



Missy, Now Mia

by Lisa Leffingwell, Southern Coordinator, BSDRT

"In the Beginning...."

Shortly after the 2012 National, it came to the attention of the BSDRT that a possible BSD was in a shelter in the St. Louis area. "Missy" had become the shelter mascot and spent time in the office with the shelter office staff every day. However, she needed to move on to her home and BSDRT was contacted. The shelter wasn't in a great hurry as she had taken to the shelter manager and vice versa. Linda Robey graciously volunteered to identify her as BSD, yay or nay, for BSDRT. Her story was somewhat fuzzy but was something like she got out of her yard and her owner came to see her but then didn't want to pay the fees to get her back.

Linda Robey contacted me and confirmed that she was a purebred Belgian Sheepdog. We put the word out for a foster home for Missy and Monica Bamford stepped up to the plate. Monica had other Belgians and Missy fit well enough into her family. Monica was kind to keep Missy until June and spent quite a bit of time with her. Missy had a couple of idiosyncrasies that overall, were relatively minor as compared to other rescues.

There were quite a few starts and stops with various potential homes for Missy. Missy should have been easy to find the perfect home for – she had a good temperament, was a beautiful dog, without major issues. However, she would not work well with cats and that eliminated quite a few applicants. Then later it was determined that she would work best in a home with only a male dog. Children were an unknown. Although we started with many people interested in her, they all fell by the wayside for various reasons. It was astounding that a dog that initially seemed easy to

place was repeatedly not the right match for various reasons. BSDRT had placed more difficult dogs with their forever home in much shorter periods of time.

In June, it was necessary to find a new foster home for Missy. We went to work on a new foster home. Since it was now the heat of summer, BSDRT decided to try to keep her in the mid-west so that she would be more centrally located for travel purposes. Pamala Clark who had previously adopted Pirate from BSDRT volunteered to foster Missy.

Pam set out from her home in Illinois to meet Anne Marie Potchen Lynch who volunteered to transport Missy from Missouri to meet Pam. I received a very upsetting call from Anne Marie who reported that Pam had been in a serious car accident on her way to meet Anne Marie – in the course of service for BSDRT! Pam's own dogs were with her and Pam wouldn't go in the ambulance to the hospital until she was certain her dogs were going to be taken care of. Sharon Roundy put out the word that immediate help was needed in the Peoria area of Illinois and Jana King Behm came to the rescue. Jana was able to get Pam's dogs before they were even processed into the local shelter. Jana and then Sharon cared for Pam's dogs while Pam was hospitalized. Thankfully, Pam made a complete recovery. However, we were back to the drawing board to find Missy her second foster home.



Again, we put out the call for a foster. BSDRT continued to receive new applications and we were certain one of them would be right for Missy. Kathy Champine kindly volunteered to take Missy into her home to foster her. Kathy and Monica met and Missy moved more North to Illinois. Kathy worked diligently with Missy and with me towards a final assessment of Missy and then to coordinate the right applicant for Missy. Cathie Lang and Lynne Narez processed applicants and conducted their interviews quickly so that we could efficiently land the right home for Missy. It continued to take much longer than all involved hoped as we eliminated various applicants as they just were not the right fit - some applicants wanted an active dog - not so much Missy, some applicants didn't have fencing and didn't seem to understand what it would take to manage Missy without fencing, some applicants decided after going through the process that it might not be the right time to get another dog, or had decided to get a dog of another breed in the meantime. It went on and on. BSDRT appreciated that Kathy continued to foster and work with Missy throughout and continued to introduce Missy to various applicants.

Finally! I received the application of June and Tony Alleman. Susan Spinhirne had responded to their first inquiry quickly and they were very interested! After talking to the Allemans, I was very excited but guarded. We had all been disappointed for Missy at various times along the way. By now it was later in the fall of 2012 and Missy had been in rescue for approximately 6 months. I contacted Kathy and she agreed to talk to the Allemans and then let me know if an introduction was in order. After talking to them, she also felt confident about them as a wonderful home for Missy! BSDRT shared Kathy's gorgeous pictures of Missy with the Allemans via the website and they were smitten! They met her and it was meant to be. Sharon Roundy performed the home check required by BSDRT and the adoption was approved. In November 2012, Missy joined the Alleman family and they have given her their unconditional love. Although it took longer than anyone anticipated, it all happened for a reason - she was meant to spend the rest of her days with June and Tony Alleman.

