

### Cinnamon – A Special Little Girl.

Shetland Sheepdog Placement Services of NJ asked me to write the story of our beloved puppy mill rescued sheltie, Cinnamon. It is their hope that many will read our story and open their hearts and homes to abandoned and abused dogs.

When my daughter, Rachel, was a junior in high school, she did her research paper on animal cruelty including the horrific treatment of dogs in puppy mills. Several weeks later, Rachel suggested we rescue a dog from a puppy mill. We purchased our two shelties (Ellie and Willie) from a pet store in a mall unaware that they were bred in a puppy mill.

As you can image, we felt awful that we supported such cruelty. We had many reservations adopting an abused dog that spent 8-10 years of her life in a cage breeding puppies. The day Cinnamon was rescued from the puppy mill (September 28, 2007), her 4-week old puppies had been taken and she was mourning their absence, didn't want to eat or drink, was covered in fleas and matted to the skin. The picture at right, taken September 30, 2007, shows the fear and uncertainty in her eyes.



She recovered with the help of her caring and loving foster mom Linda. With Linda's help, Cinnamon slowly began to peel away the layers of pain and sorrow. With the help of her housemates, Buddy & Sashi she learned about treats, playing sheltie tag, and became relatively dependable on her house manners.



We officially adopted Cinnamon on March 22, 2008. It was my deceased mother-in-law's birthday. Eleanor Derkacs was a very happy, positive and outgoing person. My husband and our family missed her terribly. It was our hope that March 22<sup>nd</sup> would bring us happiness instead of sadness. Dogs kept in puppy mills for breeding purposes have no documentation of their pedigree etc. March 22<sup>nd</sup> also became Cinnamon's unofficial birthday!



Cinnamon paced for the first three hours on her first day with us until she literally fell asleep from exhaustion. In time, Willie became Cinnamon's best friend. She was his shadow. He was so patient with her and loved being her teacher. His gentleness guided her, and she slowly learned to be a normal pet.

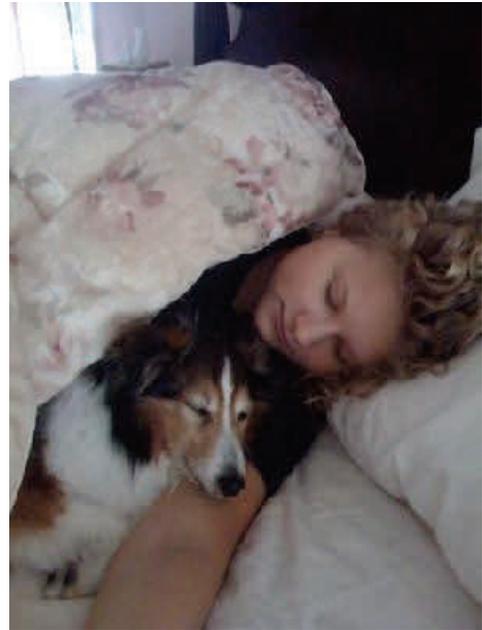


One of her favorite games was to roll in the laundry as it was being sorted



On December 15, 2008, Rachel had surgery to remove a brain tumor. She spent most of her senior year of high school recovering from her surgery. Because the tumor was behind her left eye, the surgery weakened a major nerve and left her with double vision in that eye for many months. She had difficulty walking and could not return to school. She also had to endure many months of speech therapy.

It was during these months that Cinnamon and Rachel recovered physically and emotionally together. They were bonded in ways that the rest of us could never explain. Rachel describes it as, "Cinnamon knew I was hurting, and she wanted to help me. She let me know she was going to take care of me. She opened her heart and trusted me."



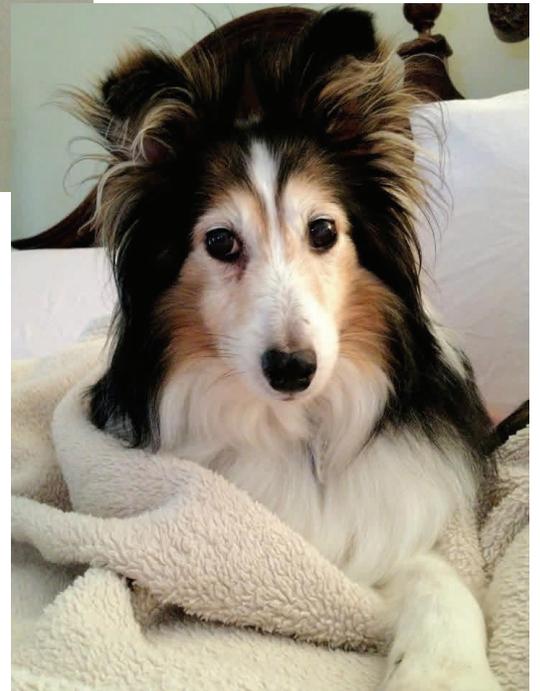
Since I worked two miles from home, I came home for lunch every day to check on Rachel. I found Cinnamon asleep on the couch with her. This was a big deal because Cinnamon never let you hold her. She was too afraid. During her years in the puppy mill, human hands never held her gently. Human hands handled her roughly and with bad intentions. If Cinnamon wasn't on the couch with Rachel, she was sleeping on the floor next to her. Other days I found Rachel holding her or tickling her belly. Some days Rachel would be rubbing her ears. One day Rachel called her and she ran up to her and tapped her nose on Rachel's nose. She kissed her. Cinnamon never learned that a lick was a kiss. To Cinnamon, a nose tap was a kiss. If there was commotion in the house, Cinnamon ran to Rachel and sat next to her. Rachel was her angel, and she felt safe with her. Or Cinnamon felt she had to watch over Rachel.





As time went by, Cinnamon trusted the rest of us and began to let us enjoy her too. She even let Douglas Jr. roughhouse her gently (belly rubs). She was always rewarded with a kiss and a treat! She made Douglas feel like a superhero! When I came home from work, she ran to me, kissed me and barked her happy bark. She made each and every one of us feel special in her own way. She communicated with us with her eyes. She always looked at Douglas Sr. with loving, adoring and appreciative eyes. (Another miracle since she was afraid of the boys when she arrived. Puppy mills are managed by men. Dogs are just another source of income.) He fed and walked her at 4:45 a.m. She was our alarm clock. Breakfast and dinner were never served late. Cinnamon made sure of that. I always felt that Cinnamon had a wonderful sense of humor. She did little things that made me laugh. If she had an accident in the house, she always came by me and stared at me. And I'd say to her, "Did you do something that I need to clean up?" And with those eyes she said yes and I'm sorry – couldn't help it and walked away.





Sadly on December 15, 2012, (the same date of Rachel's surgery five years ago), Cinnamon had a minor seizure while home alone with Rachel. A couple of hours later, she had a major seizure; and we knew it was time.

At the hospital, Cinnamon laid next to Rachel on a couch while Rachel rubbed her ears when God took her. While she was falling asleep, I whispered into Cinnamon's ears to please visit us in our dreams and to let us know she is doing well.

Since her passing, she has visited Rachel a few times and with Willie. Last but not least, Willie died on March 22, 2011. March 22nd is the same date Cinnamon had been adopted and was her unofficial birthday. We think it was his way of saying Cinnamon is ready to be a pet, and my job here is done.

Do you believe in miracles? We do!

Renatta Derkacs