



# THE THULANI TIMES



## Spreading the Love of Thulani

WRITTEN BY GOLI M.



Smokey Bear, my third Thulani dog, is an unapologetic ham. He never passes up an opportunity to get someone to pet him. And if they stop, he pets them back. I can't imagine how this absolute social butterfly found himself homeless and scared, at the ripe age of 10 in the Central Valley farming town of Delano. He had no chip, no tags, wasn't neutered, and no one came looking for him. His luck changed when Thulani stepped up for him. Smokey spent a month at Thulani central breaking out of every kennel they put him in,

with the sole purpose of finding someone to pet him. See, I wasn't exaggerating. I had a crush on Smokey from his Thulani Facebook posts, so I offered to foster him. My other three old "bears" approved, and the rest is history.

But this story isn't exactly about Smokey. It's about how Thulani dogs are the best ambassadors for Thulani and about how just telling folks about Thulani can be so impactful. Oh, and it's also about supreme serendipity. Read on!

My happy place is in the Sierra Nevada mountains, especially when they're covered in snow. Luckily, Smokey is a fan too. He's content to nap in his cozy bed in the car while I snowboard, and then we go for a walk together so he can engage in his favorite activity: making new friends. After our stroll that day, we sat down on a bench at the base, and Smokey wasted no time working his charms on the woman seated at the far end of the bench. Turns out he had a purpose.

Smokey is a great conversation starter, so she and I started chatting. Her name was Amy and she was clearly a dog person. One of us. She instantly adored Smokey and he adored her. So of course I told her about how he's my third Thulani dog, how they do amazing work, and how they even offer medical coverage. She was floored. To my surprise, Amy then told me she lived in the Bay Area but had just bought a piece of land outside Bend, Oregon, and she had a dream of adopting an old dog or two to take with her. Wait, what? I gave her all the details, and she said she'd fill out an application as soon as possible. And she did, the very next day, in fact.

A few weeks went by, and I got a call from Thulani's fearless founder Bob. He told me that Thulani pulled a very sweet senior girl from the Oakland shelter. The shelter had given her a name that started with the letter G, but they thought it didn't suit her. Bob was calling to see if I would mind if he named her Goli. Would I mind? I was absolutely honored!

Meanwhile, Amy was wrapping up loose ends and getting ready to make the big move to her new Oregon forest paradise. She decided to swing by Thulani Central to meet the dogs who were there. After meeting and spending time with the dogs, there was one standout who she felt a connection with. Guess who she decided to adopt: Goli T!

Now Goli T enjoys the unconditional love of her best friend Amy, camping, hiking, playing in the snow, romping with her doggie pals, and exploring acres of her very own private forest, all because Smokey is a ham. His new nickname is The Hambassador! Good boy, Smokey!

## To Members of a Special Rescue Community

Hello Friends,

Thulani Senior German Shepherd Rescue began operating as an independent nonprofit animal rescue in August 2017. After six years, we have a lot to be proud of. Together we have saved over 400 dogs! We have changed the lives of the dogs and the people who love them. We have become unique among rescues by sending our senior GSDs to your homes with zero adoption fee and medical coverage after adoption.

Times have changed and presented us with new and difficult challenges. What has not changed is the need of senior German Shepherds for the services we provide. In order to ensure Thulani will be thriving into the future, we are actively changing with the times by:

- Expanding our foster home network so we can take in more dogs.
- Revamping our dog operations and evaluations to better partner with shelters.
- Strengthening and codifying our practices and procedures.

The Thulani Board and officers are excited about and committed to serving the organizational goals of Thulani alongside our volunteers, fosters, adopters and supporters. We know where we need to go, and we know how to get there. But we couldn't go anywhere without you. With all of us dedicated to the Thulani mission, we will reach our goal to stay available to senior GSDs now and well into the future.

-- The Thulani Leadership Team

**MORE AMAZING  
PHOTOS OF  
SMOKEY, GOLI M.  
GOLI T. AND  
AMY!**



## Through the Eyes of a Child

WRITTEN BY KATHERINE B.

Children are amazing. The innocence and the honesty of their perspective is beautiful. Today, we lost a beloved creature. Our handsome Dutch shepherd, Cyrus, crossed to the Rainbow Bridge late this afternoon. A few hours later, Nicole, nearly 7 years old, came to me and asked if we would ever get another senior. I asked her what she wanted. She jumped and excitedly said, "Yes! I want to adopt another one soon!" Tears glistened in my eyes. This girl just lost her buddy, a dog she spent the last 7 months falling in love with, feeding, playing with, and caring for. She was still in the midst of the pain of saying goodbye. Yet she had the desire to help another one in need.

So many people say they could never adopt a senior because it hurts to say goodbye. Yes, the pain is so strong, it's heartbreaking. But one way or another, these beautiful seniors are going to die. Shelters are overcrowded, and dogs of all ages are being euthanized for space. Seniors are regularly surrendered by their owners or found as strays because they're dumped in their old age. Their bodies ache, and they just want a comfy bed to sleep on and someone to love them.

Many seniors aren't even put up for adoption at shelters. Instead, they're quickly added to the euthanasia list because their chance of rescue or adoption is so low. These seniors will die, either in a shelter on a cold table with their life cut short, or if given the chance, they can be adopted and live out the rest of their days being loved. Yes, their end will come and it will be painful for those who love them, but they can have the gift of passing peacefully, knowing they were truly cared for.

Seeing the desire to help these beautiful dogs from the perspective of a little girl still grieving left me so proud of her caring heart. She's lived the pain of saying goodbye to her four-legged friends more than once, yet she doesn't let that stop her from loving more. We can learn so much when we step back and look at things through the eyes of a child.

