



finding loving homes for displaced labradors

**DESERT LABRADOR RETRIEVER  
RESCUE**

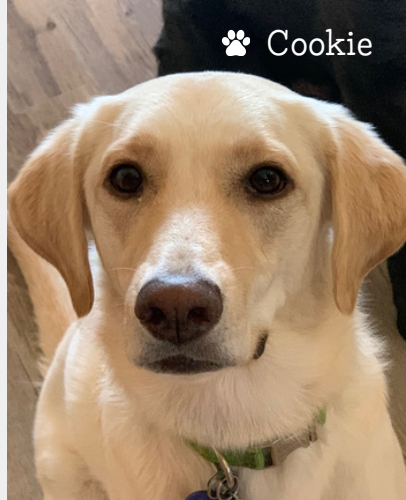


Celebrating  
**25 YEARS**





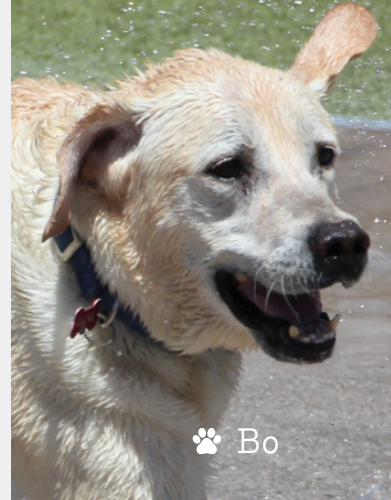
🐾 Lobo



🐾 Cookie



🐾 Sophie



🐾 Bo



🐾 Stryker



🐾 Arlo



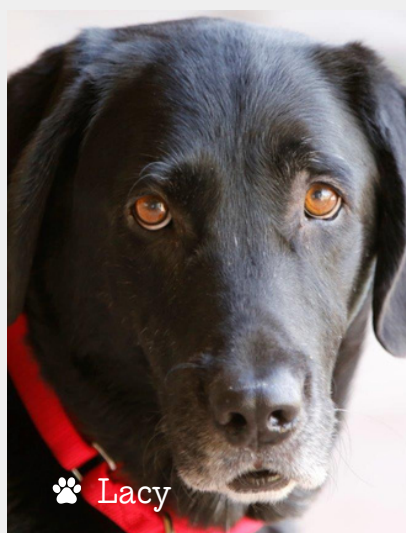
🐾 Sienna



🐾 Charlie



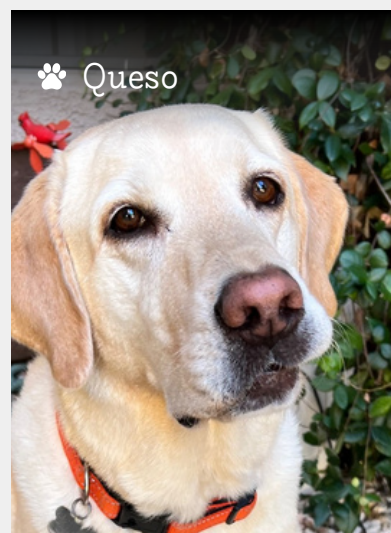
🐾 Abby



🐾 Lacy



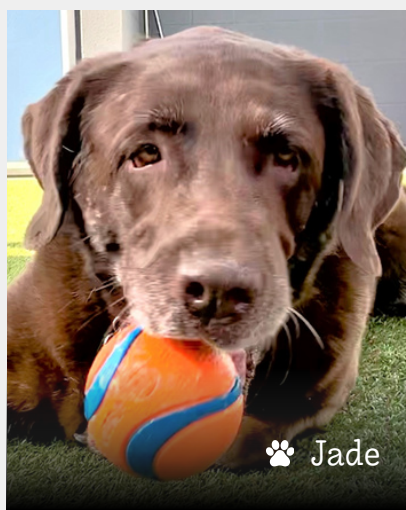
🐾 Cassidy



🐾 Queso



🐾 Kalulah



🐾 Jade



🐾 Ben



🐾 Frankie



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



It is our privilege to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue (DLRR) with all our supporters. We assembled this booklet to take a moment to commemorate an amazing 25 years of DLRR. As supporters of the organization, you should take exceptional pride in knowing that because of you, we have been able to save more than 6,000 Labs since 1999! Not only have you saved those Labs, but you have also changed the lives of tens of thousands of family members in those adoptive forever homes.

