

Raisins From Heaven Ferret Rescue And Sanctuary

Since 2002, the Raisins From Heaven Ferret Rescue And Sanctuary in Herndon, Mississippi, continues to help ferrets in need.

By Troy Lynn Eckart

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Maren Doshier adopted her first ferret in February of 2002. "Precious was a throwaway ferret found in an abandoned house with a companion basset hound," Doshier said. "Both pets were left behind when the owners moved. I adopted Precious from John Pummill, who rescued and found homes for ferrets in Mississippi for over 15 years."

Precious was very sick and never really recovered, passing away in August of 2002. Doshier said she opened her own ferret shelter the next day. "We had already taken in seven ferrets that needed homes. The name was born and the official opening of Raisins From Heaven Ferret Rescue And Sanctuary was on August 17, 2002." Since that time, nearly 250 ferrets have come through the shelter doors, either being fostered, adopted or becoming permanent residents.

Helping Ferrets After Hurricanes

After hurricanes Katrina and Rita roared through the South, Raisins from Heaven was involved with assistance programs for ferret victims for nearly 16-months. "We were involved on such a level that it is difficult to really outline it in such a short manner," Doshier said. "When we awoke that Sunday morning to the newscast that Katrina had changed course and was tracked to hit the gulf of Mississippi as a possible Cat 4 or 5, I began the calls to the other rescue groups here in the mid-south to see, 'Who's going down to the coast?'"

The location of Raisins From Heaven made it an easy stop for people traveling to help out in the coastal region. "I believe it was Friday or Saturday when the rescues on the ground down on the coast of Mississippi began calling us to advise they had picked up ferrets. The most famous rescues were the Biloxi Boys." Those "boys" were three ferrets found near death in a collapsed house in Biloxi, Mississippi. "Their cage was uncovered upside down and nearly flattened by the weight of the debris of the house. Their owners all perished."

The Biloxi boys were adopted and are doing as well as expected. Doshier continues to receive updates on them.

Remembering Mitchell The Ferret

Doshier's most heartbreaking case was a ferret named Mitchell that was abandoned at a local vet's office. The staff called Doshier, warning her that the owner had said the ferret had a growth on its belly. The vet clinic where he was abandoned recommended euthanization. Doshier rejected that, taking him to her own veterinarian, who attempted surgery. Sadly, her veterinarian discovered that the growth was inoperable and was attached to vital organs.

"It was a matter of time, a small amount of time — weeks maybe," Doshier said. "So, he just never woke Mitchell up. I cried for days. I held this sweet little guy for five minutes, only owned him for a couple hours before he crossed the Bridge. Like so many ferrets out there, this little man was given up when his owners found a medical problem and did not want to deal with it, instead of loving him to the very end."

Averting A Ferret Tragedy

Ferret rescue isn't always about heartbreaks. Although it begins in sadness, the following story has a happy ending.

Doshier received a call from a teenager warning that she'd heard about an upcoming contest where people were going to bet on how long it would take some big snakes to eat two ferrets. Doshier got the teen to find out the name and address of the person supposedly having the contest. It was in a bad part of town.

Doshier put in an emergency call to police dispatch. She was able to "buy" the two ferrets after the guy admitted to police officers that he had the ferrets and there was going to be a "contest" involving snakes and ferrets.