

# To The Rescue with MAGDRL

## By Chantel Johnson

The Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League, Incorporated, covers the areas of lower New York, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, DC, Maryland, and portions of Virginia and West Virginia. MAGDRL is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) group of state chapter leaders and volunteers who have, since its foundation in 1979, rescued abused, abandoned, lost, and unwanted Great Danes. The organization is a DC corporation and has a charitable tax-exemption under 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. MAGDRL spays and neuters, as well as provides the medical treatment necessary to return the rescued Danes to good health. They also provide training and socialization to ensure their adaptability to find new homes. MAGDRL's goal is to place rescued Danes with people who will provide secure, loving, and healthy forever homes. Like all humane groups, MAGDRL is in the unique position of helping both humans and pets, especially Great Danes and mixed Dane dogs, and the people who have or want the companionship of the breed.

MAGDRL has greatly expanded, especially since 2000. As a streamlined non-profit, their volunteers may participate in a number of roles including fostering, doing home checks, reference checks, transporting dogs within MAGDRL's states, 'Meet & Greet' events, public relations, fundraising, and education. President Mary Fran Cini and an elected Board of Directors, as well as everyone involved, are all dedicated volunteers helping gentle giants find new homes. Many of MAGDRL's volunteers are owned by more than one Dane themselves.

MAGDRL helps people to:

- Determine the right breed of dog for their lifestyle
- Find healthy and companionable Danes that fit their circumstances
- Find loving replacement homes for Danes they can no longer keep
- Become knowledgeable about the care and training of their Great Danes
- Resolve their Danes physical/behavioral problem
- Overcome the grief at the loss of their loved pet
- Stretch their tax dollar by assuming the Dane burden from public shelters

MAGDRL helps Danes:

- By providing for the rescue and care of those who have been abandoned, neglected, and/or abused by their previous owners
- We spay/neuter and provide medical treatment as necessary to return the Dane back to good health
- We supply training/socialization to ensure their adaptability to new, good homes
- We work to place rescue Danes to people who provide secure, loving, and healthy homes

Laurie Zoock is MAGDRL's volunteer Public Relations Chairperson. She is responsible for national public relations and for the PR Team Leads in each chapter who work with the news media and social media in publicizing MAGDRL for events, Meet & Greets, and stories of interest. They are a group of Great Dane lovers who assist the Danes that come from a variety of circumstances and need to find new homes. Many shelters also contact MAGDRL on the occasion a Great Dane turns up needing rescue.

Great Danes in need of MAGDRL's assistance come from various scenarios: the dog grew "too big," the owner can't afford to feed or vet the dog, the owner is moving and can't take dog, the owner is a service member and is being deployed overseas, the owner didn't train the dog so it's uncontrollable, the owner doesn't have time for the dog, the owner may not have realized the dog was deaf, the dog got pregnant and they can't afford the care, the owners are having a baby, getting divorced, owner died, allergic to dog, dog is aggressive with people or other pets, the dog was lost and un-trackable, dog unwanted and abandoned, dumped in a shelter etc. Laurie said, "Prospective owners of any breed need to research the breed and talk with a veterinarian. Larger dogs cost more money in terms of food, medical expenses, training, beds, and toys. Owning a Great Dane isn't cheap, but we love our Danes. Be prepared and do "due diligence" to make sure the breed you select fits your lifestyle as well as your pocketbook! Our foster homes work with a dog when it comes to basic training and are prepared for special needs dogs. We get an assortment of everything in rescue. White Danes which are blind and/or deaf due to bad breeding by disreputable breeders. Disreputable and uneducated breeders may breed colors that cause genetic defects and medical issues. We see Danes of all colors."

Sometimes a rescued Dane is not able to be permanently placed in a new home. Laurie said, "This can happen with older Great Danes that come into rescue. The average lifespan is 8 to 10 years, but some Danes have lived up to 14 years. Dogs, like people, can be

traumatized and feel grief when they lose their home. Some may have severe medical issues, and may be placed into a permanent foster home which is prepared to care for the Dane under these circumstances. Sometimes severely ill dogs may pass away". Laurie continued, "MAGDRL's most urgent need is foster homes. We always need foster homes, I think in part, because we have many foster failures that end up adopting. We also appreciate donations, and we can always use more volunteers. We appreciate any veterinarians that may assist our group at a discounted rate."

"Great Danes ARE the real-life Scooby Doo's of the canine world", said Laurie. "Great Danes need lots of love and attention and have NO concept of their size. They can be regal one moment and goofy the next! They can do the 'zoomies' for five minutes and then pass out on the couch for hours. They will follow you everywhere and should not be left unattended outside, and in most circumstances a six foot fence is required. Danes seem to think they are people. Be prepared and educated before adopting, and be in a good financial position to afford a Dane. Danes require a high quality food and regular veterinary care; preferably with a veterinarian knowledgeable about the breed. Danes are dogs that need a lot of attention and have the nickname 'Velcro dogs'. Our Chapter Coordinators can help prospective Dane 'parents' with the adoption process and discuss the requirements for adopting. Our website, [www.magdrl.org](http://www.magdrl.org), gives lots of great information to potential adopters on a wide variety of topics. Our group is comprised of all volunteers and 100% of donations goes to help our Danes. Our 300+ volunteers are a very dedicated group. I think that we not only help the dogs, but the new friendships developed between our volunteers truly ties us together."