In the pages that follow, we share a small sample of stories about our dedicated volunteers and a few of our more memorable Labs that we were able to give a second chance at the life they deserved.

We are also incredibly proud of our financial stability as 2023 comes to a close. Over the past few years, we have been able to operate on a slightly better-than-breakeven basis, and due to the generosity of several of our estate donors, we have established a reserve fund of over \$100,000. We are carefully managing this fund to ensure the long-term viability of DLRR.

Today, we are not able to save all the Labs in Arizona that need our help. Our vision for the future is to work to increase public awareness and involvement throughout the state. We believe that this will compel more volunteers, fosters, and donors to join our organization, and someday soon, there will be no Labs in Arizona unable to get the rehabilitation and rehoming that they need and deserve.

Our goal isn't to be the largest rescue in the state, but we will always strive to be the best one. Finally, thank you for your continued support and generosity towards our organization; we would not have been able to save so many Labs without you.



- Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue Board



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Saving one dog will not  
change the world, but  
surely for that one dog, the  
world will change forever.

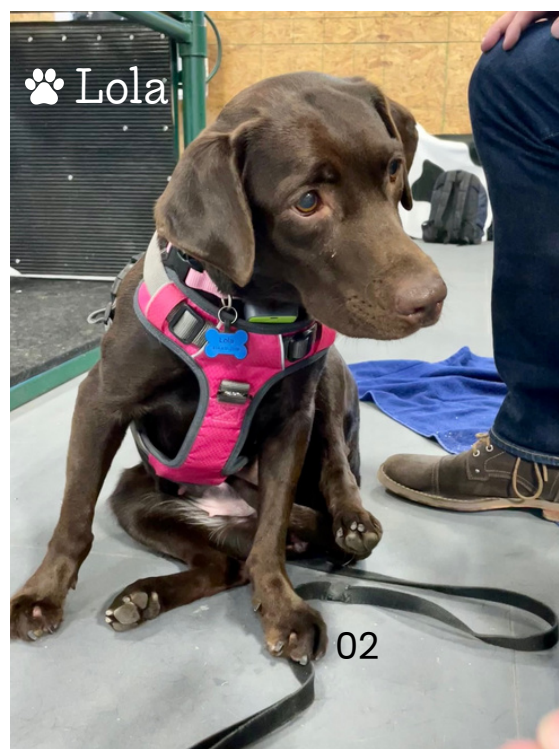
Karen Davidson



 Cooper



 Madison



 Lola



🐾 Kona  
with brother Cooper



## WHO WE ARE

Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue (DLRR) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to finding loving, lifelong homes for displaced Labrador Retrievers.

Since its inception in 1999, DLRR has rescued over 6,000 Labrador Retrievers in need. Arizona's shelters are severely overcrowded, often making DLRR a Lab's last chance to be saved before euthanasia.

Our Labs come from the county shelters and from owners who can no longer care for them due to illness, death, or loss of their home. In addition, we also rescue strays, dogs left abandoned, and friendly Labs with treatable illnesses who would otherwise be euthanized due to overcrowded animal shelters.

Every Lab that comes through DLRR has a story, and we are committed to being their advocate and their voice for a second chance at the life they deserve.




**You can't change a dog's past,  
but you can rewrite the future.**

Agnes Carass

# COMMITMENT



 Quinn



 Cassie

Often when we take in a dog, there may be an illness or injury that has been left untreated. It is our commitment to each DLRR dog to support their health needs and attend to the treatable ailments they may be experiencing.

DLRR pays for any needed veterinary treatment, which may range from dental work to amputations. At intake, each DLRR dog has a vet exam, all vaccinations, and is microchipped. DLRR also helps to reduce pet overpopulation by spaying and neutering all of our rescue Labs before they are ready for adoption.

Frequently, we have dogs that experience emotional trauma and behavioral issues which may present as separation anxiety, displaced fear due to trauma, or non-socialization with both humans or other dogs. At DLRR, we rely on a network of skilled local trainers to rehabilitate our dogs to help set them up for success.

Rescue work is difficult and often heartbreaking when we encounter a neglected, abandoned, and abused dog. As an organization, it is our commitment to provide a healthy, positive, loving second chance for all DLRR dogs.

