



PEPPER'S
SENIOR DOG SANCTUARY

The Good Days, The Bad Days, The Last Days.



We provide a compassionate, loving, lifelong home
where elderly dogs are cared for during their
good days, bad, days, and last days.



Hello, my name is Mary Leprino, and I am one of the founders of Pepper's Senior Dog Sanctuary.

The story of Pepper's is inextricably linked to my own story. You see, I am in recovery. I struggled with addiction for years and I am proud to let you know that I am over 15 years sober. This is a hard-earned accomplishment, and I didn't do it alone. Many loving family and friends supported me on my journey, but there was one guy who I truly credit with my sobriety. His name was Pepper, and he is the inspiration for this project.



Pepper was given up because he had bad breath. Seriously, his breath and his owners could not afford the expensive dentalwork that would make him healthy and happy. I adopted this suspicious, smelly pup when he was seven years old. We needed each other. We wanted to live and we needed to be loved and accepted while we were at our worst. He became my partner in sobriety and I became his doting companion.

You see, animal welfare is not only about animals. It's about what animals teach us about ourselves. Dogs made the decision a millennia ago to become domesticated. It was likely a very self-serving choice at the time, but together dogs and humans have created life-changing and life-saving bonds and mutually made each other's experience on this earth a little easier and happier.

On my worst days, I would wake up with unrelenting depression and Pepper gave me a reason to put one foot in front of the other. Now, I will spend the rest of my life paying it forward. We are creating a sanctuary for senior dogs that allows them to live their remaining years with dignity. Our society so often discards those who struggle: the elderly, the disabled, the poor. I can't save all of these people, as much as I wish I could. But if our work gives a second chance to aging dogs and engages humans in this magical interspecies friendship and unconditional love, we've done something really meaningful.

Our work at Pepper's goes beyond simply saving senior dogs, we are working to create a community in which we interact with other at-risk populations in an effort to improve the lives of more than the aging canine population. We have designed our already 70% constructed facility with areas so that we can welcome senior citizens to our facility and play bingo with these lovely animals at their feet, or lovingly on their laps. We will host movie nights for these groups as well. Many seniors struggle when they are forced to give up their precious animals, we hope to bring some joy and excitement back into their lives.

We are partnering with Firefly Autism to bring their students and adults to our facility to care for our animals. The benefits and connections between our Fireflies and our dogs is priceless. Recent studies have determined the sensory benefits for people with autism interacting with animals, providing a remarkable calming effect.

Another community partner is TOSA - The Other Side Academy. This wonderful program is a 2-year drug and alcohol program, which serves recently released incarcerated individuals that have committed to recovery with a remarkable recovery, unmatched throughout the country. The bond between addicts and animals has a proven efficacy impact. Pepper's isn't just about providing a loving home for a few seniors, it is creating a community dedicated to improving the lives of those around us.

Thank you for listening,

Mary Leprino



About PSDS

We provide senior dogs with a compassionate, forever home, at our veterinarian-supervised sanctuary. We care for our dogs for all the days of their lives, including hospice needs. We are the premier “dog retirement community” for canines who need us most—forever. We fill a unique need and space in senior dog sanctuaries. While you won’t find shuffleboard at our sanctuary, our seniors have other amenities and supports that make Pepper’s a well-deserved luxury for senior dogs. We provide small group and one-on-one care; enormous space to play, lounge, and sleep kiddie-pool-side; individual bedroom suites, professionally trained staff and volunteers; and dedicated physical therapy and medical care.

Dogs who become part of the Pepper’s family win the retirement lottery.

We will officially open in 2023 after construction completion of our full-scale sanctuary. We have already welcomed some dogs who currently live with our leadership team and at the sanctuary, and are raising funds to complete our \$5 million capital campaign.

