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'Grrreat' fun with GRRoW *Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin held a fund raising golf outing Aug. 16*

Mixing business with pleasure, the Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin (GRRoW) held its first annual golf outing fund raiser Aug. 16 at West Bend Lakes Golf Club.

Having raised approximately \$2,000, volunteer Mary Schmittinger deemed the event profitable.

"We're a small organization," Schmittinger said. "For us it's a success."

The three-year-old organization, comprised entirely of volunteers, rescues golden retrievers that have been surrendered or found at large.

"We take the dogs in and find homes," said Mary's husband, Mike(sic)* Schmittinger, adding that it is an alternative to taking them to a humane society.

The program includes fostering the dogs and evaluating them.

"They assess the dogs at the foster home," Mary said.

Some dogs require veterinary care, with last year's vet bills for the organization totaling \$93,000.

Veterinarian Dr. Sue Fluhr stated that each breed has specific hereditary medical problems. The most common in golden retrievers is hip dysplasia and allergies.

She added that it is the responsibility of breeders to screen for these hereditary problems.

"You want to breed out the bad things," Fluhr said.

Neutering or spaying a dog can be valuable to the enhancement of the breed, according to Fluhr.

"You save a million dogs when you spay or neuter," Fluhr said, adding that the genetic defects will breed out.

As for dogs rescued through the organization, she believes finding appropriate homes is the answer.

Dallas, a golden retriever rescued by GRRoW, was found in the streets of Chicago, needing treatment for various ailments.

His foster family, Debbie Lukasik, adopted him.

"That happens quite a bit," Fluhr said. "When someone special grabs your heart, you know."

If the foster family does not adopt the dog, home visits are arranged with prospective owners to determine if the dog appropriate for the family.

When a match has been made, the dog is then placed in its "forever home," Mary said.

According to Mike(sic)*, the organization has been taking in approximately one dog a day this year.

Another facet of GRRoW is its ability to supply search and rescue departments with appropriate dogs.

Volunteer Jody Wallace explained that the first GRRoW dog entered into the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation training program shortly after Sept. 11, 2001.

"The basic comparison for the type of dog needed is a kid with hyper activity," Wallace said.

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*Note - correct name is Tom Schmittinger.