

# The Forgotten Animals of Los Angeles and their Angel



Charleen Sweeney (above) and her FALA volunteers rescue L.A.'s "throw aways".

Woody first met his angel at the corner of Burbank Boulevard and Hollywood Way. The terrified cocker spaniel was dodging honking drivers and narrowly avoiding fatal collisions. By the time the angel could pull over and dash into the traffic for him, he was so panicked that he darted out of the



intersection and down an alley. Undeterred, his angel continued the chase until she managed to slip a leash around his neck. Then she took him home. About seven years old at the time, Woody was unneutered, unhousebroken, destructive and fearful. But gradually, with the angel's vast patience and expert training, he developed into a great dog with a loving nature and gentle soul. Ten wonderful years later, Woody died peacefully of old age.



Lazarus met that same angel at a college campus in the San Fernando Valley, where the angel

had gone in response to reports of feral cat killings. When she first spotted the kitten, his tiny body was covered with ants and fleas and he was motionless from hypothermia. The angel rushed him to a veterinary hospital, and it was touch-and-go for weeks. Today, although he is blind and disabled from the severe beating he endured, Lazarus leads a loving and happy life in the safety of his angel's home.

So, who is this angel to the animals? She's Charleen Sweeney, one of the most dedicated animal rescuers anyone could ever hope to meet, and co-founder and president of Forgotten Animals of Los Angeles Rescue League (FALA). Inspired by her example, FALA volunteers get down in the trenches to rescue the "throw aways" awaiting horrific futures on the streets. FALA then provides them with full medical evaluations and treatments, so they are all healthy and well cared for before they're adopted. FALA's exacting screening process, free in-home behavioral sessions, and continued contact with adoptive families ensure successful adoptions.

FALA also performs community outreach. Volunteers take animals to comfort the sick and elderly, assist seniors in caring for their four-legged companions at home, and serve feral cat populations with effective Trap/Neuter/Release practices. FALA's latest rescues are elderly animals who were relegated to Death Row in a county shelter when their guardians passed away without making plans for their ongoing care. FALA would like to remind all of us that it's never too early to make legal provisions for our animals so they can live out their lives in peace, safety and comfort even if we can't be there with them.

FALA's next project is humane education. Says Charleen, "If we show children how wonderful animals are, if we teach them to be kind and compassionate, we will be enriching the children's lives and we will be saving the lives of many animals in the years to come." Woody and Lazarus would say their angel is simply looking to the future on behalf of forgotten animals everywhere.

Heidi Mastrogiovanni is a FALA board member. FALA is totally volunteer-staffed, so 100% of their donations go to animals in need. FALA is always looking for additional foster homes and volunteers. For more information, please email FALA at [fala-org@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fala-org@sbcglobal.net) or write to Forgotten Animals of Los Angeles, P.O. Box 2285, Toluca Lake, CA 91602.