

Dog rescued on Florida highway called the 'miracle' greyhound, brings local Ohio community together to support a non-profit organization started in his honor

By Mandy Boggs

In the early morning of May 9th, 2012 a young greyhound fell from his transporters vehicle on Interstate I-75 near Gainesville, Florida. Terrified, injured, and still wearing his racing muzzle, he was now racing for his life. He survived over thirteen hours loose on the freeway before being rescued. He was in shock with injuries to over 80% of his body. The treating veterinary hospital did not expect him to survive the night, but they were not willing to give up on him. Despite his injuries and condition, he remained sweet and affectionate just looking for kisses while 80% of his body was covered in bandages. Naturally, the staff quickly started calling him, "Freeway". Freeway had four major surgeries and around the clock treatment for over five weeks. His immediate medical bills quickly soared well over the \$8,000.00 mark. Gold Coast Greyhound Association (GCGA) started a fund and was overwhelmed with donations coming from across the country and around the world. Over twelve thousand dollars were raised towards his medical expenses and care. Freeway's story went viral on the internet, Facebook and various news stations, causing him to become quite the celebrity. Shortly after leaving the veterinary hospital, he was adopted by local residents, Diana and Tom DiLoreto of Garrettsville, Ohio, who reside in Florida during the winter months. Diana and Tom decided to create Freeway's Greyt Escape Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in Freeway's honor to help other racing greyhounds who need medical care. Freeway's Greyt Escape Inc. (FGE) provides the necessary funding to allow immediate emergency medical treatment to injured racing greyhounds who have been surrendered to greyhound rescue organizations. The alliance between FGE and other non-profit greyhound rescue groups continues to help injured racing greyhounds receive the care they need in order to have a chance at a new life. So far they have helped fund the surgeries and medical care for two lucky greyhounds, Emerson and Kathy. They have fully recovered, been adopted, and are already enjoying their new forever homes. They have the option to race around their new yard but prefer napping on the couch instead! Freeway's Greyt Escape Inc. relies on the generosity of individual donations, grants, bequeaths, and special events for fundraising. So far they have hosted three fundraising events within the local community.

October 2nd, 2014 FGE held their Retired Handbags for Retired Greyhounds event hosted by the Candlelight Winery in Garrettsville, Ohio. Thirty women attended the event enjoying wonderful wines and delicious chocolate while hoping for their chance at a bargain on over thirty four donated designer handbags being auctioned off. Auctioneer, Leona Pliszka, volunteered her time in making this event a great success. Thanks to many more sponsors, the Handbag Auction

raised over \$1,500, enough to save at least one greyhound, and will be hosted again next spring. FGE has already started collecting handbags for next year's event.

October 4th, 2014 FGE hosted their First Annual Freeway's Fairway Challenge Golf Scramble at Sugar Bush Golf Club in Garrettsville, Ohio. Despite the weather being a very cold and rainy thirty-eight degrees, the event was a success and everyone had a great time golfing and enjoy the day. With a 50-50 raffle, breakfast and lunch, and an array of contests, such as, Hole in One, Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin, Putting Contest, the event was enjoyable and successful in raising funds for the organization. Pete Kepich of Kepich Ford sponsored the Hole in One contest with the chance at winning a two year lease on a Ford Mustang, along with a second chance at winning a trip for two to Treetops Resort in Michigan. Unfortunately, there were no lucky Hole in One winner's this year but everyone had a great time trying! Dave & Becky Harrington generously sponsored the beverage cart which was enjoyed both on and off the course. A variety of local businesses supported the event, such as, Maggie's Donuts, South Wood Apartments, Harrington Square, Panera Bread of Warren, Hermann Pickle Farms Inc., MB Realty Group, Ellerhorst & Russell Insurance Agency, Dairy Queen, Charles Chevrolet-Oldsmobile Inc., Rick Patrick's Auto Service & Sales, Middlefield Bank, Dick's Sporting Goods of Aurora, Cal's Restaurant, and many others who made personal donations or volunteered their time. Middlefield's Mayor, Ben Garlich, is a big supporter of Freeway's Greyt Escape and enjoyed his time golfing at this year's event. Next year's 2nd Annual Golf Scramble is set for August 22nd, 2015.

A fundraising yard sale took place over this past weekend in Garrettsville from Thursday October 9th thru Saturday October 11th. With great support from the surrounding communities and many wonderful donated items, the yard sale was a huge success!

These three events raised enough money to save at least three greyhounds in need of medical care! For more information on Freeway's Greyt Escape Inc. or for links to the news articles on Freeway, you can visit their website at www.FreewaysGreytEscape.com and their Facebook Page, facebook.com/freewaysgreyscaleinc . Any donations to Freeways Greyt Escape Inc. makes you an honorary member of the Freeway Fan Club and all proceeds go directly to helping adoptable racing greyhounds.