# FUNDING



DLRR is funded solely through donations from the public and fundraising efforts from our volunteers. Without the public's support and contributions, we would not be able to save so many lives. Many of the dogs we save are only hours away from being euthanized; however, with the support of DLRR, they end up in loving homes as family pets. You can be confident that 100% of your monetary, tax-deductible gifts will be put to great use and make a difference in the lives of our Labs.

**On average, each dog we save has approximately \$500 worth of basic medical bills. If a spay or neuter surgery is required, the cost will go up to over \$1,000 per dog.**

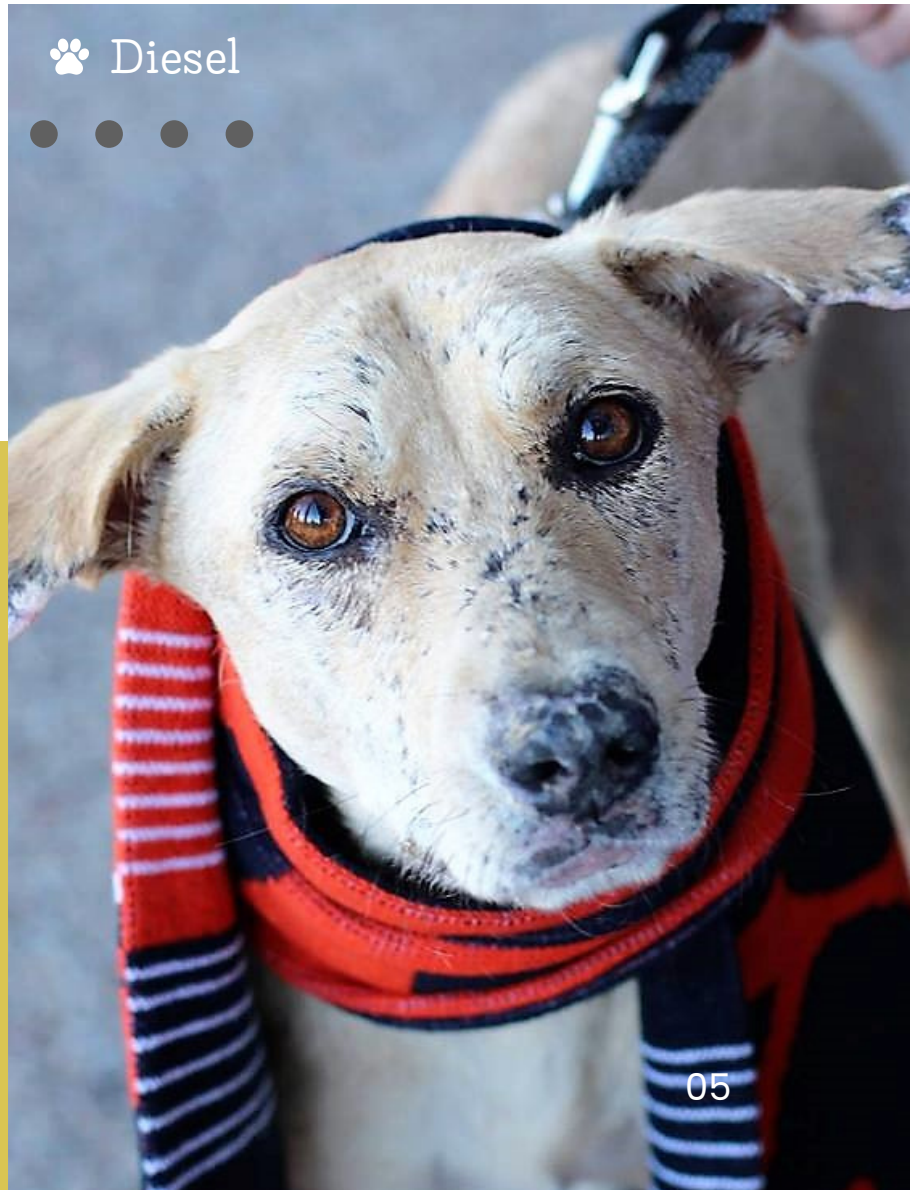
 Diesel



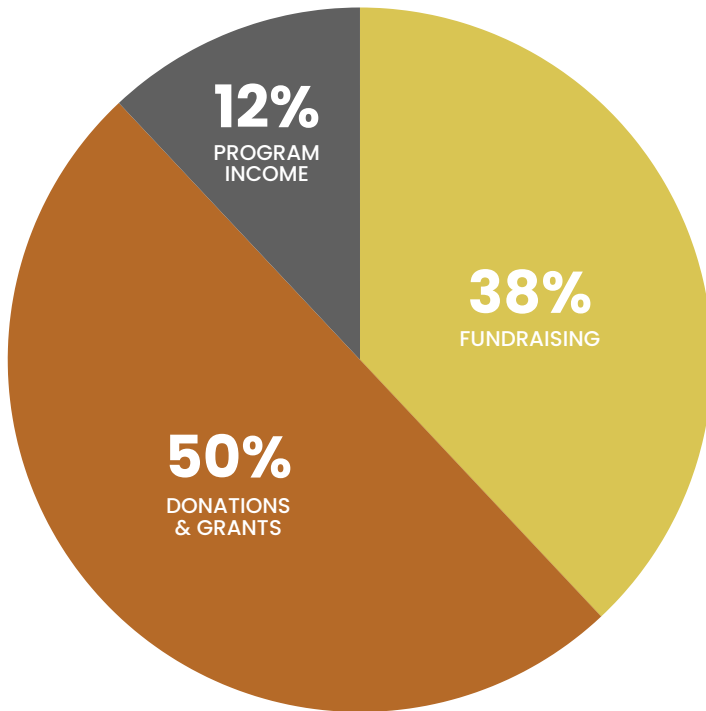
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Dogs have a way of finding the people who need them and filling an emptiness we didn't even know we had.




Thom Jones

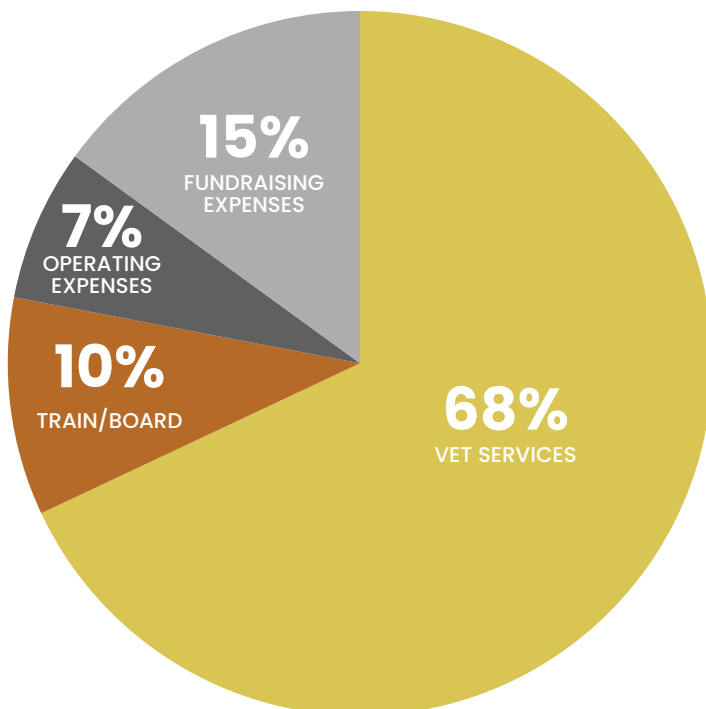


# FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS





**2023  
REVENUE**  
\$454,000

-  Program Income: adoption fees, membership dues
-  Fundraising
-  Donations/Grants  
Individual donations public & private grants



**2023  
EXPENSES**  
\$425,000

-  Train/Board  
Training & boarding of dogs
-  Vet Services  
Medical expenses
-  Operating Expenses  
IT & Marketing expenses

# FOUNDER'S STORY



As DLRR marks its 25th anniversary, we spoke with Ilaria Keogh, one of the four founders of the rescue. In 1999, Ilaria moved to Arizona and couldn't find a Lab rescue to volunteer with. So, she and others who shared her love for Labs decided to start DLRR that October, with the first adoption in December.

At the time, there were many purebred Labs in pounds, and they faced tough decisions on which ones to save due to limited resources. They chose the name "Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue" to strike a balance between specificity and inclusivity.

