

25-YEAR-OLD ANIMAL RESCUE GROUP FEARS FOR ITS FUTURE

Award-winning Orange County Dog Rescue Struggling Amid Economic Fallout

NEWPORT BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Newport Beach, CA.... As individuals face today's financial challenges, all too often canine family members pay the

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Over the years, so many people have told me, 'If I ever win the lottery, I want to start an animal rescue'. They don't need to wait for that 'someday'—they can help to save our dogs today.”

Maria Dales, Director

price. Local animal rescue organization, German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County, is feeling the crunch of unprecedented requests for support, while adoption rates have fallen to a 10-year low. Skyrocketing vet care and pet food prices, along with a shortage of affordable housing options, has forced many pet owners to make heart wrenching decisions to give up their pets.

Local animal shelters from Los Angeles to San Diego Counties are bursting with unwanted pets, with large dogs being the slowest to find homes and the quickest to be euthanized. Shelter overcrowding has led many local

shelters, including the Orange County Animal Care Center, Riverside County Animal Shelter and San Bernardino Animal Shelter, to refuse to take in stray and unwanted dogs, telling owners to “contact a rescue group” as an alternative. Pet owners, feeling helpless, often have no options without rescue intervention. Many simply turn their animals loose, hoping for the best, while Animal Control authorities ignore the dangers that this trend poses to communities.

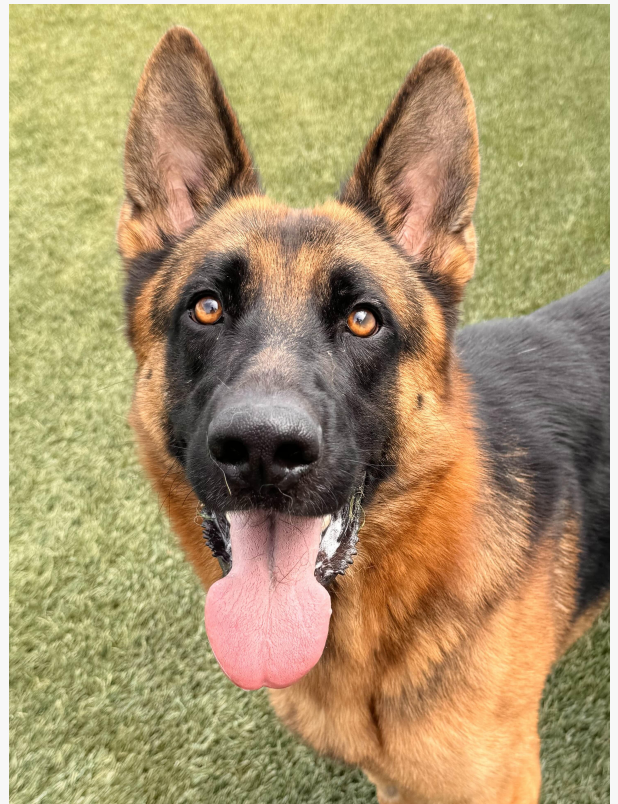
Recently, both CNN and NBC news spotlighted this “perfect storm” scenario playing out across the country:

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/07/27/economy/us-pet-surrenders-shelters-economy>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1130104898981374&set=a.642068524451683>

Amid these harsh of times, German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County is facing headwinds that they fear could curtail their ability to continue their lifesaving work. Named “Best Of” Orange by the LA TIMES in 2022 and 2023, the rescue attempts to fill a gaping chasm between safety and peril for pets, and between relief and despair for struggling pet owners.

"Our phone rings all day, every day, with calls from pet owners desperate to find safe haven for a dog that they can no longer keep," says Executive Director and Founder, Maria Dales. "The sad stories are overwhelming, with most people truly just unable to care for their dogs any longer. Many are people who have lost their jobs, lost their homes, have moved in with family, or are living in cars. Others call sobbing that they can't afford the cost of veterinary treatment for a dog that they love. In years past, dogs were frequently surrendered due to "no time for", but over the past two years, the predominant reason has been a lack of financial means. We don't just help dogs—we help people with their dog-related emergencies. It's so difficult to tell people that we can't help them because we know we are their last and only hope."



Jake is one of 85 German Shepherds looking for a home

Dales shares that the frequency of calls has quadrupled during the past year, while adoptions have dropped off significantly. "We have beautiful, young, healthy dogs looking for new families, but the number of people willing to take on the responsibility of a large dog's care is dramatically lower than it has been in prior years. We are getting people surrendering litters of purebred puppies to us because they can't afford to care for them properly, or they find the care too burdensome."

Adding to the gravity of the situation, donations to fund the rescue have dropped this year, challenging the rescue's abilities to continue. Dales fears that without a significant influx of new donations or "angel donors", the group may not survive current market conditions. "We are helpless to assist without incoming donations. Hard costs, such as liability insurance, water and utilities, and vehicle insurance and gas, are a heavy load to carry month after month. Vet care and prescription medication costs have gone up 30%, while donations have fallen by this same amount, leaving us with a huge gap between what we have and what we need. We go through a pallet of dry dog food every three weeks, so that cost alone is daunting."

She continues that donations of every size are desperately needed. "You might say that right now, we need someone to 'rescue our rescue'. We have always acted as a small but mighty life raft, that has faithfully carried thousands of cast-off German Shepherds to safety. Now, we need a temporary tow so we can make it through these tough times. Without an injection of funds, our future is very precarious." Currently, German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County is housing 85 shepherds that need homes.

Over 25 years, volunteer-driven German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County has rescued, rehabilitated and rehomed more than 10,000 dogs, historically taking on some of the saddest hardship cases. Some of these include a German Shepherd named "Courage" that was intentionally starved by its owners; a German Shepherd named "Justice" who was the victim of a battery-acid attack; and earlier this year, a German Shepherd named "Argon", who was abandoned at the base of Malibu Canyon with his jaw zip-tied closed so he could neither eat nor drink. Among the group's currently housed orphans are three German Shepherd dogs that lived in a van for two years with a mentally ill woman who led Los Angeles police on a chase before being shot by officers. These three dogs need sponsors to assist with their ongoing care needs.

German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County is a 501c3 organization (EIN 20-3455479) that receives no public or municipal funding. The organization relies entirely on donations to fund their efforts. They have earned highest rated Platinum Status by Candid ™ and Four Stars by Charity Navigator ™ assessment organizations for transparency in accounting.

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