Pepper's only adopts dogs from area shelters and rescues, helping to ease the burden of overcrowding at shelters. The ASPCA estimates that approximately 670,000 dogs who enter U.S. shelters each year are euthanized. Sadly, many of these dogs who are considered seniors and special needs dogs are prematurely or unnecessarily euthanized due to age, special medical needs, testing heart worm positive, or having a disability. At Pepper's, age and appearances don't matter – we're specially equipped to care for elderly and special needs dogs for their entire journey. We DO NOT accept dogs via owner surrenders or drop-offs.

“Older dogs have always needed a safety net, as they are the most overlooked and vulnerable population in shelters. The world needs more places like Pepper's Senior Dog Sanctuary.”

—Hope Morgan, Owner of Little Old Dog Sanctuary



Our Story

Our dream of creating such a wonderful facility for senior and special needs dogs first took root in 2019, the year of our inception. In just 3 short years, that dream is already being realized. But why this dream? First and foremost, we are dog lovers. Like so many people, we understand the joy dogs bring into our lives. But we also understand the obligation we have to our canine friends to afford them the simplest privilege of living out their life with the most basic needs being met: shelter, food, water, companionship, love, and care.

Every year, at least 1.2 million dogs are euthanized, and a large percentage of those are senior dogs—the dogs few people want to adopt. The fact is that there are a number of reasons why people are hesitant to adopt a senior dog. Age is certainly at the top of that list, but there are also a variety of misconceptions about caring for a more mature dog that cause people to walk away from senior dog adoption. Something needed to be done to help dispel the myths, remove the misconceptions, and break down the false stereotypes. And with that, our dream began to grow as we pledged our commitment to help educate the public while building the best possible sanctuary for senior dogs.

While senior dog sanctuaries have been in existence for several years, none are quite like Pepper's Senior Dog Sanctuary, a place for senior and special needs dogs to live out the rest of their lives in a loving, caring, and nurturing home-like setting. Planned for completion in 2022, our facility sits on 50-acre ranch in Roxborough Park, a quaint community nestled in the red rock foothills southwest of Denver. Pepper's will be the premier dog sanctuary, a model facility others will want to follow because of the unique, complete continuum of care we provide for our residents. Not only will they receive love, shelter and medical care, they will also receive hospice care at the end of their journey, ensuring that these wonderful creatures will know how much they are loved—every day, including their last day.

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Examining The Need

Let's be clear about something. It's important to understand the reasons why senior dogs end up in shelters. In the vast majority of cases, the reason is us, not them. Pets are relinquished to shelters for reasons relating to a change in the owner's circumstances twice as much as they are for reasons relating to animal behavior. The common misconception is that the animal's behavior is the leading cause for surrender to a shelter. That is simply not true.

Existing shelters lack the necessary funding as well as adequate space to sufficiently address the need resulting from canine homelessness. Under the current model adhered to by most animal shelters, if an animal is deemed to be "less adoptable" than one of its younger or healthier counterparts, its age and medical needs become determining factors in whether the animal lives or dies. Our model seeks to ease the burden on shelters by providing an additional option in the form of a unique and innovative layer of care for the most vulnerable canines. And best of all, we believe that ours is a model that can eventually and easily be replicated elsewhere.

Recently, there have been positive trends developing in the animal welfare world that address the specific plight of senior and special needs pets. **But even with those encouraging trends, the need far outweighs the options.**



The Vision: Changing The Culture

While we are seeing progress being made on behalf of senior dogs on several fronts, it isn't enough. Far too many senior dogs are still being unnecessarily euthanized every day. But the Pepper's team is ready to make a difference. We envision, through advocacy and action, a model to change the culture of care and adoption of senior dogs. We will build upon the growing recognition of dogs that are in greatest need of hope, help, and a home.

It would be wonderful if we could change everyone's mindset so that senior dogs were adopted at the same rate as their younger counterparts. While that vision is unrealistic, we believe we can improve our culture so that, in ten years, we see a 30% increase in the number of households and families into which senior dogs have been adopted.

Through effective social impact programs, strategic messaging and targeted campaigns, we hope to influence opinions, shatter stereotypes, and debunk myths about senior dogs as household pets, encouraging people to give greater consideration to inclusion of senior dogs into their families.

