

Fall 2011



Mississippi Valley German Shepherd Dog Rescue & German Shepherd Dog Rescue of Iowa

# K9 Currents

## 2012 Calendars Are Here!

Every year we create a collage calendar featuring the dogs that were rescued and adopted out over the past year. This year we have 50 dogs showcased in our 2012 calendar. The theme is "MVGSDR Greatest Hits" and each month features lyrics from a song.

The cost for each calendar is only \$17 including shipping. To reduce costs orders must be prepaid. Payments can be made online using [Paypal](#) or by



sending a check to MVGSDR, 600 34th St NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.

This our only major fundraiser each year. Without calendar sales and donations we would not be able to continue saving the lives of German Shepherds.

Order yours today by going to [www.mvgdsr.org](http://www.mvgdsr.org) or sending an email to [germanshepherdrescue@gmail.com](mailto:germanshepherdrescue@gmail.com).

## The Story of Love for Niko

By Allie Kasper, age 5

"Niko likes to play ball and bite the water. He is really protective to me, I gave him my Princess couch and he really likes it, we folded it out and one time he was all snuggled up because I put a blanket and a pillow and his ball on his Princess couch. I hug him because I really love him so much!"



# Niko's Journey

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Niko's journey began with an email from Brian Pospichal with a link to a brown eyed boy's video. Our whole family sat together on the couch with the laptop in front of us watching this video. At the end of the video I was crying and my kids were asking if he could live with us and my husband was getting the phone to get a hold of Brian. It had been a year that the Kasper family had been without a dog. Our elderly Labs died within 11 months of each other and we were all so heartbroken without them. We were not really wanting to go through the puppy stage again so finding a dog that was done with chewing and peeing on everything in the house was definitely something we were interested in. We all got the chance to meet Niko (Dalton) and immediately fell in love. He was such a handsome boy that didn't even flinch when children in the store where we met Niko and Brian were all coming right up to him. Both my children were hugging him and my husband bent down to say hello and Niko planted a big ole doggie kiss on him. All he had to do was look at me and I was hooked.

Niko joined his forever home with the Kasper family in March. We came up the name Niko because he was found in Chicago on Christmas Eve, we wanted something to tie his name into that night. So we thought of St. Nicholas and shortened that down to Niko.

Niko quickly became a little brother to our children and another child to us. He has transitioned into our home so easily. He has been the sweetest, smartest dog. He loves to be with people, his favorite toy is tennis balls. He doesn't go anywhere without one with him.

This year he got to participate in his first Easter egg hunt where he even carried his own basket around the yard. He was also quite the entertainment at our son's 8th birthday party. He played football with all the kids and kept pushing the balloons in the air with his nose. He had all the kids laughing hysterically.

He lives in the country on 2 1/2 acres and enjoys running after his ball in the yard. He really likes water

and get all excited when we get the garden hose out. He tries to "bite" the water as its coming out of the hose.



He has brought great joy to all of us and gets told everyday what a good boy he is and how much we love him.

We want to express our gratitude to Brian Pospichal and MVGSDR for saving such a great dog. And to Brian and his family for providing him with such a good foster home. Without your love and dedication to GSD's Niko would of never been able to be a part of our family and never got to have a family love him and cherish him as much as we do. Thank you for all you do!



Mike, Julie, Luke, Allie, and Niko Kasper

# New Online Store

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Introducing our new online store! We are selling MVGSDR merchandise including our calendars, shirts, koozies, and lots of other fun stuff. We also have links to our affiliates where purchases made through the links from our website earn us profits.

Check it out at [www.mvgsdr.org/store](http://www.mvgsdr.org/store).



*How are dogs like phones?*

*They have collar id's.*

## Heartworms in Dogs: Facts & Myths

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### WebMD separates the facts from fiction about canine heartworms.

By Sandy Eckstein

WebMD Pet Health Feature

Reviewed by [Audrey Cook, BVM&S](#)

[Heartworms](#) in [dogs](#) are easy to prevent, but difficult and costly to cure. We asked Sheldon Rubin, 2007-2010 president of the American Heartworm Society, to separate facts from the myths about heartworm infestations in dogs.

#### Q: How do dogs get heartworms?

A: Only by the bite of an infected mosquito. There's no other way dogs get heartworms. And there's no way to tell if a mosquito is infected. That's why prevention is so important. Heartworm disease has been reported in all 50 states. And the bite of just one mosquito infected with the heartworm larvae will give your dog heartworm disease. Heartworm disease has not only spread throughout the United States, but it's also now found in areas where veterinarians used to say "Oh, we don't have heartworm disease." Areas like Oregon, California, Arizona, and desert areas -- where irrigation and building are allowing mosquitoes to survive. And if you have mosquitoes and you have animals, you're going to have heartworms. It's just that sim-

ple.

