

# 12 Saves of the Holidays

## The Puppy Who Stole Our Hearts

**W**hen our partners at Washoe County Regional Animal Services (WCRAS) received an anonymous call that there was a puppy inside a kennel with his mouth wrapped closed, they immediately sent an officer to investigate.

When WCRAS Field Supervisor Robert Wooster arrived on scene, there was a four-month-old puppy trapped in a cage, motionless and nonresponsive.

The puppy was quickly removed from the cage and the shoelace tied around his face was removed. He was raced to Sierra Veterinary Specialists Emergency Clinic and turned over to their Veterinary Team for treatment. The photos below show how quickly Bowie's face began to swell in his first 24 hours of recovery to the progress he made when he started to heal

Bowie was returned to WCRAS where he spent five days recovering and being cared for by their team. "Our team immediately bonded with this sweet puppy as soon as Wooster told us his story and we saw what he had been through. It's tough to see the things that people do to helpless animals and you become very invested in their recoveries. I personally sat with this puppy while he was in our care and hand fed him soft food with his medication in it so I could make sure he was eating and getting his antibiotics and pain meds. At that time his little mouth was still so swollen and he was in so much pain –he simply couldn't eat on his own. It was truly heartbreaking." –Tammy Wines-Jennings, WCRAS Assistant Director

After spending five days at WCRAS, Bowie was transferred to Nevada Humane Society (NHS). We share a building with our partners at WCRAS, so we can easily transfer animals into our care when it is time to find them happy homes and, in many cases, provide them with continued medical care, fostering, training and rehabilitation.



*"WCRAS is the primary animal welfare agency in Washoe County with an important role of investigating tips from our community about animal cruelty. Working through difficult cruelty cases, a key area of focus is to protect and preserve the lives of pets within our community through education, resources, and prosecution of those who egregiously abuse or neglect animals. We cannot do this without our community so if you see something, say something."*

– Shyanne Schull, WCRAS Director



*“It was difficult to tell at first if the puppy was alive. I made noise on the gate at the edge of the property to get the dog’s attention and he looked up at me and started to whimper. It was obvious that he was in desperate need of medical attention and wouldn’t survive much longer in the conditions he was being kept in.”*

– Robert Wooster, WCRAS Field Supervisor

“Bowie was suffering from deep wounds on his face due to abuse and neglect. My Veterinary Team treated his wounds, prescribed pain medication and antibiotics, got him up-to-date on his shots, neutered him and recommended he spend ten days with one of our experienced foster volunteers so he could be in a calm, loving environment while he continued his recovery.”

–Dr. Jessica Slatin, NHS Veterinary Director.

Our team could hardly believe how affectionate and trusting this amazing puppy was despite everything he had been through. He just wanted to be loved so badly, and was so grateful for any affection he received. He quickly found a special place in all our hearts and we knew he needed a foster home and eventually an adopter who could work with him to help him come to know what it’s like to be well cared for and loved.

When our Animal Care Director told me Bowie’s story, I was eager to meet him. The two of us went into his kennel and sat with him together. After a few minutes, lots of cuddles and many tears, she said I think you need to foster him, and I knew I couldn’t go home without him that night.

My husband and I have fostered dozens of shelter pets who were too young, too sick or too stressed to be in the shelter until they were ready to be adopted over the past few years, but there was something very special about little Bowie...

“It was obvious right away that this puppy had been kept poor living conditions for so long that he had no idea what it was like to be inside of house, or how to be part of a family. My wife brings homeless pets in need of foster care regularly, but the ten days we shared our home with Bowie and watched him overcome his fears, was an amazing experience for us. We are grateful for the opportunity to make our home Bowie’s first experience feeling loved and comfortable.” –Radium Sulprizio, NHS Foster Volunteer.

Bowie recovered quickly once he was in our home and he blossomed into a confident puppy –especially once his mouth was healed enough that he could play with our other pets. Bowie had a special connection with Bruce who is the same age as Bowie and was so excited to have a buddy he could care for and play with for ten days.

## **A new beginning...**

**B**owie found happiness when he met his adopters and finally got his happy ending! “We have a senior pit bull and our daughter had been begging us for a puppy for months. We wanted to make sure that we were rescuing a dog that was truly in need of a second chance, so we waited. When we heard Bowie (then Becker’s) story, we just knew he was the perfect dog for our family and that we could give him the happy home he so desperately needed and deserved.” –Rich & Celeste, Bowie’s Adopters.



We always encourage our foster volunteers to help find adopters for their foster pets. When they are able to, those pets don't have to spend time waiting in the shelter to be adopted, but get to go home right away –so it is better for the pet and it provides us the space to help even more pets in need. So it's a win-win.

Celeste was my cheerleading coach in middle school, so I've known their family for years and have seen first-hand how much they love dogs and are animal-rights advocates. When they called and told us they wanted to meet our foster pup and were interested in adopting him, I knew they would be the perfect fit for him.

When Celeste and Rich brought their daughters over to meet little Bowie, he spent the evening toddling after their youngest daughter, Merlot, and snuggling with Celeste! The family knew that adopting a dog who had suffered abuse and neglect wouldn't be easy and that Bowie would require extra love and care because of his traumatic past. After taking a few days to research how best to care for and train Bowie, and discuss what adopting him into their family would mean, they made a unanimous decision! They couldn't wait to take Bowie home and can't believe how much progress he has made.

"When Bowie's family brought him back to the shelter to get their holiday photos taken just one week after they adopted him, I couldn't believe how much progress he had made. His wounds were completely healed and it was obvious how much confidence he had gained and how happy he was with his new family –especially his new furry dog mom, Bebe!" – Robert Wooster, WCRAS Field Supervisor.

By: Nicole Theodoulou, Marketing & Communications Director

***We are so thankful that we were able to help this amazing puppy heal and find him a forever home. Please visit our [Donate Page](#) to learn more about how you can help pets like Bowie.***

***"As Nevada's only open-admission, no-kill shelter we regularly take in animals that have experienced neglect and abuse. It is heartbreaking to see what some of these animals have been through, but at the end of the day knowing that our team had a hand in their recovery and seeing that they have been adopted into a loving home –it makes it all worth it."***

*–Greg Hall, NHS CEO*



*Before*

*After*

***Bowie's journey to recovery ends with a happy home.***

***Now a long way from his former life, during which he was regularly caged with his mouth tightly tied closed with a shoelace without food or water, Bowie is now happy, healthy and most importantly, loved.***