



## TWINKLE OFFICIALLY ADOPTED AFTER TWO YEARS

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While adopting Gallant (left) in 2019, Amelia and Bruce got to know Twinkle when he joined Gallant on his home trial. Two years and several "staycations" later, Twinkle formally joins the family.

#### Why did you decide to adopt Gallant initially, and Twinkle thereafter?

During the home trial part of the adoption process, Gallant needed a buddy to accompany him (to boost his confidence). Amelia liked Twinkle a lot. After we adopted Gallant, we worked out this "staycation" system for Twinkle. Twinkle would alternate weeks at our home and at the shelter. This alternate week arrangement went on for more than 2 years.

We made the leap to adopt Twinkle when another family became really interested in Twinkle. After more than 2 years Twinkle definitely already felt like a part of our family, and it would be very weird if he suddenly wasn't here anymore. Because of this potential scenario, we made the decision to adopt Twinkle formally.

#### What was your decision-making process to adopt Twinkle (and Gallant)?

We both wanted a dog and were committed to adopting. The process to adopt Twinkle was more difficult, as we already had Gallant. For Twinkle, we had to consider a few more things: he is older, not very good with vets, does not like injections or being muzzled, and likes to bark. We both like to travel and our previous arrangement was to leave Gallant in the care of his sibling Marvel's family while abroad. With 2 dogs, we didn't think that the previous arrangement would work. We also did not want to board. Fortunately, MercyLight was understanding and told us that MercyLight could house Twinkle when we travel. I think that MercyLight has been very supportive, especially with Twinkle.

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## MEET THE ADOPTERS: GIDEON

### RESCUED IN EARLY 2021, NOW SETTLED, SAFE AND HAPPY

#### Why did you decide to adopt?

We only wanted to adopt since I'm quite the animal activist having had experience rescuing and rehabilitating dogs and all our cats are rescues too. We had a rescue dog from Mutts & Mittens back in 2017 - Dino the golden retriever. He unfortunately passed away in January 2021 at the grand old age of 16. I remember saying at the time that I just couldn't have another dog, and here we are!

#### Why did you decide to adopt from a shelter and from MercyLight specifically?

One of the things we liked about MercyLight is that the dogs weren't in cages - when we walked in, it was one huge pack, and it was a little bit crazy, but it was great. We liked this place, liked the people, and the director Kelly especially blew my mind with how dedicated she is, and how she's given her life to support dogs. This impression helped the initial decision making process, because I felt these guys really cared and knew what they were doing.

#### Can you run us through your decision making process?

We saw Gideon's story on the MercyLight page. It was sad, yet something about Gideon's face made us want to know more. With those eyes and that haircut, he just looked like a bear, and we loved that about him. Gideon was terrified the first time we met him. That's when we realised he was quite a damaged dog. We had a discussion about whether he was too damaged for us, whether we knew what we were doing, but we quickly dismissed it.

We visited Gideon times in the span of 5 weeks, we'd walk and shower him to try and bond. There was a time when we were showering him, he started to fall asleep, and my heart melted.

With Gideon, it was obvious he needed love, a safe place and patience. The process was accelerated because of his seizures - we suggested that it'd probably be better to bring him here to recover rather than at the shelter. Basically, the more and more we went through the process, the more and more we realised he needed us, and we fell in love with him.

“The difficult part was when we realised he had seizures, we didn't want to let him down after going that far. He still deserves a chance like any other dog.”



#### Ed, Gideon and Hannah

#### How has Gideon been settling into your family?

Slow progress, yet he's making progress every week. You can tell he's not used to being indoors, and at first he would sit in the corner and wouldn't move for 12 hours a day, but slowly we moved his bed further and further away from the door, and now he walks around. He's started eating in front of us, and now he's even chosen the sofa as his spot! We doubt he's lived with humans before, but he's gaining confidence slowly, and now he's even started eating from our hands on some occasions.

