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## Shot dog gets new leash on life

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Article Text:

EVERYONE at the Bishop Ranch Veterinary Center and Urgent Care knew the day would come when they had to say goodbye to their new friend. But it didn't make it any easier.

"He kind of thinks he owns the place," technician Rene McComb said while several of the San Ramon clinic's staff played with the shepherd/cattle dog mix who would go to foster care later that evening. The fact that he was going anywhere is what makes Bucky so popular with everyone he meets.

A little more than a week ago, a Livermore good Samaritan found Bucky laying wounded on her ranch in shock and bleeding profusely. The 2-year-old was shot at least twice, shattering his right back leg and severely injuring his left front leg with more than 50 buckshot pellets.

He was taken to an emergency animal clinic to be stabilized before going to the East County Animal Shelter in Dublin. However, because of budget constraints, the shelter could do little for Bucky.

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue was contacted to see if it was interested in saving Bucky.

After taking him to Bishop Ranch for an evaluation, the animal rescue organization decided to help the injured dog through its Cinderella Fund — a program funded through donations, which pays for the medical care and fostering of dogs to give them a second chance.

"We chose to keep him in the program and pay for the bills because he's young and he's friendly," said rescue volunteer Tracey Quartaroli, adding his positive attitude and ability to survive also played a part in the decision. "He'll get along fine on his three legs so he seemed like a perfect candidate."

After making Bucky comfortable by applying a Fentanyl patch, which slowly administered a painkiller to the animal, clinic veterinarians decided to amputate the broken rear leg to avoid gangrene.

"He probably would have died within 24 hours if he hadn't had surgery," said James Pogrel, the surgeon who performed the procedure and neutered Bucky, who also was shot in the testicles. "It was bad enough that we had to take it at the hip, above the infection."

Pogrel said it was the right decision.

"He wouldn't get up the first two days (after arriving at clinic)," remembers Pogrel. "He was up soon after surgery. He obviously feels much better with his leg amputated."

For the past several days, staff at the clinic have been providing physical therapy on Bucky's front leg, which was riddled with shrapnel, and antibiotics to avoid infection.

What would have cost around \$2,000 only cost the Tri-Valley Animal Rescue about \$700 thanks to the kindness of Pogrel and his staff. The non-profit organization only had to pay for the cost of medication and surgery-related items. The clinic is donating nursing time and aftercare services.

"We generally give the rescue organizations a 50 percent discount," said Pogrel, who admitted they did go a little beyond the call of duty in Bucky's case. "They did a good thing by picking him up early and we tried to help them out."

It also didn't hurt that the young dog steals the heart of everyone he meets.

Only a few days following surgery, Bucky runs with a limp, chasing a red and green ball that clinic worker Nikita Evans throws. He loves the attention he gets from everyone on staff and the few visitors who wander through.

Bucky is staying with a foster family, a registered nurse who will care for him until Tri-Valley Animal Rescue can find him a permanent home. Quartaroli estimates his recovery, also funded through the Cinderella program, will take two to three months.

McComb said she's just glad that Bucky, who was given his new name by the clinic staff, is part of a story with a happy ending.

"When he came in, he was just one down-and-out dog," McComb said. "We removed his leg and he's a new dog now. ... He's got a new lease on life attitude."

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Caption:

TAKING A BREAK after playing, Bucky and Nikita Evans relax at the Bishop Ranch Veterinary Center in San Ramon.

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