

## Collie Rescue Foundation – Helping to Save the Innocent

The year 2005 was a year of celebration for local collie groups throughout the U.S. and this very special breed. This was the year the Collie Rescue Foundation was established. Those committed to protecting the breed and the CCA saw major rescues in 2002, 2003, and 2005. The 2002 seizure, which involved 171 collies, has come to be known as the Montana Collie Rescue.

Athena Lethcoe-Harman and spouse, Jon Harman, were charged with 183 counts of animal abuse. They were travelling with the collies from Alaska to resettle in Arizona when customs officers near Sweetgrass, Montana (Canada-U.S. border) pulled over their tractor trailer. When the U.S. Customs officers opened the truck, several dogs jumped out and the smell of ammonia was staggering. The dogs were in airline carriers and homemade wooden crates. They were dehydrated and emaciated. Crates had toppled during transport and several dogs had escaped. Several were puppies and 7 others were born the night of the seizure, 5 of which lived. One dog was discovered dead. Reports stated there was about 4 inches of urine and feces covering the trailer floor. A local veterinarian commented that the dogs were filthy, several with bleeding gums, ringworm and giardia.

(1)<https://www.animaladvocates.com/watchdog.pl?md=read;id=1149>

“Animal Advocates Watchdog”

(2)[https://mc-aac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/newsletter\\_winter\\_2003.pdf](https://mc-aac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/newsletter_winter_2003.pdf)

“Humane Society Foundation”

Caring for animals in cases such as this one in Montana can run into tens of thousands of dollars. The animals need professional veterinary care, lab fees, exams, treatment, boarding, grooming, feeding, microchips, etc. In come the local non-profit collie rescue groups. The sweat and tears that are put into ensuring these dogs never suffer another day in their life is tremendous. The emotional costs and personal sacrifices are immeasurable. The rescues find volunteers to foster, which is not an easy task. Dogs coming from these types of hoarding situations can be complicated. They are often shut down and extremely shy. They all recover at their own pace; all with some permanent emotional damage. The rescues take on the expense of continuous medical care and feeding. All of this is done purely with donations.

Mike Esch, president of the Collie Club of America at that time, realized that the CCA did not have a 501c3 status, committees or guidelines to deal with these unprecedented events. He worked on establishing a group that could help with these horrendous events. His hope continued with his successor, Pati Merrill.

Pati’s vision was for a national organization to have a working relationship with the CCA but to be a totally separate entity. This organization would be a resource of information for the public and collie rescue organizations. It would also provide emergency funding for local collie rescues throughout the U.S. whether it was needed for 100 collies or a single collie. In September of 2005, CCA voted to provide funding for the creation of a separate,

autonomous 501c3 collie rescue organization. Thus, the birth of the Collie Rescue Foundation!

Since its founding, the Collie Rescue Foundation has helped rescues throughout the United States to provide medical care to thousands of collies. Many are individual collies saved by the rescue and, unfortunately, there remains to be massive seizures in hoarding and neglect cases. In 2014, Houston Collie Rescue was awarded by the court, the seizure of 149 collies, puppies and pregnant mammas. With the help of CRF, HCR was able to provide medical care to every one of them. All found loving homes in Texas and throughout the country as other rescues were able to take a small number, again, with the help of CRF.

The most recent (2022) was the Sherrard, Illinois hoarding case of 200 collies. This was very much the same situation as the 2014 case. Rescues throughout the country were able to take in these collies, provide medical care and adopt into loving families.

CRF takes their Code of Ethics seriously expecting all affiliates to adhere to them strictly. All affiliates must apply and are screened.

It would have been impossible for these rescues to save all these collies, not only the massive seizures cases, but even the individual cases, without the support of CRF. Rescue affiliates are required to have 501c3 status. These rescues operate solely on local donations and could not survive without the support of CRF.

The Collie Rescue Foundation is quite proud of the fact that over 97% of all donations go to the mission of supporting rescues. CRF operates with Officers and a Board of Directors who serve as volunteers. Since its inception in 2005, CRF has provided more than \$400,000 in financial assistance to rescues throughout the country.

When collies come into rescue, they are often in poor health. Years of medical and emotional neglect take a huge toll on this very sensitive breed. The local rescues provide them the medical care needed. They are placed in foster homes to physically and emotionally heal. They are often in foster homes for months to provide training and emotional support to help these dogs become well-adjusted enough to be adopted into a loving family.

The Collie Rescue Foundation is there for the local rescues. We hope you will be there for CRF to continue to be there for the local rescues through your donations and/or membership. You may also consider remembering CRF when carrying out your estate planning.

Thank you for taking the time to read about CRF. We are proud of what we can do for all the precious collies!

To become a member or offer a donation, please visit:  
<https://collierescuefoundation.org/membership/>