

Pacifica Tribune



Jean Bartlett photo

In 2015, Rockaway Ricky was interviewed at one of his favorite hangouts, Pacific Java Cafe.

The mighty legacy of little Rockaway Ricky

By Jean Bartlett
Tribune Writer

Rockaway Ricky was a small dog with a huge heart and his Pacifica BlogSpot was second to none. Many locals knew him and when the little Schnoodle passed in August, a collective sigh could be heard throughout town. Ricky was the official mascot of the Lommori/Stahl Group of RE/MAX Star Properties in Rockaway. His mom, Christine Stahl, grew up with cats and had never been a dog mom until she met Ricky. In a 2015 Rockaway Ricky interview, Stahl discussed how she worked with him to overcome his initial ride-in-the-car nerves. She also helped him refine his manners a bit as he took on his role of office mascot.

"But really, it wasn't me opening up his life to all these new experiences," Stahl said, "it was Ricky opening up my life to what I've heard people talk about so much in regards to their pet companions, unconditional love. I'll never be the same person because of his existence."

In early 2018, Stahl received several calendars in the mail that were beautiful shots of Pacifica's scenery. As she looked at Ricky an idea began to form.

"People in Pacifica love their pets," Stahl said. "I am one of those people. I decided to put a calendar together, something that featured local business owners and their pets.

"I didn't want to do anything big, just a calendar for friends, clients and the businesses featured. There were no expectations other than having fun."

She contacted Brenda Simpson, owner of Bijou Blue Photography and Ricky's BlogSpot photographer. "Brenda, Pete Lommori and I decided we would produce this calendar. Brenda took all the photos and Jennifer Hoover did the calendar design."

The 2019 "Dog Days of Pacifica" calendar, subtitled "The Working Life of a Pacifica Pooch," had its release party at A Grape in the Fog on November 15. It stars: Rockaway Ricky; Sir Charles; Rocky Road; Jack, Rowan and Riley; Daphne; Carmella; Diesel; Smokey and Gus; Dude; Kya and Bailey; Ralph, Wanda and Marty; and Roxy. It features fabulous quotes such as: "Be the person your dog thinks you are." It also shines a star on the business owners whose pooches line its pages: the Lommori/Stahl Group; Successories in the Button Box; Full Moon Healing Center; Moore Barrel Bats; A Grape in the Fog; Bijou Blue Photography; Jasmine Dunkel, LMFT; Pacific Java Cafe; PKM Construction; Supreme Lending; Dial Glass and Window Company; and Green Room Music Center. The release event was filled with people who deeply understand the George Eliot quote: "Animals are such agreeable friends. They ask no questions, they pass no criticisms."

But there was something more to this party, a recognition that many individuals struggle to financially support the animal that they love – something that came to Stahl intuitively when Ricky became sick.

"Ricky was my family," Stahl said. "And I'm the type of person that when I go through a life event, such as Ricky's death, I ask myself, 'What am I being taught here?'" She reflected on Ricky's last days.

"On June 6, I learned Ricky had a tumor in his bowel and it was cancer. The options were: unpredictable surgery; unpredictable chemotherapy; or to take him home and when he was no longer able to go to the bathroom, I would need to have him euthanized. I chose the latter."

Following the diagnosis, Stahl phoned Simpson. Ricky's calendar photo needed to be taken immediately.

"Pete brought in his Harley and Brenda photographed Ricky on it."

The picture is captioned: "Highway to Heaven."

Ricky died at home on August 16 with Christine and her fiancé Glen Gerber by his side. He was 13. His last day was a beautiful day, which included visits with dear friends to say his goodbyes.

In his memory, Stahl spoke with Anita Rees (Executive Director of the Pacifica Resource Center) and Jim Lange and Ann Cooney (Recreation Manager, and Assistant Supervisor, Meals on Wheels/Transportation Coordinator with Pacifica Senior Services), and found Ricky's legacy. She created the Rockaway Ricky Memorial Fund to help the pets of struggling Pacifica families and seniors in need.

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Rees, Lange and Cooney are well aware of the importance of pets in the lives of our more vulnerable populations.

"Often people will put their pet's needs in front of their own," Lange said.

"Pets offer amazing mental and physical benefits to those facing difficult circumstances," Cooney said, "This is entirely true for Pacifica's Meals on Wheels clients."

"The only pet food and pet items we offer are by way of donation," Rees said. "But when we have it, the PRC provides these items to any Pacifica family that uses our pantry. With Ricky's Fund's support, we can keep pet food and other pet items onsite or offer gift certificates to families with furry family members to get what they need more consistently."

PRC also has a veterinarian onsite on the second Thursday of the month to give shots and check on the health of client pets.

"When you love your pet, you want to take care of them," Stahl said. "They certainly take care of you. This is what Ricky taught me and this is why the Rockaway Ricky Memorial Fund was established, with Pacificans Care serving as fiscal sponsor."

To help the pets of Pacifica families and seniors in need, Rockaway Ricky Memorial Fund donations can be directed to Pacificans Care, a 501(c) 3 organization. Pacificans Care, P.O. Box 875, Pacifica, CA 94044, www.pacificans-care.com. Email: pacificanscare1982@gmail.com.

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