



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 6, 2016

CONTACT: DENISE ROELKE
Shibas4life@gmail.com

NW Shibas4Life Rescue Closing in 2016

NW Shibas4Life Rescue was founded by Denise and Tony Roelke more than 16 years ago, out of their home. Since that time, the organization has grown, and the Roelkes have hosted the rescue on their land, and in their own home and personally financed facilities. More than 500 Shiba Inus have been rescued since its founding in 2000.

Historically, NW Shibas4Life Rescue has been able to commit to caring for and rescuing some of the most physically needy homeless Shibas because Denise Roelke, in addition to having a full-time career in IT health care, has stayed up-to-date with her training as a veterinary technician. This has made it possible for Shibas with very time-consuming medical conditions to be rescued; however, it also meant that the entire Roelke family has committed a great deal of their personal time to caring for these special needs dogs.

Thanks to some very dedicated volunteers who help care for the 10-15 dogs and the facility, NW Shibas4Life Rescue has been able to operate. Denise rises at 3:30 a.m. to give the Shibas their morning exercise in the yard, breakfasts, and medications before leaving for work. Tony and Denise each work from home a couple of days a week, as their supervisors allow, to care for the dogs. Denise again medicates and exercises the dogs when she gets home from work, and she and Tony take dogs to the vet after work if any of the dogs need to be seen. The dog building is cleaned daily. Yard work and dog poop is a daily routine. Their son, Riley, comes straight home from his job to prepare the dogs' evening meals and supplements. It has been a careful balancing act that requires everyone to be on time and available to meet every commitment, every day.

After careful consideration, the Roelkes and the NW Shibas4Life Rescue Board of Directors (Denise Roelke, Jean MacTarnahan, Kendra Schuett, and Kathy Oppenheimer) realized that they can no longer make that commitment for the long term. It was one of the hardest decisions they have ever made.

Here is what supporters of NW Shibas4Life Rescue should know:

What:

- As of May 2016, NW Shibas4Life will slow down its in-take of new dogs.
- The rescue's Beavercreek headquarters will shut down fully by 10/1/2016 to avoid renewals and registration fees for 2017.

Why:

- NW Shibas4Life Rescue has been a full-time volunteer commitment for almost 17 years for the Roelkes. The on-site rescue facility at their home gave the rescue tremendous advantages; however, it also put restrictions on their family time, careers, personal interests, and health. This difficult decision was made for their health and well-being.
- The NW Shibas4Life Rescue Board of Directors researched possible Shiba Inu rescues on the west coast to transfer operations to; none showed interest in taking over the NW Shibas4Life Rescue operations model.
- SIRRA (Shiba Rescue Resource of America) is a valuable resource for rescues across the U.S. and should be used because breeders and Shibaholics contribute to its support.

How:

- The sanctuary dogs: Diablo, Oso, Mama and Angel will be adopted by Tony and Denise because of their special needs. The Roelkes want the very best for them, and know that a change in home or families could be detrimental.
- The adoptable dogs: Chloe, Akira, Nikko, Addy and Prancer will be adopted out when the right homes match their needs. NW Shibas4Life's Board of Directors is prepared to make sure all of the dogs in its care have loving homes, regardless how long it may take.
- NW Shibas4Life Rescue will host one more online event this year to assist the dogs in rescue for the next journey to their forever homes; there will not be an annual picnic.
- The rescue's website will stay up to provide information, and Denise will continue to work with her resources to build content and share common health information.
- Once all debt is paid and all Shibas are provided with everything that they need, the rescue will determine the organization's final remaining fund balance. If there is a remaining balance, the rescue will donate it to another non-profit Shiba rescue.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Could NW Shibas4Life Rescue stay open if we all gave more money?

A: Unfortunately, the problem is not a funding issue; it is the cumulative effect of combining close to 17 years of full-time rescue with a demanding career, family needs, and health priorities.

Q: I've known Denise through Facebook for years. All this talk about her health has me worried. Is she sick?

A: Thanks for asking; Denise isn't sick. Imagine you had two full-time jobs: one for a paycheck and one for Shiba kisses, plus you were a wife and mother—for more than 16 years. It's just time for Denise to take care of herself. Years of lifting Shibas, crates, Shibas in crates, and supplies have been hard on her body, and she has suffered a shoulder injury that may require surgery. Due to rehabilitation she won't be able to lift anything for some time.