#### Anything you would like to share with us?

The main thing for us is that dogs like Gideon should always be given a second chance, because they bring so much joy into someone/a family's life. Gideon has enriched our lives in so many ways - of course, it's not straightforward and it's challenging, but it's so fulfilling and worthwhile, and it makes me so happy to see him safe and happy. He makes us laugh everyday, and his medication just goes in his food morning and night, not a bother. It's also a really nice way to engage with friends and family, since they're interested in how he's doing. He's just become another member of the family. I also have to say that you don't have to spend a huge amount of money to buy a pedigree dog - you'll get a lot of personality from a Singapore special. 🐾



THEN: before his rescue with a rope tied around him



NOW: enjoying walks and becoming confident



# MEET THE ADOPTERS: DONN

## VOLUNTEERS SEBASTIAN & CHRISTINE SHARE HOW DONN OPENED THEIR HEARTS



### Sebastian, Christine and Donn

#### What has been your past experience with dogs?

We bought three dogs previously, all toy breeds. The first and second lived their lives to the fullest and brought our family so much joy. Our third dog wasn't that fortunate, he was born with two major birth defects and other health complications. He needed to be hospitalized every alternate week. One of the many vets we went to managed to fix one birth defect, but what took his life was the other defect. He passed on at the tender age of 1 year 1 month old. His death was a grievous blow to us. We believe that everything happens for a reason, maybe our third dog came into our lives and had a message for us?

In the past we used to think that store-bought dogs would be healthier compared to rescued dogs, as the latter suffered from starvation and poor living conditions during their stray days. But after our third dog experience, our perspective was completely changed. Store-bought doesn't guarantee anything, all dogs are the same. After our third dog passed we felt an emptiness in the house, but we were not ready to get another dog. So we thought of volunteering at MercyLight to do our small part of helping rescued dogs. Prior to volunteering we had no experience in Singapore Specials and Christine was actually scared of big dogs. That fear was soon gone after spending some time in the shelter and getting to know the dogs better.

#### When did you both know you wanted to adopt from MercyLight?

After volunteering for 6 months we thought we were ready for another dog. We didn't look elsewhere as we knew how well MercyLight takes care of the dogs. The shelter is always kept clean and well organized, dog's welfare is always their top priority. And since we already knew the dogs, it is only logical for us to adopt one of them.

“ Sometimes we wondered, are we helping the rescued dogs or are they rescuing us by mending our broken hearts? ”

#### What brought your attention to Donn?

The first time we spotted Donn, he looked like a brown fox. The second time, we had a much better look and were mesmerised by his handsome face. We never knew Singapore Specials could be so beautiful. We also liked his small build and gentle, mild temperament.

#### How did you bond with Donn?

Although we volunteer, we do not have much quality time to spend with individual dogs. We had 7 sessions before a home trial. Previously, we were thinking why so many sessions were needed, but after the process we felt that it was good since it gave us ample time to think if Donn was the right dog for us.

#### How had Donn been accepted by your family?

Everyone in the family loves him and gives him his needed space and works towards helping him slowly open up. Initially, walks were frightening, he would tuck his tail and shiver. It took him about 2-3 weeks to get comfortable.

#### What are Donn's favorite activities or habits?

Donn loves his walks now, he often peeps when it's about time to go out. With his tail up high swaying, we know that it's become his favorite activity. He has the habit of chewing bedsheets and interestingly the torn parts seem to look like little heart shapes, we were jokingly saying this shy boy is secretly sending us love messages. Now we are constantly mending torn bed sheets and always on the lookout for affordable bed sheets. 🐾





# MEET THE ADOPTERS: KODI AND LIAM (KAYA AND PRAYER)

## ADOPTED AS A PAIR AND GROWING UP TOGETHER



**Sean, Lucas, Emma, Kian, Kodi and Liam**

### Why did you decide to adopt?

Our last dog passed away 2 years ago and we felt ready to open up our homes to another dog again. Both of us (Emma and Sean) grew up with dogs and we knew how much joy having a dog would bring to a family. Before Kodi and Liam, we've also adopted other rescues before as a pair, and we liked that they could grow up and play together.

### Why did you decide to adopt from a shelter and from Mercylight specifically?

We were researching on dog shelters and discovered Mercylight's website. We liked that the website shared details about each dog's characters and personalities. It made us feel they genuinely cared about the dogs and wanted to find good homes for each of them.

### Tell us about your decision to adopt? Why two dogs?

We wanted to adopt a pair of dogs, and we asked Kelly to recommend suitable pairs that could get along well and could be adopted together into the same home. When we went down to the shelter to interact with the dogs, Kodi and Liam came up to us and the kids were immediately in love! I remember how Kodi sat on Kian, and Liam nibbled on Lucas too. The two puppies also get along very well with each other and are always playing and snuggling together.

“ Before Kodi and Liam, we had adopted other rescues before as a pair, and we liked that they could grow up and play together. ”

### How have they been settling into your family? Have you seen any changes?

They settled in almost immediately - perhaps it was easier because they had each other. They're always stuck together and they never sleep more than a few centimeters apart. The first week of bringing them out to play with other dogs was a little intimidating. We were unsure how they would react, but it turned out fine and we felt more confident in the subsequent outings.