Ilaria cherishes a photo album from DLRR's early days, featuring stories and pictures of rescue dogs. The first dog, Otto (renamed Murphy), came from Tucson Humane, was underweight, and had kennel cough. Thanks to DLRR, Murphy transformed into a happy, healthy dog. Though Ilaria now lives in California, DLRR remains a cherished and rewarding part of her life from her Arizona days.

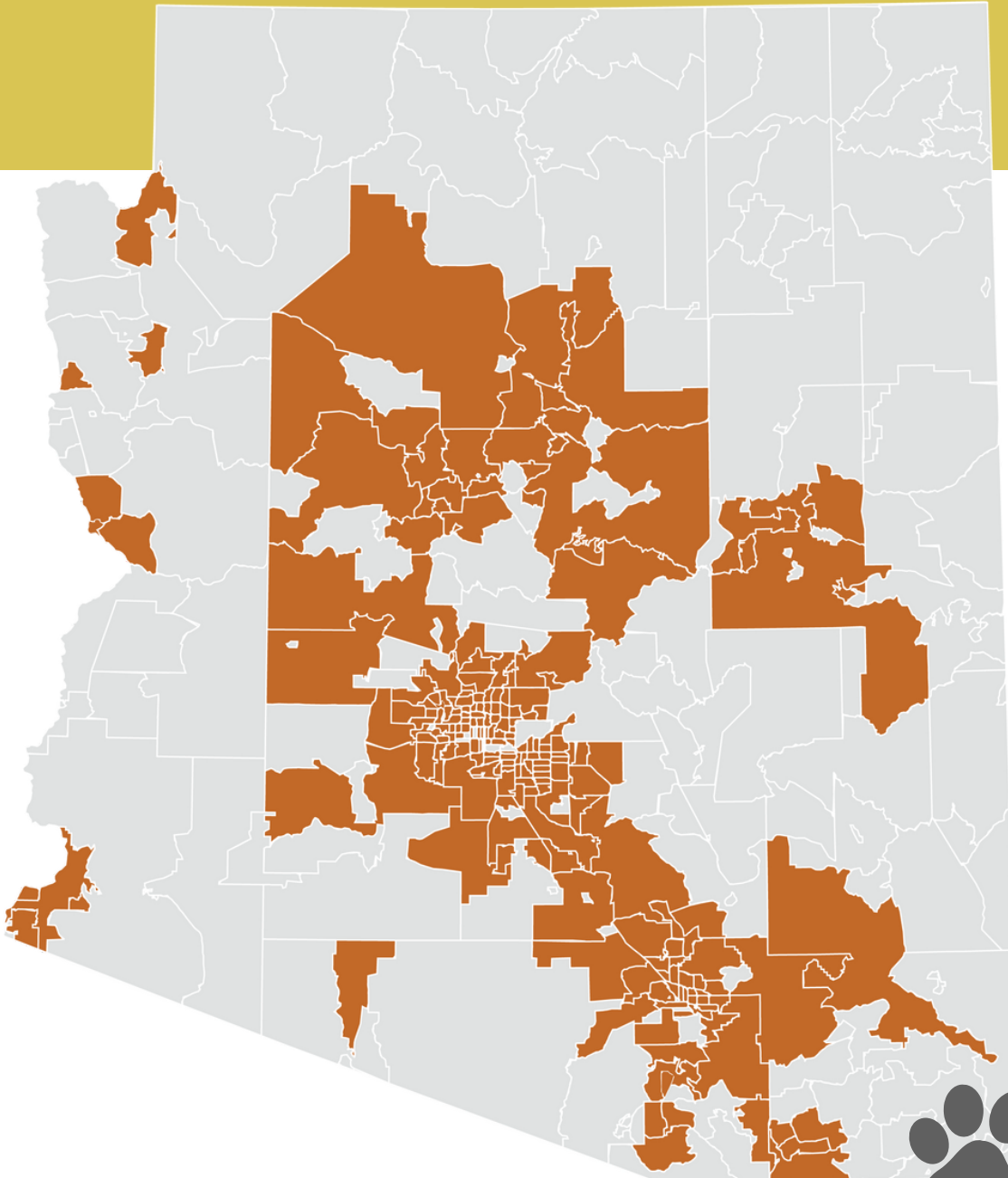


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**It's amazing to think about. It is really hard to fathom that what we started had a such an impact. I am pretty sure that this will be the most impactful thing I will have done with my life. It makes me happy and proud.**

*Ilaria Keogh*

# STATE-WIDE ADOPTIONS IN AZ



**6000+ ADOPTIONS  
IN 241 ZIP CODES**





How is it possible that  
out of all the dogs in  
the world, the best  
ones are rescues?