Thanks to everyone that volunteered their time and money to help BSDRT and specifically Missy, now Mia. There were many people involved with Missy and we appreciate so much their efforts. This case was particularly frustrating at times since Missy was

technically in my area but still so very far away. But many people closer in location stepped in to do the hands on work to successfully foster, transport, and work with the various steps vital and necessary for a successful adoption. Best wishes to June, Tony and Mia.



MISSY FINDS A PERMANENT HOME

By June Alleman

It was late October 2012 and my best friend contacted me in the hopes that I could assist in an adoption event held in Highland Park, Illinois. A guardian angel was bringing 25 pups here from Tennessee kill shelters in the hopes that they could all find permanent, safe and loving homes. My husband and I had had the sad misfortune to put down our beloved Beau, a Belgian

Sheepdog, who had been ravaged by cancer in one month. He was our second of this wonderful breed and we were grieving still. My friend was concerned that this predicament would put me in turmoil but I had assured her that I would be happy to assist in this worthy event and I would not be conflicted in anyway. I had an eventful day as the puppies were extremely exuberant, to say the least, and I believe all but a few were successfully adopted. I loved them all but did not feel a connection with any one of them.

Later that evening I related the details of the event to my husband and went online to show him some of the pups I had the pleasure of spending time with. While on this site we had found about 10 Belgian Sheepdogs who were available for adoption. We had already raised two males and decided to go with a female this time. We had sent an inquiry regarding four of them. We had planned to seek a breeder for a spring 2013 litter but if we could help a dog in need now, we thought we would investigate. Within 10 minutes I received an email from someone named Susan at the Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust. She wanted to know where I had seen these dogs as they had already been placed. She went on to say that they only had one dog left to place and she was, in fact, a female about 6 years old, named Missy. She included the link to the website so we might get a look at the girl. OF COURSE SHE WAS ADORABLE! She had an adorable patch of white fur on her chest. This was quite unusual to us since neither of our boys had a stitch of white on their bodies until they were older. Although we were not really looking we thought it was worth getting more details.

We learned that Missy was rescued from a shelter in St. Louis, where she'd been ID'd by a volunteer as a purebred Belgian. BSDRT had placed her with one foster person and then moved her to another because of special circumstances. That move brought her to Zion, Illinois. I'm telling you this girl was on a one track mission to her forever home. The inquiry led to three interviews and a meet and greet with the fair Missy.

OH MY GOD! SHE WAS A HEARTBREAKER!!! How could anyone send this gentle creature to a shelter? I told my husband that the people must have been down on their luck. I totally get it if you must choose between feeding your child or a dog, WELL WHATEVER! If you care about your pet you should at least make the effort to find the best alternative care available. Long

story short, we loved her, she loved us (oh what a surprise). Before we knew it Sharon Roundy, the Trust Chairperson, was contacting us regarding our home inspection.

Missy (we named her Mia) joined us on 11/25/12. She is even more loving and sweet than we ever could have imagined. My husband claimed her as the Audrey Hepburn of dogs because she is so graceful and sweet. She is soooooo quiet, I have almost fallen over her. She will follow me everywhere and sit right behind me. She was fearful of every room in the house at first. She would cower constantly and look up at everything with trepidation. We feared what her past home life experience must have been. After about two weeks we realized that Mia suffered from incontinence when she would sleep. A visit to the vet and some medication later and we are confidently working to get this under control. It does not make us happy, but this is something that we could have experienced with a dog we raised from a pup. I am convinced that this is why our Mia was tossed out. Their loss is definitely our gain. We truly love her and appreciate the joy and care she bestows on us every day. My husband is so over the moon with Mia that I have told Sharon that I have to be the alpha to rein in all the love or the two of them will just be pathetic.

I didn't think it possible, but I actually succeeded at getting Mia to go in and out of a crate on her own accord. She will actually go in there now and lay down on her own. I can't tell you how monumental this is. In January, Mia and I enrolled in basic obedience classes. I knew that this was our chance to truly bond with one another. BOND WE DID!!!! MIA ROCKED THIS COURSE AND TOOK FIRST PLACE, I might add! She is uber-brilliant, you know. When she joined our family she could sit on command. You should see her now. If only we could get daddy to follow the program, *hmmm*.

We plan to further her education in May when we begin off-leash training. We must work constantly and with much consideration and patience on her impending fear of the day. She can jump behind me at the drop of a hat. But this too shall pass. Thank you, you amazing people of the BDSRT, and your unending devotion to this wonderful breed of FURKIDS. Please continue your good works. Especially thanks to all of the people involved in Missy's (Mia) behalf. I promise you she will be well cared for all of her life.

Your devoted friends.