### What was the adoption process like?

I did a bit of research to find out about the entire adoption process and requirements so that we would be more prepared.

I was impressed with how thorough the selection process was for adoptions under Mercylight, which was unlike experiences we've had in the past with other shelters - it focuses a lot on matching dogs with families that are the most suitable for them.

After we were put in touch with Kelly, our entire family went down on a Saturday and met the dogs when they were on their morning walk. We were impressed by how clean the shelter was and how calm all the dogs were, even during their feeding time. The kids were very content with that eye-opening experience as well.

### How has adopting a dog changed your daily lives?

Kian: I'm more happy! I wake up early now to walk and feed them.

Emma: Since we've adopted Kodi and Liam, we've been going out more to meet other dogs and being more active. It's been great to see the kids taking on more responsibilities and handling more tasks such as feeding and walking the dogs. I love how the dogs would give Kian and Lucas tons of kisses after long walks, as if to thank them for bringing them out. All in all, it has been a very rewarding experience to see the dogs grow up along with the kids. 🐾





# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER: CHRISTIE

## HER VOLUNTEERING JOURNEY AS A STUDENT



**Hi I'm Christie!** I am currently in my third year of studies at NIE. I have been volunteering at Mercylight for 2 years. Prior to joining Mercylight as a kennel volunteer, I had no experience at all with handling dogs.

### Can you run us through the day in the life of a typical volunteering session?

As a PM shift (evening) volunteer, my teammates and I will start the session by walking the dogs at around 5:30PM. Usually, it will take about 2 hours for all the dogs in the kennel to be walked. During our walks, we will make sure that the dogs' poop is properly picked up and watch for signs of an unhealthy stool (watery diarrhoea, etc.) After which, we will assist the team leader in feeding the dogs. My team and I split up the tasks to ensure efficiency. Some of us will feed dogs, others may help out by refilling the water bowls and washing dishes.

Thereafter, we will attend to dogs that require any type of medical attention and perform first aid such as cleaning their wounds, applying cream, and massaging (for. Finally, before lights out, my team and I will bring the dogs down for their last pee before 10PM (usually).

### How long did it take for you to get settled into Mercylight as a kennel volunteer?

It took me about 6 months to settle into Mercylight as a committed kennel volunteer.

### What has been the most rewarding part of volunteering at Mercylight?

My friendship with the dogs! They are in a way very human-like, which I think is really cute. Some of the dogs can also be really affectionate, which makes the process of winning over their trust so worthwhile.

### What has been the most challenging part of volunteering at Mercylight?

In the beginning, I found it taxing to commit weekly after school. In view of the fact that there are not as many volunteers on the weekdays as compared to the weekends, I found it mentally and physically exhausting to complete the daily tasks with a small team of volunteers. However as time passed, I saw how well the shelter thrives with this set of routine, and it definitely got easier. I was also more motivated to devote myself to a cause that I found very meaningful. This weekly commitment has trained me to have endurance both mentally and physically and to be more resilient.

### Do you have a favourite dog at Mercylight?

For now nope, I love them all! 🐾

## TWINKLE'S STORY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Bruce, Gallant, Twinkle and Amelia

### How has adopting Twinkle and Gallant changed your daily lives?

I think one thing is that we have been waking up a lot earlier to walk the dogs. We plan our time a lot more carefully so we are home by 10 or 11PM to bring the dogs out for their last pee. It has been really nice to have 2 dogs. There are times where I work late, and it is nice to have Twinkle by my side while I work away. We plan more in terms of finances, as things like vet fees are not cheap in Singapore. Every month we will put aside a certain amount for any contingencies for the dogs. 🐾



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER TEAM LEADER: ANNA

## HOW A LITTLE TIME VOLUNTEERING EACH WEEK MAKES ADOPTIONS POSSIBLE

**Hi! I'm Anna!** I am 25 this year and I'm currently self-employed and running my own business. It's my 5th year of volunteering at MercyLight. Prior to this, I've volunteered at other shelters and I also have 2 dogs at home.

### Can you run us through the day in the life of a typical volunteering session?

Our team starts at around 5:30PM for the evening volunteering shift. We spend about 1-2 hours walking all the dogs in the kennel, and each dog gets a 20 minute long walk where they get to poop and pee. After their walks, it's dinner time - my job is to prepare the individual food bowls for each dog and ensure that every dog finishes their food, with the help of my teammates. We also carry out tasks such as refilling of water bowls, feeding medication and vitamins and washing the dog bowls. After every dog is fed, some of us carry out the daily medicine application, which includes cleaning of their wounds/rashes and applying medication, while the others will bring the dogs down for a quick 5 minute walk known as the "last pee." Lastly, we arrange the dog's bedding and mats for their bedtime, and say goodnight before we leave at around 9:30PM.