It takes about seven months, once a dog is bitten by an infected mosquito, for the larvae to mature into adult heartworms. They then lodge in the heart, lungs, and surrounding blood vessels and begin reproducing. Adult worms can grow up to 12 inches in length, can live 5-7 years, and a dog can have as many as 250 worms in its system.

#### Q: Can people get heartworms from their dogs?

A: It can only be passed on by mosquitoes. It's a specific parasite that only affects dogs and cats and ferrets and other mammals. In rare cases, heartworms have infected people, but it does not complete its life cycle. The heartworm will migrate to the lung and cause a round lesion that looks like a [tumor](#). But these are very rare cases.

#### Q: If one of my dogs has heartworms, can he give it to my other dogs?

A: No. Again, the only way heartworms are transmitted is through the bite of an infected mosquito. And even if an uninfected mosquito bit your infected dog, and then bit your uninfected dog the same night, he wouldn't transmit the parasite from one dog to the other. That's because when a mosquito bites an infected animal, the heartworm needs to

undergo an incubation period in the mosquito before the mosquito can infect other animals.

**Q: Is it OK to adopt a dog with heartworms?**

A: It's a very common problem in animal shelters today, and public shelters rarely have the money to treat heartworm disease. It's perfectly acceptable to adopt a dog with heartworms, but you have to be dedicated to having the disease treated appropriately, because it's a horrible disease that can lead to a dog's death if left untreated.

**Q: How can I prevent my dogs from getting heartworms?**

A: For less than the cost of going to Starbucks for a weekly coffee, you can prevent heartworm disease in your dog. There are monthly pills, monthly topicals that you put on the [skin](#), and there's also a six-month injectable product. The damage that's done to the dog and the cost of the treatment is way more than the cost to prevent heartworm disease. A year's supply of heartworm preventative will cost about \$35 to \$80, depending on a dog's weight.

**Q: What are the symptoms of heartworm infestations in dogs?**

A: Initially, there are no symptoms. But as more and more worms crowd the heart and lungs, most dogs will develop a [cough](#). As it progresses, they won't be able to exercise as much as before; they'll become winded easier. With severe heartworm disease, we can hear abnormal lung sounds, dogs can pass out from the loss of blood to the brain, and they can retain fluids. Eventually, most dogs will die if the worms are not treated.

**Q: Once my dog has heartworms, what's the treatment? How much will it cost?**

A: The drug that you treat with is called Immiticide. It's an injectable, arsenic-based product. The dog is given two or three injections that will kill the adult heartworms in the blood vessels of the heart. The safest way to treat heartworms includes an extensive pre-treatment workup, including X-rays, blood work, and all the tests needed to establish how serious the infection is. Then the dog is given the injections. With all the prep work, it can run up to \$1,000. But just the treatment can be done for about \$300 in some areas.

**Q: Why do I have to keep my dog quiet during the several months he's being treated for heartworms?**

A: After treatment, the worms begin to die. And as they die, they break up into pieces, which can cause a blockage of the pulmonary vessels and cause death. That's why dogs have to be kept quiet during the treatment and then for several months afterward. Studies have shown that most of the dogs that die after [heartworm treatment](#) do so because the owners let them exercise. It's not due to the drug itself.

**Q: If my dog is diagnosed with heartworms, can I just give him his monthly preventative instead of having him go through treatment? Won't that kill his heart-**

**worms?**

A: Studies have shown that if you use ivermectin, the common preventative, on a monthly basis in a dog with heartworm disease, after about two years you'll kill off most of the dog's young heartworms. The problem is, in the meantime, all of those heartworms are doing permanent damage to the heart and blood vessels.

**Q: Can I skip giving my dog his preventative during colder months, when there aren't any mosquitoes?**

A: The American Heartworm Society recommends year-round heartworm prevention. One reason is, there's already a serious problem with people forgetting to give their dogs the heartworm preventatives. It's a universal problem. Now if you use it year-round, and you miss a month, your dog will probably still be protected. But if you miss more than one or two months your dog could become infected. The other reason not to stop is that many of the preventatives today also include an intestinal parasite control for [roundworms](#), [whipworms](#), or [tapeworms](#). You want your dog to be protected against those at all times.

**Q: If I don't treat my dog with heartworms, will he "outgrow" his heartworms?**

A: No. He stands a good chance of dying from the disease.

**Q: I've heard the treatment for heartworms can be dangerous. Are there any newer, safer alternatives?**

A: We used to use plain arsenic to treat it, which had many side effects. What we use now is a safer product with fewer side effects. It's a safe product if used correctly.

**Q: If my dog gets heartworms, and is treated for them, can he get them again?**

A: Yes, he can get them again. That's why prevention is so important.

