | Advanced  
Visit Eventbrite for details

### ROCKIN' 50's

### FFRR BENEFIT NIGHT

Dec 3 | 4-8 pm

### We are participating in Christmas Trees of Charity!

It's a friendly competition with the top three winning cash prizes for their cause! You can vote in person at the Morton Mandan Library or online by using the link below! You can vote daily through December 25th!

Link to vote 👉

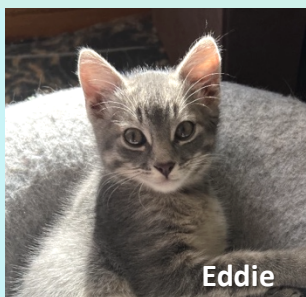
<https://www.visitmandan.com/voting-trees-of-charity>

Preventing unwanted litters means fewer animals struggling to survive and fewer entering already overwhelmed rescues. Your decision can change the future for countless animals.

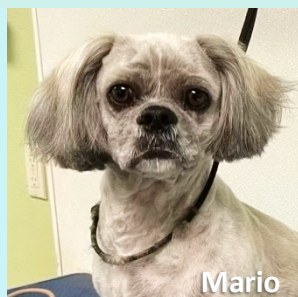
These adorable faces are waiting for their forever families.



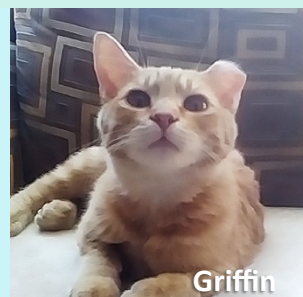
Cooper



Eddie



Mario



Griffin



Kiara



Chevy



Sol



Dino



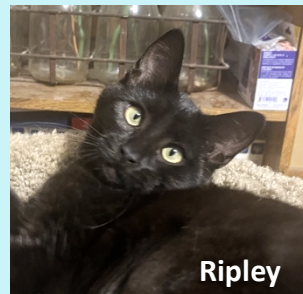
Fefe



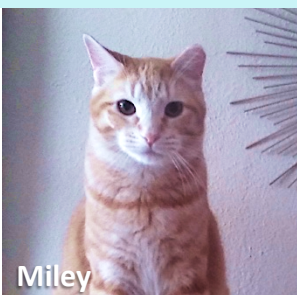
Daisy



Parker



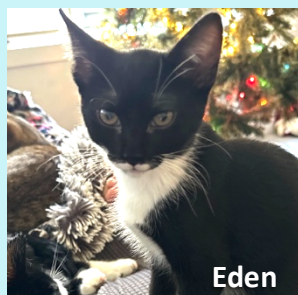
Ripley



Miley



Olive



Eden



Jack

From our rescue family to yours, Merry Christmas and warm wishes for a peaceful, joy-filled holiday season. Your compassion is the gift that changes lives - thank you for being part of this incredible community.

