

Community angels create Christmas miracle involving abandoned dog ...

Lost lab 'Home for the Holidays' and safe at Orphans of the Storm

By CHRIS JIRAK O'DONNELL, Humane Police Officer For The Leader Times

Dec 28, 2022

The dog was spotted on the side of a remote dirt road in Plumcreek Township Nov. 17.

He was terrified and bolted when anyone came near.

Once the story was released it was learned that the dog's name was Cooper, a 3-year-old Chocolate Lab.

Many wanted to help and prayed for his safe rescue.

Orphans of the Storm (OOTS) volunteers Lori Frantz, Jackie Zubik, Tracy Horrell and Della Kacmar; and board members Tammy Rusnica, Melissa Schaeffer, and Liz White (and her dog Jett) aided in the effort.

Resident Jerry McClafferty checked the trap often. His cat, Jerry, closely inspected the contents and found himself trapped twice.

Hunters and residents were on the lookout for Cooper. Elderton VFD Chief Keppel had a volunteer crew on standby to help transport the dog, once caught.

Cooper appeared nightly on the trail cam, patrolling the spot where he had been left. Hopes were high when he was seen within feet of the trap Nov. 28. But then, he disappeared. After weeks of no sightings it was assumed Cooper had not survived the frigid winter weather. But almost a month later, on Thursday, December 22, 2022, Joan Schall called to say Cooper was outside her house in the township.

After so much time, it would be a miracle if he had survived. And it wasn't like Cooper to allow people near.

Despite doubts, a trail cam set was up and left. Within the hour photos confirmed it was Cooper.

The dog remained at the house all day and throughout the night. For some reason he trusted Joan and liked playing with Snowball, the Schall's little white poodle.

On Friday, Cooper followed Snowball into the house. Cooper's back was covered with ice from the brutally cold weather.

Joan called and said, "I have your miracle dog."

Cooper arrived at OOTS on Christmas Eve. He was welcomed by staff and volunteers as he wagged his tail, offered his paw, and enjoyed ear rubs.

Thanks to the community angels who helped him, prayers were answered, and Cooper will soon be ready for adoption and a new life where he will be cherished and loved.

To learn more about Armstrong County's Humane Animal Allies that supports our two humane police officers visit www.humaneanimalallies.org; or Orphans of the Storm, the no-kill animal shelter at www.orphansofthestorm-pa.org.