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Home for the Holidays

Written By: Harry Gribnitz

It was a couple of weeks before my seventh Christmas. I didn't have the normal list of toys and gifts that most seven year olds have bouncing through their heads. I just wanted one thing for Christmas, a new best friend, a puppy. I had my guy friends. Ray, Bruce, Woody and I played ball together, traded baseball cards, and just hung out together, but it wasn't the same. Not only did I tell Santa and my parents but anyone else who would listen. All I wanted for Christmas was a puppy.

My parents talked with me about my responsibilities if we added a puppy to our family. I would be responsible for feeding, grooming and most importantly, cleaning up after the puppy (My Dad was most adamant about the last item). Convinced that I would meet my responsibilities, we headed to our local Humane Society. The Humane Society had so many animals that needed new homes. Most of the puppies and dogs greeted visitors to the kennel with happy yelps, wagging tails and all the cuteness they could muster. But, in one corner of the kennel lay a little, mostly black dog with a few white markings. Someone told us that she was a Shetland Sheep dog or Sheltie (looked like a little collie to me). Unlikely most of the other dogs, she seemed afraid to come forward to greet us. I sat quietly on the floor, dog treat in hand, hoping to draw her out of her corner. My parents walked on to look at some of the other dogs. When they returned, the little puppy was curled up in my lap.

Her official name became Black Snowflake (My mom's idea), but to me she was "Shep". Somehow my seven year old tongue had converted Shetland Sheep dog and Sheltie into "Shep". Every night she slept curled up at the foot of my bed. She was always ready to play. She never seemed to tire of chasing a ball or stick or running along side of my bike. She was always a little shy around strangers, but would protect our family and home with every ounce of her body. She was the first one to greet me when I came home. It made no difference if I had a good day or bad day. Three strikeouts or a homerun, an "A" or a "C" on the math test or a little late taking out the trash, she just loved me. I could talk to her about anything and she never judged me, she just loved me. She was my best friend. Even though she has been gone for many years, I know she is looking down very pleased with our efforts to help the Humane Society find homes for others in need.

If you are ready to bring a new best friend into your Home for the Holidays, please come join us at the Humane Society Open house on Dec 7th. We have been given the opportunity to be the exclusive sponsor of this event. If you would like to learn more, please review the information on the back of this letter or call the Humane Society at 616-453-8900 or me at 616-667-5711.

Merry Christmas,

*Harry Gribnitz
Your Home Loan Specialist for Life!*

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