To learn more about the number of Great Danes rescued by MAGDRL visit:

<http://www.magdrl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2015-Annual-Report.pdf>

Contact information is by state- listed here: <http://www.magdrl.org/area-coordinators/>

FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/MAGDRL/>

## **MAGDRL 'Foster Failure' & Success Story 1**

### **Erin Jordan, Director of Legislation Volunteer, MAGDRL**

My husband and I lost our Dane to cancer and our home felt very empty. We decided to adopt a Great Dane instead of get a puppy from a breeder. So I started the adoption process with MAGDRL. We decided we wanted to try fostering. We got our first foster, Hyperion and he was very underweight when he came to our house. He looked very similar to our previous Dane and even had the same exact birthday. Neither one of us wanted to foster fail with our foster dog, but we fell in love with him and he is still with us almost 3 years later and he is 9 years old.

Our 2nd foster came to us only a week after we got Hyperion. Sam is not the typical Great Dane. He's fearful of children and he doesn't get along with other dogs. He is super sweet with adults. We knew he wasn't going to fit into just anyone's home. It wasn't hard to see that Sam was staying with us forever. It took months for us to be able to leave the boys without separating them. They now sleep together and lay on top of each other like there were never any issues between them. After a long time we decided to try fostering a third Dane. We figured no more males since there was enough testosterone in our house. For several months we fostered female

Danes. Zellie was one of our fosters who was adopted out, but came back because the Dane in her new home didn't like her at all. Her adoptive family gave it all they could, but it just didn't work. She is deaf and partial blind and had a rough start in life. She did wonderfully in our home and we could not let her get bounced around anymore.



## MAGDRL 'Piece of My Heart' & Success Story 2 Pat Ali, MAGDRL Director Fundraising and Grants

I have had over 20+ Danes since my first girl Rosie in the 1990's, and each one has taken a piece of my heart. Every Great Dane that passed through my doors, including Danes that I had the privilege of fostering, have a special story that make them so memorable.

My first Great Dane came to me in the late 90's, she had been dropped off at a veterinarian's office to be euthanized at 3 months old, because they could not afford her. A good friend, who was a Dane owner, that knew I wanted a Dane so much, called me to see if I was interested. My first answer was no because of my busy schedule, however, literally 5 minutes later I changed my mind and said absolutely. Rosie was the perfect dog, she loved everyone she met and only wanted everyone to love her. Rosie would go everywhere with me, including Trick or Treating every Halloween.

Unfortunately, she left me at the age of 6 because of cancer and it broke my heart. Rosie was my first love of the breed and she spoiled me for any other breed.

After Rosie's passing, I knew there was a lot of work to do in order to help this breed and then began volunteering with MAGDRL.

Every breed needs help, but Great Danes, because of their size and medical issues are often surrendered due to the costs involved in helping them.

As I mentioned in the beginning each one has taken a piece of my heart, but in reality, each one has made my heart larger with the love they gave to me.

Pat Ali

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MAGDRL NJ Adoption Coordinator

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## MAGDRL 'Love at First Sight' & Success Story 3 Mary Fran Cini MAGDRL President

I was about to become an empty nester, and my husband traveled for work and would be away sometimes for several weeks. With my children going away to college, I knew I would not want to be alone in the house when he was away. I was working full time so a puppy was not a good idea, so I turned to Rescue. We had a Great Dane while my children were growing up and I knew that was what I wanted.

I found Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League (MAGDRL) on line and gave the local coordinator a call and submitted an application. It took one month for my application to be processed and to be approved to adopt. While waiting to adopt, the Danes that I thought I wanted to meet all got adopted, it was so disappointing. It was suggested that I take a look at a male mantle merle Dane in Delaware. His picture was not very flattering but my husband and I thought he was worth a look, so we took the two-hour drive to DE to meet 'Remington'. We walked into the foster Mom's house and saw Remington thru the glass sliding doors to the yard. It was love at first sight. He was everything we wanted and more.

On the drive home we stopped for gas and the attendant asked us if we had a cow in the back of the car. Remington was a very tall Dane with a large head. He was beautiful and a big goof. Because I loved him so much, I wanted to give back and started to volunteer for MAGDRL. Remington was the perfect MAGDRL ambassador. We did events and raised public awareness about Great Danes and pet ownership. And within a couple of months we had our first foster Danes. That was 15 years ago and about 100 foster dogs have come and go since then. Remington was our first rescue, but we also later adopted Rocco, an older fawn male and Hutch, a blue male. Each one is special in their own way and have brought us so much happiness and love. I am now the NJ Chapter Coordinator and the President of MAGDRL and Great Dane Rescue is my passion. And it all goes back to Remington, my heart dog, who started it all for me.