But we know that even with the most compelling messaging, there will still be those for whom senior dog adoption is simply not desirable. And that's why organizations like Pepper's exist, to provide a forever home for those senior dogs still unable to be adopted from shelters, allowing them to live out the remainder of their lives in a comfortable, caring, and nurturing homelike sanctuary.

While we may not be able to completely eliminate the problem of senior dog homelessness, we will have made a significant difference in our culture and in how our society views and treats senior dogs. And we'll have the satisfaction of knowing that many will still be alive solely because of our efforts.

Pepper's Plan

Senior Dog Sanctuary offers a unique and dynamic solution that is all too rare in the animal rescue community—a home sanctuary and hospice for unadopted senior and special needs dogs. Our solution will not only transition dogs from a shelter environment, but will also provide those dogs with a life-long, healthy, and loving home. As an added benefit, Pepper's also offers space specifically designed to help other animals waiting for services. Our solution is multi-purposed, and the impact it creates is multi-faceted. It will provide countless dogs with the compassion and assistance they so desperately need for years to come.

The Pepper's plan welcomes up to 50 dogs at a time into our family. These new adoptees will receive care at Pepper's for the rest of their lives, no matter how many or how few those numbered days may be. We are not only saving the life of our adopted pets, we are also making room for others in need. And as these dear creatures reach the end of their journey, we will fill the vacancies with new canine family members as space allows.

The Vision: Changing The Culture

It is important to understand that Pepper's only adopts dogs from shelters and rescue organizations, thus alleviating some of the overcrowding at those facilities. That is a critical element of the process, because the dogs we adopt are among those who have been identified for possible premature euthanasia simply because of their age, special medical needs, testing positive, or having a disability. Unfortunately, they have little-to-no chance of being adopted by an individual or family into a forever home. Because of Pepper's, they're given a second chance.

Pepper's Partners



We've spent a great deal of time touring other successful sanctuaries and shelters, as well as enrolling in trainings with well-known animal welfare innovators such as like Best Friends Utah and Denver Dumb Friends League. As a result, we have been able to further improve our model, and we've been able to recruit the most talented and dedicated staff to join our team. And now, after having learned from the experts, we've built an organization comprised of experts.

We currently work with the following shelters and rescues to identify and adopt senior and special needs dogs into the Pepper's family. Our partners will continue to grow as our capacity increases.



"It is
immensely satisfying
to be a part of the PSDS effort, because it will
**enrich the lives of
so many senior dogs.**

And because of the enrichment they have brought to our lives,
it's the perfect way to say, 'thank you.' —Antonio Ballatore, host of Animal Planet's Animal Cries

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY

Please visit psds.org to learn more about us.

Our Process

While we wish we could give every dog a home, that is simply not feasible or realistic. But for those who are selected for intake into the Pepper's organization, the decisions are based on the following criteria:

- Imminent euthanasia due to overcrowding
- Dogs not being adopted due to age
- Dogs not being adopted due to medical needs
- Heart worm positive dogs
- Dogs with a disability preventing adoption
- Personality and temperament considerations (to ensure safe dynamics within the pack)

Click on the image below to learn more about our process and to meet past and current residents of Pepper's Senior Pet Sanctuary.

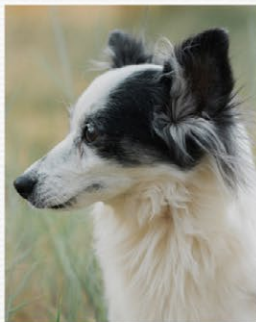
We Embrace the Sweetness, Sass, and Everything In Between

Our cast of characters continues to grow. Meet some of our beloved and boundlessly happy senior dogs:

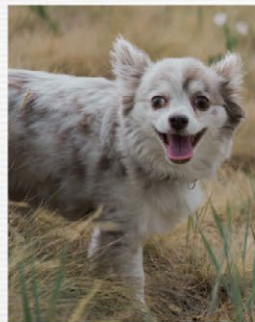
Click any photo below for full profile or **check out all of our residents**



