



DISABLED DOGS



by Meish Goldish

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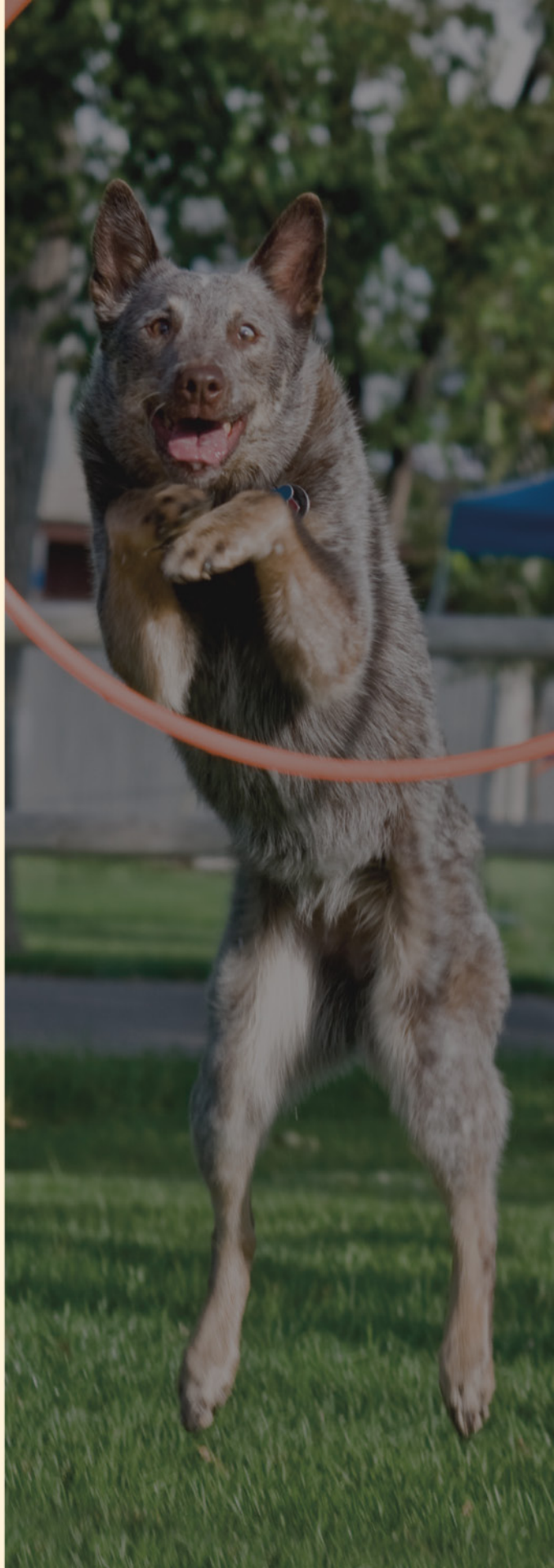
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Keeping Faith

In 2002, when a puppy with golden fur was born, her owner noticed something unusual. The tiny puppy, named Faith, was missing one of her front legs. Her other front leg was badly bent, leaving her unable to walk. Reuben Stringfellow, a friend of the dog's owner, felt that he could give Faith the extra care that a dog without a leg would need and brought Faith home. Reuben worried, though, that the little puppy might never walk on her own.



Faith's bent leg had to be removed to prevent further health problems.

As Faith grew older, the Stringfellow family tried to teach her to walk on her two back legs. Yet Faith would always fall down. All that changed, however, the day that Faith discovered her favorite food—peanut butter. To urge Faith to walk, the family placed peanut butter on a spoon and called out her name. Instantly, she began to hop toward the treat, bouncing along on two legs like a kangaroo!



Dogs may be born with a disability or they may become disabled after a serious illness or injury.

Faith walking with Reuben's mother, Jude Stringfellow

Inspiring Others

With practice, Faith became skilled at walking and running on two legs. She quickly proved to the Stringfellows that she wouldn't let her **disability** hold her back. Jude Stringfellow, Reuben's mother, wanted to share Faith's inspiring story with others. So she took Faith to visit hospitals and nursing homes, where she brought joy and hope to people with disabilities.

Faith and Caity Stringfellow, Jude's daughter



Over time, Faith developed stronger muscles in her hind legs and hips to help her walk on two legs.

Jude also took Faith to visit several U.S. **military bases** around the country. During her visits, Faith inspired American soldiers leaving for or returning from war. “She shows what can be achieved against great odds,” said Jude. Faith was even made an **honorary sergeant** in the U.S. Army for helping lift the spirits of disabled war **veterans**.

Faith visits two U.S. Army soldiers.



Leading the Way

Dogs that have disabilities, such as Faith, have an incredible ability to **adapt** to life. Tricia and Stan Simpson learned this after they **adopted** Echo, a blind Australian shepherd. At first, they worried that their new dog might have trouble getting up and down the stairs. So Tricia led Echo to a steep staircase to help him get used to it. He carefully felt the edges of the first three steps with his paws as he slowly climbed each one. Minutes later, Echo was racing up and down the entire staircase on his own!



Despite being born blind, Echo has learned how to jump through hoops.

Echo also learned how to locate things in the Simpsons' home by using his senses. He used his nose to sniff out food treats each morning. Using his sense of hearing, he played hide-and-seek with the family's daughters. Echo showed the Simpsons that a blind dog can still be an active and playful pet.



Blind dogs can **memorize** where objects are in their homes. This helps them find things, such as their food bowl, and move around without falling down stairs or bumping into furniture.

Echo with the Simpson daughters, Piper and Hunter

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