

My Three Dogs

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If not for my friend Tina, Circle Tail's Executive Director Marlys, and my Circle Tail dogs, I would not be the person I am today. I would not be as mobile, confident and capable as I am. They gave me back my life. I am eternally grateful, as are the people who share their life with me. I have known Tina for over 30 years. Tina introduced me to Marlys, who accepted my application for a service dog from Circle Tail, and my life began to improve.



In 2002 I had a surgery go horribly wrong. Instead of waking up the next day, I woke up from a coma three months later, and spent another 3 months in the hospital. Upon discharge, the living room became my bedroom. There I learned how to be a person again.

I was left with some serious deficits: traumatic brain injury, loss of cognitive function, PTSD, balance issues, decrease in both large and small motor skills, and more. Put succinctly, I was a mess. I thought my life was over.

Nixa

In July 2004, Nixa came into my life. Nixa picked up the hundreds of things I dropped in a day. Nixa leaned into me when I started to lose my balance. Nixa gave me the confidence to push myself to walk, no easy task. I began to take on the world again. I began to think with Nixa's help perhaps I could have a life.

Nixa's unconditional love gave me permission to love myself. I was not defective or unworthy. I am one-half of team Nixa. Nixa crossed over the rainbow bridge in 2010. I refused to go back to pre-Nixa days. Nixa had given me to greatest gift possible-she gave me back my life.



Mario



Mario came into my life March 2011. I had high expectations for him. Mario exceeded them all. Mario gave me the confidence to travel more, including a trip to Scotland (where we were arrested for making an illegal entry). Mario was a people magnet. He was a huge flirt. Mario's extroverted behavior helped me be more social.

Mario retired in April 2018. He now lives with our vet. Mario is well loved and cared for. Mario has three boys under the age of 11 to meet his every need. All Mario needs to do is be a dog—which he is very good at.



Keen

Keen and I have been matched almost a year now. He is snoring right next to me. We just came in from a two mile walk and we're both tired. Keen is sweet, calm, charming, and an astounding service dog. He knows what I'm thinking, almost before I do. Keen's eyes draw me in and envelop me in support and love.



Each of my three service dogs has helped me be a more functioning person. Each has given me the courage to live my life. Each service dog as allowed me to try new things. Nixa, Mario, and Keen have given me far more than I ever expected. Each has given me safety, confidence, bravery, joy, smiles and laughter.

There are not enough words to express my unwavering gratitude for Tina, Marlys, Circle Tail, Nixa, Mario and Keen.