SUPERPUPPER POWER: PHOTOGENIC & YOUTHFUL
Lily



SUPERPUPPER POWER: MISCHIEVOUS & MULTILINGUAL
Mabel



SUPERPUPPER POWER: UNSTOPPABLE HEART PATIENT
Marvin



SUPERPUPPER POWER: SPUNK, BARBARIC BARK
Harry

Your Support

While we wish we could give every dog a home, that is simply not feasible or realistic.

Our dream to completion will cost \$5 million, of which we have already raised \$3.7 million. Our business model is sound and solvent, and we have created the best team that includes some of the most talented and dedicated professionals in the industry. Our daily operations are overseen by a board of directors that believes as strongly as we do in this dream—not just because it's a smart solution to a growing problem, but also because it's a smart solution that includes easily attainable goals and desired outcomes—a solution that WILL make a difference and have a lasting impact for generations to come.

Your generous support will help complete the build-out of our facility and begin transforming the lives of so many senior dogs as we continue to ramp up to our official grand opening in 2023.

With your gift, you will become a lifetime member of the Pepper's family and your name will appear on our Wall of Fame at our new facility. With gifts of \$5,000 or greater, donors become a member of our Legacy Circle, which includes even more perks and benefits.

The Outcome of Your Support

Philanthropic support is the most critical ingredient to our success. Our vision cannot be Realized without it. It is the foundation upon which our mission comes to life. There is no question that the need is significant, and the problem will only get worse without the execution of our detailed plan. Fortunately, we have designed a very sound solution that is ready to be enacted. We have recruited the best professionals, we've crafted an exemplary business model, we have an incredibly strong support and partner network that includes the endorsement of several respected animal welfare agencies. And we have the ideal property on which our new state-of-the-art facility is being constructed. All the pieces are in place. Well, almost all of them. We still need you.



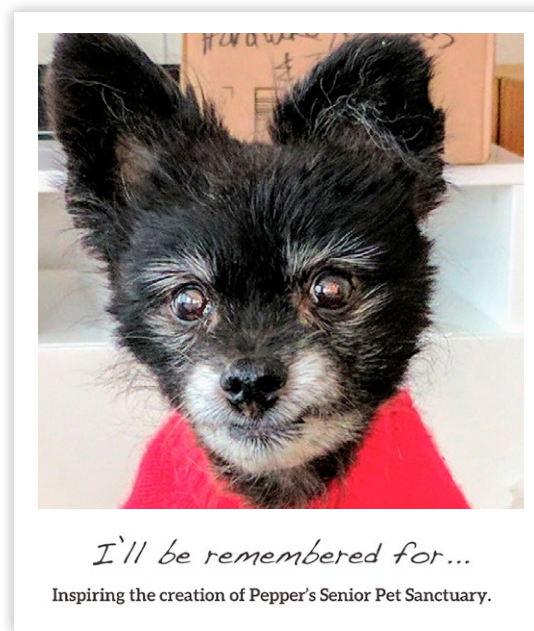
Your Support

We don't expect you to fully comprehend our passion or stand by our mission if you are not a lover of animals. But we hope our message is compelling enough for you to believe in that passion and trust in our mission because, when executed, that mission will save the lives of countless senior dogs, and impact the greater community in a way that alters how we look at these wonderful creatures and, more importantly, how we value them.

It would be unthinkable to imagine a world where humans are randomly sent to their death simply because of their age, or because of health conditions that require long-term medical treatment, or because they have a less-than-cheerful demeanor towards others. But countless senior dogs are sentenced with such a fate every day. Your support will help bring about a significant reduction in the number of dogs who fall to such a fate. But most of all, it will create a wonderful, loving, caring, and nurturing environment in a safe and comforting forever home for so many senior dogs, as well as a beautiful hospice center where they will continue to receive the best possible treatment, love and care right up to their very last breath.

