

Great Dane rescue a labor of love

By TAMARA PHILLIPS
CORRESPONDENT

ORMOND BEACH — Loving words spoken to five-year-old Miranda by Central Florida Great Dane Rescue volunteer Angelika Gruber usually go unheard.

But the spunky canine with a speckled nose and ice-blue eyes in Gruber's care feels her affection and is learning to interpret her hand signals.

"She is mostly deaf," Gruber said of the now 100-pound dog rescued from a Florida puppy mill.

"A lot of white dogs have a gene that causes deafness and can also cause blindness," she said.

Such rescued animals additionally have an uncanny sense of their good fortune, according to Gruber, as she says she has observed with her adopted Weimaraner-Great Dane mix, Leo, 7, and during her eight months of tending to foster dogs through the rescue group.

Another Great Dane she owns, Ashley, 9, lives in her home, too.

"These animals really know that they finally met a person that means well or that an organization is there to look out for them. You can really tell how grateful these animals are," Gruber said.



Neighbors/TAMARA PHILLIPS

Angelika Gruber, Central Florida Great Dane Rescue volunteer, plays with Miranda, who is mostly deaf. Miranda is learning to react to Gruber's hand signals as a way of communicating.

It's her personal thankfulness, however, that prompted Gruber to pay it forward by volunteering.

"I got one of my dogs from an adoption, and I always wanted to give some of the joy back that these dogs create in my life," she said.

Gruber cringes at the thought of all the neglected and unwanted, organization-rescued Great Danes, most under age two, that are out there.

Many have had more than one home. One contributing factor is owners who don't research the breed and breeder before buying a cute puppy.

They can later become overwhelmed as their dog grows and becomes energetically playful, or when genetic health issues such as hip dysplasia and heart problems occur.

"It's always amazing to me how many people are willing to give up an animal that they had in their possession or as a family member. Unfortunately, a lot of people are either forced to give them up or they don't want to deal with them anymore. It's really a shame. And it's really amazing to me how much of that is going on," she said.

"An animal is really a commitment. We're their guardians and we are there to take care of them. And we just can't drop them as we please."

That makes the match-making process for a potential new owner an especially thoughtful undertaking.

"Adoption is a process that we take very seriously. We want to make sure that a dog is placed only once, and that the family that the dog goes to will be happy. And that the dog will be happy as well," Gruber said.

For more information, visit the CFGDR.org.

BB gun incident lands suspect, friend in jail

The following information was compiled from reports filed with the Holly Hill Police Department:

Andrew J. Young, 20, of Lake

POLICE BEAT

Police stopped them in the 1000 block of Calle Grande Ave-

door lock. As she was about to close the door, she felt a tug on her left arm and saw Williams take her purse and ride off on his bicycle toward Sonny's restaurant in the northeast corner

him, but Koontz started running.

Another witness saw this and chased Koontz while calling police.



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