Anonymous 

 Jake

 Ozzie

 Goldie

 Charlie

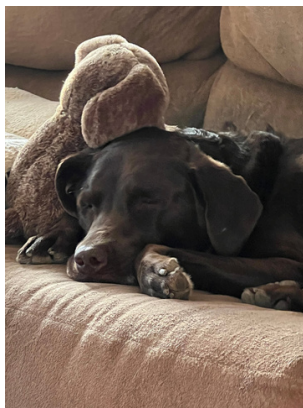
 Brownie



# CHARLEE PHOENIX



In November 2022, DLRR stepped in to rescue two Labradors – Charlee and another – when their owner could no longer care for them. Charlee, a diabetic Labrador with cataracts and health issues, needed specialized care. Her journey began with uncontrolled diabetes, muscle atrophy, and blindness, but DLRR's care transformed her life. A dedicated volunteer fostered her, providing constant attention and medical treatment. After overcoming a diabetic seizure, Charlee had cataract surgery on February 8, 2023 that successfully restored her vision. Her newfound energy and confidence shone through, and on March 4, she found her forever home with experienced adopters. Charlee's remarkable transformation showcases the power of love and care. Join DLRR in making a difference by volunteering as a foster and giving other Labradors a chance to thrive.





# GREGAR FAMILY

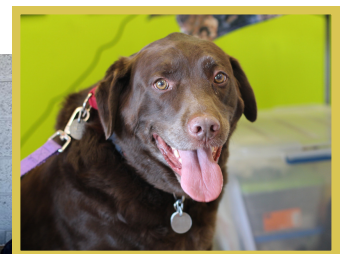
The Gregar Family, a bustling household of four, embarked on a unique adventure as volunteers for the Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue (DLRR). Fostering Labrador Retrievers had become more than a mission; it was now an integral part of their lives.

For their kids, aged 7 and 9, fostering had become a transformative journey. It instilled empathy, teaching them the value of helping those less fortunate and making them realize how blessed they truly were. They learned essential life skills, from interacting with both dogs and potential adopters to making decisions for others and understanding love and loss.

In this vibrant family, where the parents juggled demanding careers—mom in pharmaceuticals and dad as a city fire department captain—fostering became a way to bring harmony. Their son's outgoing nature found purpose in calming dogs, teaching him the importance of emotional control. Meanwhile, their reserved daughter found her voice, passionately advocating for the needs of each dog.

Through fostering, the Gregar family not only found companionship for their dog Sterling but also discovered a unique way to nurture their children's character and compassion, creating a home filled with love and life, one paw at a time.

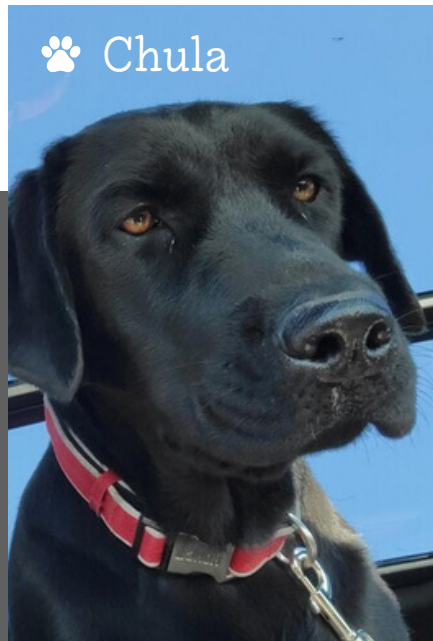
## Robert



 **BamBam**



🐾 Cora



🐾 Chula



🐾 Chula

## 🐾 CORA AND CHULA 📍 TUCSON

# DR. ESTHEIMER

Dr. Michele Estheimer's journey is a testament to love and compassion. As a veterinarian and DLRR partner, her connection with animals is profound. Driven by a childhood love for animals, she's committed to giving back and supporting displaced Labradors. This passion led her to adopt her first DLRR Lab, Cora, who became a constant presence as she opened Tangerine Pet Clinic. Sadly, Cora suddenly passed away in November 2022. Only eight days after her passing, Chula, another DLRR Lab, entered Dr. E's life. Both she and Chula knew they had love to give, and they formed an unbreakable bond.