It is a remarkably satisfying moment when you realize that your efforts have made such a significant difference, giving an even greater purpose to your life—one of the moments that, if we're lucky, come only once or twice in a lifetime. For us, this is one of those moments.

Please join us.



Remembering our namesake, Pepper. To learn more about Pepper and our other residents, [click here](#).

Our Leadership

It's our pleasure to introduce our leadership team to you. Click on any bio for full information.



Paula Jacques-Bonneau

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Paula brings a comprehensive background in education to Pepper's Board of Directors, and is dedicated to animal welfare and learning opportunities. Paula brings a comprehensive background in education to Pepper's...

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Justin Klemer

COO & FOUNDER

Justin has a B.A. in business finance from Metro State University and is a fourth-generation Colorado native. Justin has a B.A. in business finance from Metro State University and is a fourth-generation Colorado native...

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Leigh Sullivan

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, BRAND MANAGER & FOUNDER

Leigh is a Denver native, the founder of the Sullivan Restaurant Group, a wife, and a mother of two children, and three dogs. Leigh Sullivan is the Development Director for Pepper's Senior Dog Sanctuary (PSDS)...

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Grace Guard

YOUTH AMBASSADOR

Grace is a seventh-grade student at Ranch View Middle School. Grace has been a lifelong dog lover and advocate which is why when her family told her they were moving out of Denver to Littleton...

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Weston Plakke

YOUTH AMBASSADOR

Weston is a tenth-grader at ThunderRidge High School. Weston, an avid dog lover has many talents including all things multi-media. Weston can often be found mucking stalls, playing lacrosse, or hanging out with his friends...

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Our Board of Directors

We are grateful for the time, talent, and expertise of these individuals.

Please click any name to view their full bio.

J. Brad Olsen

Chairman of the Board

Mary Leprino

Founder & Secretary of the Board

Jes Cytron

Andi Leahy

Jon F. Sands

Erica Lopez

Jesse Ogas

Larry Kunz

Steve Greig

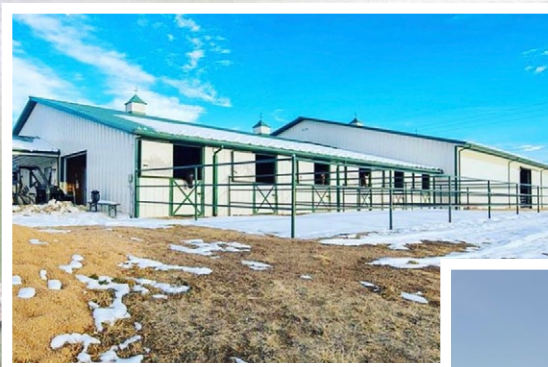
A 'Pawsitively' Joyful Dream Come True...

Saving the lives of more senior dogs is our passion.

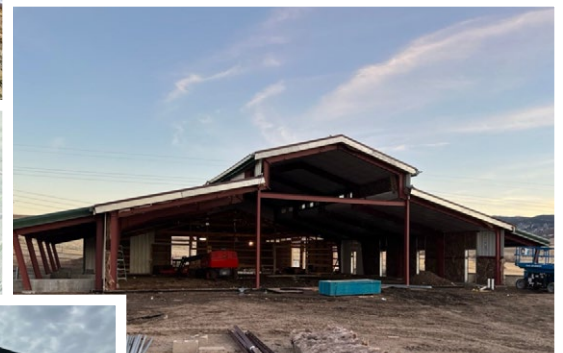
We are excited to fully open our doors in 2023 so that we can provide a homelike environment for senior dogs in need, so that they can be loved and experience joy for the rest of their lives.

As our buildout reaches new heights, so does our joy!

PRE-CONSTRUCTION 2019



DECEMBER 2021



AUGUST 2022



FINAL RENDERING



The Senior Rescue Dogs of PSDS
Thank You!



PEPPER'S
SENIOR DOG SANCTUARY