Q: What can we do to help during this difficult time?

A: Thank you for asking; as you can imagine Denise is very emotional about the decision. Sharing this information and supporting NW Shibas4Life Rescue in a positive manner will help tremendously.

Q: What if someone offered to become a volunteer coordinator and develop a network of volunteers to help keep the rescue open?

A: That's a lovely idea; unfortunately, volunteers are not able to medicate the dogs at 5:00 am, comfort a new rescue at 2:00 am, or give our dogs with glaucoma their eye drops on schedule several times each day to ensure they stay pain free. And picking up poop for 10-15 dogs isn't what volunteers envision they will be doing to help out. They want to play with the dogs.

Q: Why not change your rescue model and become a rescue that fosters out all of your Shibas so that the burden is off the Roelkes? You could stay open then, right?

A: The foster network rescue model works best when a rescue takes in dogs that have minor issues that can be addressed around a family's regular schedule. Few foster families have the time or energy to address special needs dogs.

The NW Shibas4Life Rescue operations model came to exist because it was what the Roelkes found was in the best interests of the special needs dogs they rescued. A rescued dog is a commitment to ensure that animal survives the hardships they've endured, has superior nutrition to heal, gets the training to be an adoptable pet, and the veterinary care to be healthy; all are important foundations for their higher quality of life. Farming those dogs out to foster

families that aren't equipped to handle these special needs dogs is not realistic and not in the dogs' best interests.

Q: Why not just become a rescue that can take the kind of Shibas that would work with a foster network rescue model?

A: On paper, it sounds easy to say that a rescue would find foster families for dogs it can rehome. But it's never simple. For example, it's a lot harder decision when you know that you might be able to heal a dog's skin condition with medicated baths, but until the dog is vetted, you wouldn't know if there is an underlying disease causing the skin condition or other conditions caused by neglect. Do you take the dog or do you let it be euthanized? Too many dogs with hidden but serious illnesses would end up living with the Roelkes, which is exactly what moving to a foster network rescue model was supposed to avoid.

Q: Who should we contact once NW Shibas4Life Rescue stops taking Shibas?

A: We suggest you contact two organizations: SIRRA (Shiba Rescue Resource of America) and Shiba Prom.

SIRRA (<http://sirra.Shibas.org/>) is a valuable resource for rescues across the U.S. The organization facilitates coordinating Shiba rescue resources, direction of fundraising, and fund distribution under qualified expenses. SIRRA is a board compiled of breeders, rescuers, and pet lovers under National Shiba Club of America. It is also supported by Shibaholics.

Shiba Prom (<http://www.Shibaprom.org/>) is a group of Shiba owners and pet lovers who support Shiba rescue and provide fundraising leadership. The organization helps Shiba rescues raise funds through fundraising and grant opportunities.

Q: What will happen if a former adoption from NW Shibas4Life Rescue needs to be rehomed?

A: We have tried to prepare our homes for a lifetime commitment. However, if that should happen, we would expect the home to continue to provide the Shiba a safe, nurturing environment, while we assist with finding the right new home.

Q: What will happen to the NW Shibas4Life Rescue facilities on the Roelke's property?

A: The outbuilding for foster housing was paid for with private funding. It will continue to be used for the dogs waiting to be adopted: Chloe, Akira, Nikko, Addy, and Prancer. Afterward, the Roelke's may find a use for it.

The play yard is also the Roelke's property. It will continue to be used by their Shibas: Fuji and Jewel; and the sanctuary dogs they have adopted: Diablo, Oso, Mama, and Angel; and the Shibas waiting for their perfect forever homes.

Q: Will overstock of supplies be sold or given away?

A: We have used daily supplies on an ongoing basis to avoid their expiration. Some excess supplies such as crates, xpens, and baby gates may be sold at liquidation prices to support the remaining adoptable dogs. Other supplies such as blankets, bowls, and grooming equipment will be donated to another rescue. Very limited medical supplies will be donated to another rescue that rehabilitates. If you are interested in supplies, send an email to: Shibas4life@gmail.com

Q: Why no final Annual Picnic?

A: The Annual Picnic is a lot of work and a lot of resources! The NW Shibas4Life Board of Directors decided to put that time and money to better use to benefit the dogs waiting to be adopted.

Q: Can I bring my Shiba by to run in the Roelke dog park?

A: Do you know the Roelkes? If you're friends, contact them. They love seeing friends and Shibas!