

Deaf Dogs Rock – Narrative Mission Statement

(last updated 12/15/2013)

Deaf Dogs Rock, Inc is a non-profit corporation formed in 2012 in the state of Virginia. Deaf Dogs Rock, Inc. also does business as Deaf Dogs Rock.

The mission of Deaf Dogs Rock is to promote the care and well being of deaf dogs. This charitable and educational purpose is done through the education of the public regarding the adoption, care, and training of deaf dogs, and through financial support of the shelter, medical, and transportation needs of deaf dogs. Additionally, Deaf Dogs Rock is a national resource for information serving perspective and current deaf dog owners, and the shelters and rescues that have deaf dogs available for adoption.

To further these purposes Deaf Dogs Rock undertakes activities including education, networking of available deaf dogs, community building, and financial support for the needs of deaf dogs. All of the following activities are currently underway and will continue for the foreseeable future. At this time these activities are done year round by members of the board of directors and other organization volunteers.

1. Educational Activities.

Deaf Dogs Rock has and will continue to fill a substantial void in regards to information available for care and training of deaf dogs. Due to this lack of information and persistent stereotypes, the welfare of deaf dogs was often put in jeopardy. Shelters are more likely to euthanize a deaf dog, adopting families often pass over consideration of a deaf dog, and many breed organizations encourage culling of all deaf puppies. Without information resources for the training of deaf dogs, owners were more likely to give up on a deaf dog and bring it to a shelter. A December 2013 comment from a Deaf Dogs Rock follower sums this up nicely: “This is our new addition to our family, Cesar. He is a 9 week old white pit, and he is deaf. We didn't know when we adopted him that he was deaf. After realizing he was I got on the web and came across your website, Deaf Dogs Rock. With the tips and advice I can say in just a few short days Cesar has already learn some hand signals. These dogs don't hear you say you love them, they FEEL it!!!! I just want to say THANK YOU for being there for our family!!!!”

Our website DeafDogsRock.com has multiple sections dedicated to education. Creation and maintenance of these resources constitutes a major portion of the work done by Deaf Dogs Rock. These web resources are available 24/7. Educational sections include:

- You've decided to adopt a deaf dog, now what?
- Training tips and videos
- Why are dogs deaf? (background information on deafness in canines)
- Canine Good Citizen, Service Dog, and Therapy Dog Wall of Fame (sharing of positive success stories)
- Happy Tails (sharing of stories of successful deaf dog adoptions)

- Products We Love (recommendations for products that are specifically beneficial to deaf dogs and their owners. Deaf Dogs Rock receives no financial gain from these endorsements.)

While the primary consumers of the educational materials mentioned above are individual members of the public, there is also significant interaction and benefit to rescues and shelters that find themselves with a deaf dog in their care. With the educational materials we have created shelters are better able to discuss the adoption of a deaf dog with perspective families and help them set aside their concerns. As an example of this, a few months ago Animal Control and Care Team of Philadelphia (city animal control and shelter) put up a listing for a deaf dog that was in their care – in this listing they noted “If you don’t believe that deaf dogs rock, click here” and linked to our site.

The education activities of Deaf Dogs Rock will continue to be a primary focus, furthering our purpose by improving and developing the capabilities of individuals to provide a home and ensure care for deaf dogs.

2. Networking of Available Deaf Dogs – Animal Welfare and Prevention of Cruelty

Deaf Dogs Rock has become a national resource for the networking of deaf dogs that are in need of a home. Currently there are between 100 and 200 deaf dogs listed on our site. Our national exposure has been such that shelters all over the country now reach out to us for help when they take in a deaf dog. Our website is currently averaging 500 unique visitors per day, leading to our involvement in the adoption of an average of one dog per day. This activity has significantly contributed to our purpose of addressing the welfare of deaf dogs around the country. Through the sharing of our posts and biographies of these dogs their chances of finding an adoptive owner are increased dramatically.

This success has been noted and furthered by attention in national publications like Dog Fancy Magazine and the USA Today 2013 Pet Guide (see attached), and coverage from such sources as ABC News, Dog Talk Radio, PetMD, Animal Fair, and others. (A more comprehensive list of coverage can be found at deafdogsrock.com/in-the-news)

As a daily activity of the involved board members the upkeep of our networking sections of the site constitute roughly one-third of time spent of Deaf Dogs Rock activities.

3. Community Building - Education

Deaf Dogs Rock has leveraged Facebook successfully to develop an open forum for deaf dog owners and advocates to come together. As of December 2013 there were over 25,000 followers of the page with measured reach of many posts reaching 300,000 people. The question and answer format of posting through social media sites greatly improves the capabilities of people around the country with regard to caring for deaf dogs. It is not uncommon for a question asked by a follower to generate more than 100 responses from others in the community.

The administration of such an open discussion forum environment will remain a fundamental activity of Deaf Dogs Rock, currently consuming one to two hours of daily activity.

4. Support of Deaf Dog Expenses – Charitable Activities

To further its purposes as a charitable organization, Deaf Dogs Rock is involved in providing financial support for the welfare of deaf dogs in a variety of ways that can be grouped in to three broad categories:

- Shelter. Frequently there are needs such as short term boarding while a deaf dog is waiting for adoption or for crates, blankets, and other shelter expenses to help facilitate the adoption of a deaf dog. As a recent example of this financial support, Deaf Dogs Rock paid the boarding expenses of a deaf dog for two weeks while it was awaiting placement in a long term foster home.
- Transport. A current problem for deaf dogs in a shelter is that an individual may be interested in adopting, but they are geographically more than a couple hundred miles from the shelter. To help facilitate this adoption Deaf Dogs Rock has paid the expenses incurred with transporting the dog to the new owner. A very recent example had a group of four individuals each driving a leg to transport a deaf dog on the euthanasia list at a shelter in Tennessee to a permanent home with a family in Maryland.
- Medical Costs – Spay/Neuter. Key to improving the welfare of deaf dogs (and rescue dogs in general) is that all be neutered before being placed in a home. Deaf Dogs Rock will not list any dog for adoption that is intact. So that this is not a barrier for low funded shelters and rescues, Deaf Dogs Rock has on many occasions paid for the needed spay/neuter surgery. Other types of medical procedures may also be needed to help facilitate adoption. As an example – a local shelter took in a deaf dog with a badly split tail. The dog was in a great deal of pain and his odds of being adopted while needing a \$400 surgery were very slim. Deaf Dogs Rock promoted his cause on our site, and the call was answered by a group of students in an ASL class at the Watkinson School in Hartford, CT. They donated the proceeds of a recent fundraiser to pay for this dogs needed surgery. This “happy tail” ended wonderfully with the dog Dozer finding a forever home with a family in Washington State.

Itemized financial contributions made by Deaf Dogs Rock can be found in the budget attachments. Broad public support of these types of financial contributions has been demonstrated by the fact that a substantial portion of the financial support for Deaf Dogs Rock is in the form of contributions from the general public.