### How long did it take for you to get settled into MercyLight as a kennel volunteer? Were there any difficulties at the start?

It was quite fast! The shelter is very well organized and the tasks and expectations are clearly conveyed by Kelly, which makes the volunteering process very fuss-free. New volunteers are guided and trained by older volunteers/leaders during the first few sessions, enabling new volunteers to learn the ropes and settle in easily.

My team members all play different complementing roles and have different job scopes, which enables us to get our tasks done efficiently as a team.



### Anna preparing individual meals for the dogs What has been the most rewarding part of volunteering at MercyLight?

It's very rewarding to see the rescued dogs improve in terms of their behaviour and sociability over time at the shelter, overcoming their fears and eventually getting adopted into loving homes. Although, I'll miss the dogs that I've developed a strong bonds with, our ultimate goal is to rehabilitate and look after them by giving them a loving, but temporary shelter before they move on to their forever homes. After they've been successfully adopted, I love to stay updated on their lives through their Instagram pages!

### What has been the most challenging part?

It can be quite disheartening to see sweet and loving dogs that are unable to find suitable homes, or encounter rescues that are badly injured, malnourished or terrified of human contact due to prior trauma. It motivates me to work even harder to make these dogs feel extra loved and cared for, in hopes that they can recover, improve and eventually be suitable for adoption.

### Do you have a favourite dog at MercyLight?

Yori for sure! 🐾



### DAILY VOLUNTEERS TASKS



Basic care and first aid to wounds



2-3 walks each day for 20 minutes  
Observing and reporting any health concerns



Feeding dogs and administering medicine



Interested in volunteering? Visit the MercyLight website for info on how to become a volunteer



## NEW FACES @ MERCYLIGHT

### MEET SOME OF OUR NEW ARRIVALS



#### KANGAROO

Sterilized and released by another Animal Welfare Group (AWG). Kangaroo was rescued May 2021. A very gentle and submissive gal.



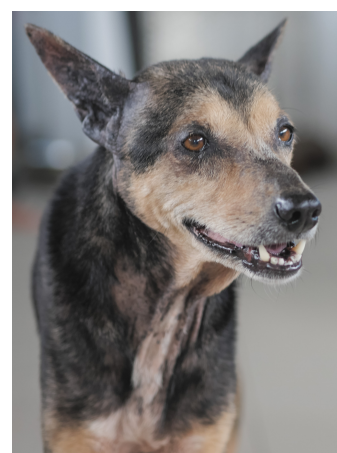
#### ALLY

Spotted roaming on the road with heavy vehicles, many times she was almost run over. A MercyLight volunteer rescued her.



#### MERCY

Rescued by an independent rescuer who sought medical help from an AWG. The AWG was unable to assist in re-homing her and she moved to ML.



#### NINO

Volunteers first spotted Nino a year ago noting that he appeared "hungry and sad." After 3 sightings, he was rescued in June 2021.



#### DODIE

A Punggol stray sterilized and released by another AWG. When his pack disappeared he fended for himself. Volunteer feeders observed that he was always the last to eat. After an absence of 2 weeks, a huge wound was spotted on his back and he was urgently rescued.



#### ZANE

One of Sheeba's 11 pups and a sibling of Yori. He is good with children.

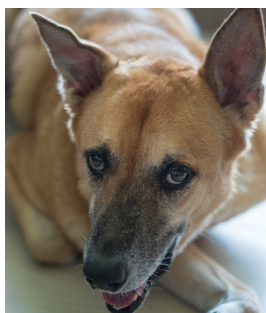
Our mission is to improve the quality of lives of stray dogs through rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing them; to increase public awareness and acceptance of stray dogs as companion animals and that they deserved to be treated with compassion and kindness.



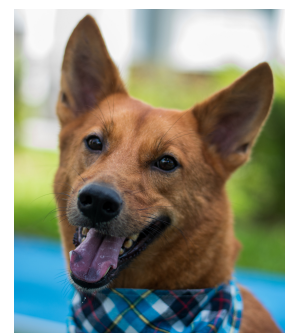
## KEEP UP WITH THE BLESSINGS IN THIS ISSUE...



@giddybumwoofit



@t\_bag\_life



@donnplayplay



CATCH THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IN OCTOBER 2021