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## Rescue Me: Marty

In this new occasional series, the *West Essex Tribune* has invited Livingston residents to tell us about



Marty was abandoned as a pup by his first family in New Orleans. He was rescued from a Louisiana kill shelter by Labs4Rescue, and through that organization came to live with Erin O'Neil and Bob Russo in Livingston.

### Have a Rescued Pet? Tell Us About It!

Do you have a pet you adopted from a shelter, or rescued in some other way? We'd love to hear about it!

The *West Essex Tribune* is announcing the launch of "Rescue Me," a new occasional series in which residents are invited to tell us about the pet or pets they have adopted or rescued. From homeless dogs and cats adopted from local shelters, to ferals that have been taken in, to classroom hamsters and ducklings that have found new homes – we would love to share your stories and photos. Tell us all about your rescued pets, how you rescued them, how they are adjusting to their new lives, etc. (Sorry, pets purchased from pet stores or breeders don't count as rescues.)

Send your "Rescue Me" story and photo to the *Tribune* via e-mail at [TribuneEditorial@Verizon.net](mailto:TribuneEditorial@Verizon.net); by regular mail at P.O. Box 65, Livingston, NJ 07039; or call our Editorial Department at 973-992-1771. Photos sent by e-mail should be sent as jpeg attachments.

the pet or pets they have adopted or rescued. Erin O'Neil and Bob Russo of Livingston adopted a Labrador retriever named Marty, who had been abandoned in New Orleans and rescued by an organization called Labs4Rescue. Here, they tell his story – from his point of view!

#### Marty's Tale

I was with my family driving down a highway in New Orleans with the wind blowing in my face. I wondered why my people have waited nine months to take me for a ride – it was so much fun.

Within minutes, the car stopped and I got pulled out. A large man approached and I heard the only human dad I ever knew say, "take him – we don't want him anymore." The stranger took hold of the rope around my neck and confirmed that if no one wanted me soon I would be put down. My family, without hesitation, turned and drove away. I thought – "What did I do wrong?"

For weeks, but what seemed like an eternity, I laid on a cold cement floor. No one spoke to me or paid me any attention. I was sad, alone and confused. What little food I did receive was terrible. Rarely did I sleep because of the other dogs' constant barking. I was exhausted. The conditions were deplorable and the smell of urine permeated the air. Soon I found myself hoping my time here would be up and I would be put out of my misery. I had hit rock bottom. One thought continued to haunt me – "What did I do wrong?"

Finally, it happened. My cage door opened, but it was not the large nasty man that took so many dogs away. It was a nice lady who gently reached for me. She didn't call me "dog" but gave me the name of "Marty." I had never experienced such a soft voice and kind hand. I gladly walked with her and did all she asked. She hugged me tight and told me I passed my temperament test with flying colors and I was far "too sweet" to be destroyed. She explained she volunteered for an organization called Labs4Rescue and they would be sure to find me a loving home, no matter how long that took. I was saved!

Labs4Rescue took great care of me. Before I could be adopted, they made certain I was examined by a vet and completely up to date on my shots. They fed me properly, so I was able to put on some much needed weight. Best of all, they bolstered my confidence with plenty of love, attention, patience and understanding. I was ready – all I needed was to find my "forever home."

As my first birthday quickly

approached, the volunteers at Labs4Rescue broke the fantastic news to me. I had been chosen by a family located in the Northeast. They saw my photo and claimed my soulful eyes won them over immediately. Soon my 1,292 mile journey to meet my new family began as I travelled from New Orleans to Livingston, New Jersey. I kept all my paws crossed that I would do "nothing wrong" to ruin this opportunity I so longed for.

Now seven years later, my past life is a distant memory. I had so much love to give and I quickly developed into what my family calls "the best dog ever." When people learn my story, they comment on what a "lucky dog" I am. My family quickly replies, "No, we are the lucky ones!" Finally I understand that "I did nothing wrong," but was a victim of uncaring humans.

If you're looking to adopt, please consider rescuing from shelters/rescue organizations to find your next "Best Friend." Many amazing animals that did "nothing wrong" are waiting.