Not only has Dr. E taken fantastic care of two DLRR Labs, but she's included DLRR in her estate planning, ensuring her pet's future even beyond her lifetime. This act of love inspired by her "soul dogs" encourages us all to consider similar legacies and make provisions for our furry friends. Dr. Estheimer's dedication to her Labs is mirrored by DLRR's mission, creating a circle of care around these beautiful, intelligent dogs.





📍 SCOTTSDALE



Meet Sam, an 11-year-old CNM AKC-papered, purebred English Labrador Retriever. When Sam first came to DLRR, he was suffering from painful burns along his back and needed extensive dental work. Once in DLRR's care, Sam received a thorough dental cleaning, including 30 extractions, and wound care to heal his burns. His foster mom, Janis, lovingly saw him through the lengthy treatment process until he was ready to meet his forever family.

Lisa Clark got in touch with DLRR in October 2023 hoping to find a senior dog and new friend for her 10-year-old Lab, Soleil. She knew she'd found the perfect match for her family as soon as she met Sam, and officially adopted him three days later. Sam adjusted quickly to his new home and is thriving. He loves playing ball, walks well on the leash, greets visitors like a champ, sits on command, and knows "drop it" and "shake."

Lisa is deeply grateful to DLRR and their volunteers for all they did to give Sam the second chance he so deserved. She and Soleil are thrilled that he found his forever home with them.





# DR. ERIC BOSHOVEN

In 2019, Lady found herself at DLRR after being surrendered by her owner at three years old. A veterinarian found that a tumor that had previously been removed had returned in her hind leg and was growing fast. DLRR knew she would need ongoing cancer treatment, and they were able to fund those treatments with help from Zeus Oncology Fund. Lady underwent targeted radiation at Arizona Veterinary Oncology under the care of Dr. Eric Boshoven, and the tumor began to shrink.

Dr. Boshoven grew fond of Lady during her treatment. Having recently lost a dog, he and his wife adopted Lady and renamed her Oshie. Despite her cancer's uncertainty, Oshie had four joyful years with the Boshovens, even after leg amputation. Lady could not have found a more perfect adopter than a veterinary oncologist. Her radiation treatments are being studied and will help with future dogs and even treatments in humans.

Sadly, Oshie passed away in June 2023. Dr. Boshoven recalls her unshakable sassiness and her zest for life – even on three legs. Oshie's unwavering affection touched everyone she met, leaving an indelible mark.





 KENDRICK/KONA  TUCSON

# LYNN REED

Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue relies on foster volunteers, who are vital for Labs awaiting adoption. Lynn Reed, a passionate volunteer in Tucson, exemplifies the impact of fostering. From rescuing strays as a child to fostering animals for 20 years across various states, Lynn's heart belongs to dogs. Devastated after her chocolate Lab Rico's passing, Lynn found solace and purpose at DLRR in 2019. After adopting Kona, she was impressed by DLRR's mission and began fostering.

Lynn has experienced firsthand how DLRR changes Labs' lives. "We save them from a variety of situations that are never their fault, and we find them loving forever homes," she reflects. Her dedication demonstrates the transformative power of fostering, offering a chance for every dog to thrive. Join DLRR's compassionate mission as a foster family, creating lasting impacts on both dogs and your heart.





# MOLLY TUCSON

Molly, a resilient soul, embodies the spirit of survival. Abandoned in a desolate Mexican field with her 12 puppies, Molly's strength shone through even in the face of unimaginable loss. Despite her pups not making it, she fiercely protected them until the end. When DLRR rescued her, Molly was a mere shadow of her former self—emaciated, weak, and broken. Her journey towards recovery was nothing short of miraculous.

After enduring starvation and neglect, Molly faced another battle: cancer. She fought with incredible courage, enduring eight rounds of chemotherapy, a testament to her unwavering determination to live. DLRR stood by her, providing not just medical care, but also love and support. Molly's tenacity triumphed, and she emerged cancer-free, her spirit shining brighter than ever.

