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****For Immediate Release (Cutlines: Rocky Feature – Rocky is one of GCHS' first Dolly's Dream sponsored dogs. His adopters will be given a bevy of gifts, including a collar, leash, dog bed, training crate, food and treats. There also will be a surprise gift given after the adoption signing.**

Misha Feature: Misha is the "love sponge" of GCHS and loves to be loved. She takes in all the attention, while giving it back twofold. She, along with Rocky, are up for adoption and are the first two recipients of the Dolly's Dream Adoption Program.

Dolly: Dolly was the inspiration behind "Dolly's Dream Adoption Program", after being adopted by Jeff Levitz, and showed how loving the pitbull breed really is.

Dolly's Dream and GCHS Logos attached

'Dolly's Dream' Program helps misunderstood breed climb out of the Pit

There's been a breed of dog which has taken turns being demonized in society, starting with the German Shepard in the 1970's.

The stereotyping of "bad" breeds continued in the 1980's with the Doberman, while the 1990's, the Rottweiler took its turn being negatively labeled as a dangerous dog.

For the last 15-plus years, though, the pitbull has had a stronghold on the “dangerous” breed label and it has shown through overzealous laws in cities banning the breed completely, to breed restrictions in living facilities.

The negative stereotype by society has many undesirable cause-and-effects on these types of dogs in shelters, including Gulf Coast Humane Society, located 2010 Arcadia Street in Fort Myers.

“People have such a negative opinion of this type of dog and it is not fair to each individual animal,” said GCHS Executive Director Jennifer Galloway. “Some of our sweetest dogs are our bully breeds. They are loyal and have such a calm temperament. But some of our longest termers end up being this type of dog.”

But with a new grant from the Levitz Family Foundation’s Dolly’s Dream, there will be more incentives to adopt one of these breeds. The Dolly’s Dream Program will also shed a fresh, positive light on these misunderstood breeds through education to eliminate the ignorant stereotypes which are out there.

Each month through the Dolly’s Dream Adoption Program, GCHS will be highlighting two bully breed type of dogs a month to help enhance their odds of being adopted. Those incentives include many benefits to the dogs’ adopters, including a new leash and collar, training crate, food, a dog bed, toys and food, with treats.

At the signing of the adoption papers, a surprise gift will be given to the adoptive parents – all thanks to the Dolly’s Dream Program.

“We sponsor five shelters throughout Florida,” said Daniella Jordan of the Levitz Family Foundation. “The Dolly’s Dream Adoption Program has been a huge success and we are looking at expanding. We are looking to partner with well-established and well known organizations, ones which have the proper infrastructure and support us in our mission. When I came across GCHS, it was a no brainer.”

The two sponsored dogs will not lose their Dolly’s Dream status if they are not adopted through that month, instead will remain a Dolly Dog until they are adopted. Their kennels will be highlighted with a hanging Dolly’s Dream logo sign and a kennel card explaining what the adoption program is all about.

The Dolly’s Dream Adoption program started when Jeff Levitz adopted Dolly in 2011, from Lady Luck Animal Rescue.

“Dolly is the dog that taught him how amazing this breed truly is,” Jordan said. “Their first days together she was timid and scared of her new surroundings and then little by little she would

explore her new home, and as time went by she became very happy. He couldn't have been happier Dolly found him!

"He never expected the happiness she would bring into his life. And little did he know that he would end up with three more, Dexter, Monk, and Zeus. Dolly is the reason why we continue to save dogs like her."

The first two GCHS dogs who are Dolly's Dream dogs are Misha and Rocky. The GCHS' Dolly's Dream webpage can be found at <http://www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org/dollys-dream.html>.

Misha is the "love sponge" of the shelter, because she seeks out the love and affection from anyone who will give it to her. She has a beautiful black coat, with white "racing stripes" which wrap around her belly, possibly caused by a boar attack in which her fur grew back white around the scars.

"She is very people friendly and likes to lay in laps and lick her human," Galloway said. "She is dog tolerant and would be great in a house. Every one of our volunteers and staff members just love her and wonder why she is still available for adoption."

Misha is six and a half years old and has been at GCHS since Feb. 19. Her Dolly's Dream page can be found at <http://www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org/misha---dollys-dream.html>.

Rocky is the GCHS "Rockstar" and is just over five and a half years old. He has intense eyes and loves attention. His energy can be harnessed after training by GCHS staff members and volunteers. He is harness-trained and would be an amazing walking partner.

"Rocky has a beautiful blue-gray coat and has the most amazing brown eyes, which show the affection he has for people," Galloway said. "He has received much training since he arrived at GCHS in Jan. of 2016. Although we love our Rockstar, everyone here at GCHS wants him to find his perfect forever home, both he and Misha deserve that."

Rocky's Dolly's Dream webpage can be found here:
<http://www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org/rocky---dollys-dream.html>.

Jordan has seen firsthand how Dolly's Dream sponsored dogs have found their forever homes. The incentives offered through the Dolly's Dream Adoption Program can be just enough to have a potential adopter to take a second look at these worthwhile dogs.

That alone could be just enough to have them fall in love with the dogs.

"The truth is that dogs can be expensive," Jordan said. "But that is the commitment one signs up for when adopting a dog. But if by advertising these goodies and supplies, we are able to even have someone take a second look at this dog, we are happy."

“Yes, our goal is to get them adopted, but our second goal is to educate. So when someone walks by a kennel that has our Dolly’s Dream sign and a list of everything they come with it has them asking why that dog. We know the answer to that... because pit bulls are awesome!”

To inquire about the Levitz Family Foundation Dolly’s Dream Adoption Program, visit their website at <http://www.levitzfamilyfoundation.org/dolly-s-dream>.

Misha and Rocky can also be viewed at www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org, along with all the other dogs and cats at the GCHS.

About Gulf Coast Humane Society:

Gulf Coast Humane Society is a regional organization dedicated to helping companion pets find their forever homes, no matter how long it takes. GCHS provides an adoption center, spay-neuter and veterinary clinic, as well as education and awareness to the public about the welfare of homeless pets.

GCHS’ mission is to care for companion pets in need by offering safe refuge, providing medical care and facilitating adoptions. GCHS promotes the concept the “Adopt, Don’t Shop” and help educate the community about proper and responsible animal care, while providing quality, affordable veterinary care.

GCHS Veterinary Clinic: 2685 Swamp Cabbage Court, Fort Myers, 33901; Phone: 239-332-2719

GCHS Spay/Neuter Clinic: 2010 Arcadia Street, Fort Myers, 33916; Phone: 239-332-1573

GCHS Adoption Center: 2010 Arcadia Street, Fort Myers, 33916; Phone: 239-332-0364

DOLLY'S



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