

SENIOR DOG ADOPTION in ALBERTA

by Kim Hanson

682 words

Have you been tossing around the idea of rescuing a dog? Maybe picturing a canine as part of your family? Before you take the plunge, why not consider rescuing a senior dog. . . one who is eight years or older?

Senior rescues are out there, just waiting for the right person to find them. Heaven Can Wait Animal Rescue Foundation located near High River and ARTS Senior Animal Rescue with offices in Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton, each have animals waiting.

Heaven Can Wait was started in 1999 by the compassionate and charismatic Kim Hessel. She often takes in harder-to-adopt rescues from other agencies. . . animals that have health and/or behavioural issues. The elder dogs come to Heaven Can Wait where rehabilitation, nurturing and love for the animals flourish. Her first priority is getting the animals healthy. She finds that once a dog is feeling well, behavioural issues often improve.

Kim charges \$500.00 for a senior, rescued dog. That amount guarantees that the animal is sprayed or neutered, vaccinations are current, has received two forms of parasitic treatment and has an identifying tattoo or microchip. Bloodwork and dental treatment complete the package. Any extra fees are **not** passed on to the new owner.

Heaven Can Wait survives on donations from kind souls who care. Kim's late Mom's estate is her back-up source of funding.

Adopting a senior animal is not for everyone. Older dogs often crave a quiet lifestyle, longing only to be cuddled and to be close to their owners. They've already lived a good portion of their lives. When looking at potential adoptors, Kim seeks people who, "display empathy, compassion. . . are fully aware that their hearts may break open, yet still want to make the commitment. These people go into the adoption not thinking what the dog can do for them, but what they can do for the dog."

ARTS Senior Animal Rescue, was formed in 2014 and like Heaven Can Wait, survives entirely on donations. Caring and kind volunteers take in the senior surrenders (both dogs and cats) and foster them, until a new, forever home can be found. Blair Douglas of ARTS (Calgary Co-ordinator) says, "We've placed 120 seniors in new homes in 2020." An astonishing number!

ARTS charges \$260.00 for a senior, rescued dog. As with Heaven Can Wait, all vet charges prior to adoption are paid for by the foundation.

My husband, Rick and I have first hand knowledge of senior dog adoption. After our beloved son, Mike, passed away, we both felt lost, sad and broken. Looking for some light in the darkness, we wondered: Was now the time to get another dog?

Both of us in our 60's, energy waning just a little bit, were reluctant to bring a young, energetic puppy into our lives. I found Heaven Can Wait online, and clicked on the adoptable dog tab. There was the sweetest elder shih tzu ever. His name was Beau.

When I contacted Kim, she said Beau had just been adopted. Likely hearing the disappointment in my voice, she said, "But you may be interested in a female Maltese that was just surrendered."

Why yes, I was definitely interested! Snowy, was either ten or eleven years old, had a slight build and was very sweet. Sight unseen, she sounded perfect for us.

After she recovered from extensive dental work, Rick and I went to meet Snowy. She touched my soul immediately; for Rick it took a bit longer. Our lives changed for the better the minute we were able to take her home.

Snowy was with us for three memorable years. She took her last breath in March of 2021. Our sweet girl brought light, love, purpose and hope. We were honoured to have her with us in her twilight years. Our phones and computers are filled with Snowy photos and videos. She clearly resided in our hearts and we loved her very much. She was our salvation.

If you are someone who can help, contact:

Heaven Can Wait - <https://www.heavencanwait.ca> email address hcw@telusplanet.net.

ARTS - <https://www.animalrescuetransfersociety.com> email address

blair.artssenioranimalrescue@gmail.com