

LOVING LOUIE

by Jaye Lewis

A Petwarmers story (www.petwarmers.com)

The first time he was placed into my arms, he was nothing but a bag of bones -- the product of a Dachshund puppy mill.

Louie had been starved nearly to death, and except for a few unhealthy patches of hair, he was bald. Those dark, intelligent eyes looked up into mine, as his drumming heart beat against my hand. At that moment I made a promise, "No one will hurt you again."

Puppy mills are the hidden holocaust of America. The suffering these little dogs experience are beyond description. In the last six months two puppy mills have been exposed and closed down in our community. The owners have been brought to trial for animal cruelty, and the dogs have been taken away.

Did you know that most rescue dogs are from closed down puppy mills? The most popular victims are small breeds, however the estimation of the number of suffering dogs of all breeds would shake us to our souls if we only knew.

The little bag of bones that I held was a silver, dappled, long-haired mini-Dachshund. Gentle and shy, he had been starved because he had failed to breed. All of the Dachshunds were suffering from malnutrition. The little dog I held was named "Louie" by the veterinarian technician, who had already fallen in love with him.

It took five months to make Louie safe, and safety meant his previous owner could never hurt him again. When I saw the bond between Louie and his new caretaker, I promised that we would help all we could to save that dog.

After many stumbles through the court system, all of the dogs found homes. There was a list of close to 500 people who signed up for 44 dogs. We were too far down on the list to even be considered. It was touching how their new owners' hearts were swayed just to see the poor abused Dachshunds.

But where were those people before? Where were they when the shelter had to put down hundreds of dogs because there were not enough people looking to save the life of just one unwanted dog?

It's true that we cannot do everything, but we could do one thing. We could save one dog or one cat. If not forever, we could foster a rescue dog until a forever home is found.

We have four dogs in our household. You cannot take a step in our house without squeaking a toy or a ball. It's like living in kindergarten. Our dogs are well behaved (for dogs); and they give us much joy. Our biggest dog is a rescue dog. He is not the brightest and he has some behavior problems that must be dealt with every day,

but he is alive and he is loved. He is safe and happy.

Little Louie was adopted by his new mommie -- the same vet tech who fell in love with him that first day. To see him look into her eyes and know, "She loves me. She'll protect me," is a joy beyond measure! He has long, silky, silver hair now, and though tiny, one can no longer feel his bones.

He has everything a dog could want. Love. Care. And a forever home.

Perhaps you have room in your heart for a rescue dog. I can promise you that what you give will never compare to what you will receive in return.

-- Jaye Lewis