

On April 2nd a pretty forty-something woman with a lion's mane of sandy colored hair rushed through the doors of the BH claiming her husband had abandoned her the night before leaving her with an old car, two dollars, and this "damn dog." Three hours later she found the errant spouse and we got the dog! Enter Harry...

The canine was a 10 week old rescue puppy...mostly lab though his paws indicated something frighteningly larger. He was passed from arm to arm, uniting all these strangers, each dealing with their own unique problems. Their focus subtly shifted from self to other. That was the beginning of animal therapy at the BH.

When folks land at a shelter they have not only run out of resources but often they've exhausted their social capital as well. Usually they have few if any healthy relationships. Reparation and reconnecting can be a long, arduous and often unsuccessful journey. Animals like Harry are a source of affection, bonding and healing.

On any given day Harry can be found being walked by a guest, wrestling and running with Bella, the house managers' s better behaved Border Collie mix, or simply draped on the men's side couch keeping them company.

Recently, Di, a participant, had to leave her seven-year old Husky, Jake, with her estranged partner. Devastated by the loss and recognizing her need she approached the director of the Humane Society in Meredith with an idea. The director was enthusiastically open to starting a partnership between the Bridge House homeless shelter guests and the Humane Society's homeless shelter animals.

This January we will begin the first evening volunteer training session at the Humane Society. Please follow the " Our Stories" on this site to track our progress.