<http://pets.webmd.com/dogs/guide/heartworms-in-dogs-facts-and-myths>



Rex had heartworms when he came into rescue and was successfully treated.

# Why We Love to Foster

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Jennifer says, “Fostering is amazing! It is something I had always thought about, but never took that initial step until about a year ago. I always felt I would become too attached and would end up as the crazy dog lady :) However, since I have started it is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. I know that I am a temporary home until these wonderful dogs find their forever home. The dogs have so much love to give and passing them on to their forever home is so awesome. The process to adopt one of our dogs is very well thought out and I know that because of this, these dogs are finding the best homes possible. “

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Joanne says, “I would get too attached and never be able to give them up. I have other dogs and don't want them to get jealous. I just don't have the room to give them what they need. I had heard many people say these things before I took on my first foster dog and you know what, they are all true! I have acquired all my dogs but one through fostering over the years. My other dog was a bit jealous at first, but I took lots of time to let her know that she was still my love but it was ok to share me with another. Now it's second nature and she barely notices when a new dog comes into the house. As a matter of fact, she enjoyed having a new dog to play with. My house is small but I am blessed with a large fenced in yard. However, as I walk down the aisle at the local shelters, I see how much room an 8X4 kennel really gives them and I knew my house, although small, could provide a much more enriching environment, even if a foster only got one room.

Once I took in my first foster, I was hooked. Finding a great family, taking her there to meet them and walking out the door without her was one of the hardest things I've even done. I broke into tears as soon as I shut the front door of the adopter's house. Then over the next few weeks and month I started getting stories and photos of how well she was doing and how much they loved her. It was totally worth it and I couldn't wait to get another dog to help. I've fostered good ones, naughty ones, big ones, small ones, but over the years, I think fostering the seniors gives me the greatest joy of all. Knowing that a senior dog was given up either by a family that it had spent it's whole life with, or never knowing a good life after so many years and finally getting the chance just breaks my heart. The senior dogs are so thankful to have a kind hand, a warm bed to sleep on and a saving rescue since they are very unlikely to be adopted out of a shelter.

So as far as getting too attached, yeah, it definitely does happen sometimes. There is no better way of knowing if a dog fits with your family than giving them a chance to live with you for a bit. Then you find out that you cannot live without them or that they would make another family a much better fit. No matter what you decide, fostering a dog not only gives them a second chance at life, but it also makes you a stronger person with more knowledge of dog behavior that you were before you got them. Seeing so many different personalities has taught me more than I could ever imagine and I truly feel I am a better dog owner because of it.”

# Why We Love to Foster

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Katy says, "I love saving a dog. The best part about fostering is taking this dog out of a high kill shelter that is currently living in its own feces and had dead eyes - devoid of all emotion. You take them home and they learn to play with other dogs, meet new people and gradually they come out of their shell. I love taking them to the lake for the first time. Watching them discover water is always an awesome experience! They get to chase other dogs, dig in the sand and learn to swim."

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Linda says, "I am a stepping stone. My home is that place where a dog goes after being rescued from a shelter, a soft place to land until a forever home can be found. When that perfect home is found, my foster gets a home where they can live happily ever after. The MVGSDR has a detailed application and home visit that makes finding the right home for each foster a good fit. I am fortunate in knowing that all of my fosters have gone to amazing, good homes. The parting is sometimes difficult, but I just have to remind myself that I am a stepping stone, if I keep a dog, I close that door."

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Alyssa says, "What I love about fostering German Shepherds is they are always kind and heartwarming dogs. Some of them may not always get along with my dogs but they are sure fun to have around. They are always very kind to me and my dad when my mom brings them into our home. I will always love fostering even though it may be tricky at times."

To learn more about fostering, go to [www.mvgcdr.org/fostering](http://www.mvgcdr.org/fostering).





Where the gentle current leads them home.

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Email:

[germanshepherdrescue@gmail.com](mailto:germanshepherdrescue@gmail.com)

**Donate**



Each year, Mississippi Valley German Shepherd Rescue saves approximately 50 dogs from being euthanized.

Each year it costs us approximately:

*\$10,000 for veterinary care*

*\$6,000 for dog food*

*\$1,500 to transport dogs*

*\$1,000 for flea and heartworm preventatives*

Adoption fees cover approximately \$13,000. If you do the math you will see that this does not cover our expenses.

We rely on donations to continue to save adoption German Shepherds from needless death and place them into loving forever homes.

Will you please help?

I want to help homeless German Shepherd Dogs. Enclosed is my contribution amount of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check to

MVGSDR Treasurer

Julie Penrod

600 34th St NE

Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

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Thank you in advance for your donation. An acknowledgement letter will be sent to you. Mississippi Valley German Shepherd Dog Rescue, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowable by law.