

Animal shelter

Second Chance gives pets with needs new 'leash' on life

By KAREN A. DAVIS

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — It's a real dog's life for Annabella at her new home on Melinda Martin's farm in Aromas.

But the Australian shepherd mix that arrived at the Watsonville Animal Shelter six months ago might never have gotten to enjoy the dog days of summer without Second Chance. The fund provides a new 'leash' on life to pets with medical needs that would otherwise be considered unadoptable and be euthanized.

When she was left at the shelter, Annabella was unable to move or bend her stiff left hind leg. It had been broken, but had not healed correctly.

"A couple of people looked at her, but they didn't want to adopt her because of the leg," said Martin, shel-

ter director.

The dog was reserved and spent most days lying down, which was unusual, Martin said. Australian shepherds are normally very energetic. The Second Chance fund was in place and contained a small balance, but employees were waiting for the right animal on which to use it.

"We were looking for a poster child and Annabella became it," said Martin. "At a lot of shelters, she would have been euthanized. But we had the space and the funds — and she was a good candidate. So we took her leg, rather than taking her life."

The surgery was performed at a discounted rate of about \$400 by an area veterinarian. Annabella stayed with Martin afterward.

"She went home to recover at my house and she hasn't come back,"

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MELINDA MARTIN, DIRECTOR,
WATSONVILLE ANIMAL SHELTER

Martin said. "She was a different dog after the surgery. Within a month, she was running around and her personality started pouring out. I knew. ... I was going to adopt her."

Now, three companion animals have been saved by the fund. Tacoma, a German Shepherd, is awaiting knee surgery. But the fund stands at less than \$100.

"If we can save a life, we want to do that," Martin said. "But most shelters don't have a budget for big procedures like this. So you have to turn to the public."

When donating to the shelter, individuals can specify whether the money goes to the Second Chance fund, the Spay and Neuter fund, the Kitten fund, the Foster fund for animals in foster care or the general fund.

■ *The shelter is open Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. For information, call 728-6078.*

■ *The Friends of the Watsonville Animal Shelter Benefit Shop, 1052 E. Lake St., is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

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Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Annabella, a three-legged Australian shepherd mix, gets some attention from her owner, Watsonville Animal Shelter director Melinda Martin, at the shelter's benefit store.