Today, Molly thrives in a warm, loving home. She revels in the simple joys of a full food bowl and a soft bed, things she was deprived of for so long. Her story is a reminder of the resilience of animals and the transformative power of compassion.



BEFORE





# DAVE & NANCY KNEISLEY

Dave and Nancy Kneisley have been fostering since 2015. Initially seeking to adopt a senior Lab, they turned to fostering after learning about the difficulty of placing older Labs and their higher rates of euthanasia. One memorable foster was Lainey, a resilient Lab found in a canal, emaciated and unable to walk. Dave and Nancy nurtured her back to health by seeing her through therapy and recovery. Despite her hardships, Lainey remained joyful and she found her forever home with an experienced family. The Kneisleys find fostering rewarding thanks to the relationships they build and the lasting impact on dogs' lives. They cherish the connections they maintain with adopters and are appreciative of the lives they have had with their fur babies.





## VOLUNTEER STORY GLENDALE

# TABITHA GANT

One day in January 2016, Tabitha Gant's youngest son found a pregnant dog abandoned in their neighborhood. Unable to find her family, they reached out to a friend who had recently started a dog rescue. She agreed to take the pregnant pup if they could find someone to foster her. Although Tabitha's husband was initially hesitant, this experience opened a new world for the Gant family.

While still in North Carolina, Tabitha fostered around 10 dogs, but their move to Arizona in July 2019 put fostering on hold due to family circumstances. Tragedy struck in October 2021 when they unexpectedly lost their 6-year-old dog.

Desiring canine companionship without the commitment of a "full-time" dog, Tabitha researched dog rescues and chose Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue for their mission and foster family involvement. By February 2022, they had their first foster dog.

Over the past year, their family has volunteered with the rescue, attending events, organizing meet and greets, and sharing their foster dogs' journeys. Their sons have also developed a passion for helping animals in need.

Tabitha shared, "Fostering teaches responsibility, patience, and compassion. We know our time with these dogs is purposeful, helping them find their forever homes and allowing us to welcome the next furry friend in need."



# **NORVILLE** **NEW RIVER**

Norville, a resilient puppy, endured unimaginable trauma but found hope through the kindness of Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue (DLRR) and its supporters. After being discovered as a stray with a collar embedded in his neck, Norville faced numerous challenges, including a diagnosis of Brucellosis, a contagious infection with no cure.

DLRR's unwavering determination led to a heartwarming connection with a retired gentleman living in the mountains outside of Phoenix. Although grieving the loss of his family dog, he felt an inexplicable bond with Norville. Despite the hurdles, he patiently earned Norville's trust. Their relationship blossomed, showcasing the power of love, patience, and companionship.

DLRR's supporters rallied, offering love, prayers, and financial assistance, ensuring Norville's ongoing medical needs were met. Their generosity not only saved his life but also created a haven where he could run free, chase rabbits, and discover the joys of his own backyard.

**His owner has renamed him Puppy because "little sweetness never got to be a puppy and now he gets to be a puppy forever."**



BEFORE





# DR. ALISON ARIANO

Dr. Alison Ariano is a veterinarian at Chaparral Veterinary Medical Center in Scottsdale, one of DLRR's veterinary partners. Our vet partners offer medical services to DLRR that include a rescue discount. Dr Ariano has been a respected DLRR vet partner for almost 20 years. When asked to comment on why she continues to work with DLRR she said: I have previously worked with many rescues in the valley but have chosen to only work with one or two. DLRR has continued to provide excellent care and treatment for each and every dog that they rescue. They have an exceptional group of volunteers involved in the decision making process helping to provide medical care for the dogs. DLRR prioritizes each dog's specific needs to give each lab the best chance at a new life.

We at DLRR are very grateful to Dr. Ariano for her commitment to rescue animals and specifically to serving labradors that DLRR saves.





“


The world would be a nicer place  
if everyone had the ability to love  
as unconditionally as a dog.

M.K. Clinton 



PO Box 10575,  
Glendale AZ 85318



 Cinco

**VOLUNTEER**



**DONATE**



[dlrraz.org](http://dlrraz.org)

480-899-LABS (5227)



@desertlabradorretrieverrescue



**True love is a hop, skip,  
and a rescue dog away.**  
Unknown