## What You (Probably) Don't Know About Thulani

WRITTEN BY ROBERT JACHENS, THULANI FOUNDER

Thulani is a Zulu word meaning "to be cared for" or "to be comforted." Its significance to our rescue is twofold. Before TSGSR existed, we saved a 3-month-old, badly abused puppy with a terminal heart condition. He lived only a few months before passing, but he enjoyed every moment of his short life. His fosters named him Thulani and agreed to give him the best life possible for the time he had left, knowing his dire medical condition.

This selfless act reminded us that there are incredible people willing to provide a great final chapter for dogs with limited life expectancy, knowing full well that heartbreak will follow. Around the same time, another German Shepherd dog (GSD) encounter solidified a plan to set up TSGSR. We found a senior GSD in a shelter just waiting to die. He was in terrible physical shape, but we just couldn't let him die on a stainless steel table in the back room of the shelter, alone, afraid, and among strangers. So we pulled him, took him on a last outing, gave him a double cheeseburger, and held him as he passed to the Rainbow Bridge. At home, I lamented to my wife what awful situations senior GSDs face in our current shelter system. As she left the room, she simply said, "Well, stop complaining and do something about it".

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Bob and his best buddy Kobuk in their respective recliners, intently watching a pair of Redtail Hawks performing a breath-taking aero-ballet.





## Thulani Founder Story Continued...

So in 2009, we launched a trial effort as a “special needs” subprogram under another existing rescue. Our mission was to save GSDs, 10-years-old or older, from shelters, where they had little chance of survival. (In fact, most were never even shown to the public for adoption.) The dog’s medical condition was not to be a deciding factor in whether the dog gets rescued or not.

We planned to serve shelters all over California. And perhaps most importantly, we decided to provide medical coverage for all of our rescued dogs, even after adoption. This was a pivotal decision because it relieved potential adopters of the fear of skyrocketing medical costs as the dogs aged. Despite numerous detractors and naysayers, the effort was immediately successful and grew year by year.

By January of 2012, based on this initial success, we formally launched the program. We expanded our service to include senior GSDs in life-threatening situations due to illness, loss of owners due to death or incapacity, and other potentially fatal circumstances. And in August of 2017, following years of growth and success, we formed Thulani Senior German Shepherd Rescue, Inc., an independent 501(c)(3) public benefit charity.

TSGSR provides a vital service that no other rescue provides. Last year, to ensure TSGSR’s viability as a senior-focused rescue for many years into the future, we began a year of leadership transition and reorganization.

To date, we’re proud to say that TSGSR has saved more than 700 senior GSDs, providing them with medical care and the chance to live out their natural lives in a loving environment. Our dogs live an average of at least a year and a quarter after being saved, which may not sound like much until you realize that it’s more than 10% of the dog’s total life (comparable to about 8-9 years of human life). Remember, dogs live in the moment, and every day is a gift.

We couldn’t do what we do without the fantastic support of the community. People worldwide really like what we do to save these most vulnerable senior GSDs, and they’ve backed up this belief with their generous donations. Their generosity has enabled TSGSR to save even very seriously ill dogs. We have donors in all 50 states and 15–20 foreign countries. We’re so grateful for the support.

As the Founder and President of TSGSR for the past decade and a half, this work has consumed most of my retirement. Professionally, I had a long career, one “to die for,” and loved almost every moment of it. But looking back, I now consider my work with Thulani as one of the most fulfilling things I’ve ever done.

Consider joining us as a volunteer, but beware, it may change your life.



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

### FOSTER

To save more seniors, we need committed foster homes where they can safely land, decompress and discover who they are. Do you have room in your home to host a Thulani senior dog? We welcome you to apply!

We cover all the expenses, you provide the TLC (Thulani Loving care).

### VOLUNTEER

Join us! No matter your skillset, interests, or even your physical location, Thulani has a volunteer position for you.

### ADOPT

Ready to open your heart and adopt one of our special seniors?

Go to [thulanidogs.org](http://thulanidogs.org), browse our available dogs, and submit an online adoption application to get the process started.

### DONATE

By Paypal:  
[donate@ThulaniSeniorGSR.org](mailto:donate@ThulaniSeniorGSR.org)

By Venmo:  
[@Thulani-ThulaniSeniorGSR](https://www.venmo.com/Thulani-ThulaniSeniorGSR)

By Check:  
Make payable to Thulani Senior German Shepherd Rescue, and mail to our P.O. Box below.

### CONTACT US

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San Juan Bautista, CA 95045  
[info@ThulaniSeniorGSR.org](mailto:info@ThulaniSeniorGSR.org)  
1-833-736-4679



FALL/WINTER 2023

## Giving Seniors Hope

**It's that time of year once again-time to give seniors hope!  
All donations made during December will be matched dollar-for-dollar.**

Thulani has partnered with supporters that have dedicated \$25,000 in matching funds donated in the month of December. When you give-THEY GIVE, which gives to senior dogs in need. This holiday season, help us give senior German Shepherds another chance to feel love, happiness, and a forever home.

### CHOOSE HOW TO DONATE:

1. Donate Online:  
[thulanldogs.org/please-help](http://thulanldogs.org/please-help)

2. Donate by Paypal:  
[donate@ThulaniSeniorGSR.org](mailto:donate@ThulaniSeniorGSR.org)

3. Donate by Venmo:  
[@Thulani-ThulaniSeniorGSR](https://www.venmo.com/Thulani-ThulaniSeniorGSR)

4. Donate by Social Media:  
[facebook.com/ThulaniProgram](https://facebook.com/ThulaniProgram)  
[instagram.com/thulanisenior\\_gsr](https://instagram.com/thulanisenior_gsr)

5. Mail a check to:  
**P.O. Box 1065  
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045**

