

“Ollie” – in memory

8th February 2008



Ollie's is a story that illustrates well the power of the spirit over these frail and temporary bodies which are our physical existence.

Four years ago Joey joined the BrightHaven family to train to become our mascot so that dear old Ollie could begin his retirement – at the grand old age of 18 years.

Today, Joey joins with me to write to you of Ollie's amazing journey to the stars at 145am today, February 8th 2008.



This photograph below was taken of the two of them just a couple of short weeks ago



This feisty and rambunctious Dachshund, who lived to the grand old age of 22 years, cheated his very death so many times that we could never believe him not to be invincible.

Ollie graced the halls of BrightHaven in his fifteenth year of life - and life and laughter is exactly what he brought to us. After spinal surgery left him unable to again walk his 90 year old guardian was forced to seek help and luckily it was us she found.

Ollie and his wheelchair were in for a shock (as were we it now seems!!)

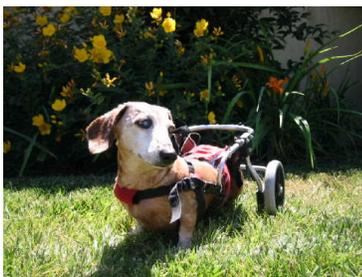
This man had lived a quiet and somewhat sheltered life and suddenly his days were filled with fun and frolic and cavorting around in his wheels. He fast became a star and thoroughly enjoyed his every waking moment – as did we all!!

Ollie became our mascot and life was sweet...that is until his health was clearly declining and after a series of strange and very high fevers we were forced to face the fact that time was short – perhaps in 2003 I think!!

On one life threatening occasion we finally resorted to taking Ollie to a conventional veterinarian for evaluation and another opinion. We had treated him both naturally and also conventionally to no avail and desperately sought help for this special man who did not wish to die. Unhappily the trip brought us nothing but the sad news that there was nothing more to be done. Meningitis was the diagnosis and euthanasia the recommendation for our boy.

Well rubbish we said – and continued on our merry way.

Ollie had no wish to die and so we supported him through thick and thin as we silently prepared to endure his demise. Hmmm the weeks rolled



Tigger2 caring for his friend



Watched over by Tim



A closer watch by Oscar



The boys at rest!

by and finally Ollie announced he felt better and was ready to resume normal duties.....well a little slower than usual it seemed!!

We watched him closely and his wonderful homeopathic veterinarian, Michele Yasson, supported him through his troubles and difficult days – and each and every time this magnificent dog bounced back from the highest fever or most toxic situation with new and renewed vigor.

The end of 2005 saw the approach to another end of Ollie’s life and this time we knew his resistance to be at final low ebb and he became deathly ill with frightening speed. This time nothing worked at all and sadly we knew the time was close at hand for him to meet his maker.

His vet prescribed new remedies to help in his comfort but Ollie responded not. He could neither eat nor drink and sadly we syringed drops of water through his dry lips as he wound down to die.

The dog who could not leave was leaving. The house became quiet and cats gathered around their friend. They ate with him: they slept with him. He was never left alone. Strange it seemed as we knew that they should all have said their last farewells by now and left.

A new remedy prescribed seemed hardly worthwhile, but might keep him more peaceful we knew and so it was to be. Ollie became quiet and peaceful and relaxed and sweet as he awaited his final fate. We were exhausted. Fray slept on the floor beside him...finally creeping to the couch for comfort in the wee small hours only.

I cannot tell you when we knew the tide had turned and Ollie was back. It happened slowly and although before our very eyes we could not believe this miracle of healing that had been given to this amazing spirit once more. Ollie had more work to do and do it well he would!

By the summer of 2006 Ollie had become the inspiration for many. Six short months previously we had sadly taken his wheelchair to sit quietly alone where he could have still seen it (if he could have seen that is!!) and moved his bed to a more central location from whence to say farewell. Well, that summer saw Ollie once more in his wheelchair – happily trundling (his days of racing behind him) along.

His highlights became the days when his favorite friend Rose stopped by to take him out for a whirl in the gardens. She always treated him as the puppy he really was – and always will be!!

It is truly the end of a BrightHaven era today as I recall the life and times of this amazing dog who showed cats that their “9 lives” theory was pure bunkum. He would be around forever!

The moral?

There truly is a moral to Ollie’s story.

This dog should have been dead – and would be dead many times over had we has listened to a conventional source and we followed through to *put him out of our misery*.

True: Ollie was dying. He smelled awful

There seemed no hope.

With Lucy, Woody & Beau



Dying – with Gail, Beau, Charlie & Barney



Watched over by Beau & Woody



Barney, Woody, Ollie, Charlie & Beau



Towards the end with Barney

He was barely alive.

False: He wanted to die.

And, my friends that is where the lesson lies.

Ollie did not want to die and sometimes that is all it takes.

His very will to survive and the love he shared were exactly what were needed. Had we not heeded the dog himself who would not give up he would have long since been dead.

Even in his darkest days he was “alive” inside himself.

Our deepest senses just “knew” he was still there and still wishing for this precious life with his purpose yet not quite finished it seemed.

Now, on to the remarkable events of this morning:

Last evening Ollie was lower – we could see that.

The cats, Beauregard, Woody, Barney and Charlie snuggled even closer, and we settled down for a long night of vigil.

Fray roused me at 130am to mention she heard a little sound from Ollie and so I slid my arms under and around his body as best I could, given the arms and paws already around him!!

He laid his head on my arm and I could feel his heart beating quite strongly.

We began once more to talk of old days in Ollie’s life and Richard went to make tea and, as we reminisced I suddenly became aware that I could no longer feel a beat.

Ollie inclined his head so very slightly, as if in a gentle nod of farewell and was gone.

Was that the end of our story? No, indeed it was not.

As is our way we sat around to talk some more in honor of our boy, and gradually came to realize that all the cats had not left, which is generally their way. Once the person they are caring for has departed they always leave for they are no longer needed and it is our turn to hold and cuddle our loved one.

As we curled together on the floor, we watched as they each honored Ollie by touching him gently and sitting for a very long period beside his still body.

Finally Beauregard (28 years!) took over and lay down beside his old friend and cohort and placed his head on Ollie’s, there to remain for a very long time. It was a sight too beautiful for words.

We were finally forced by nature to take a short nap, but could not sleep it seemed. As I finally drifted a while in slumber I dreamed that Ollie was alive. I stroked his fur – I KNEW him to be well and strong. I awoke with a start to hear Fray exclaiming she had just had the strangest dream – that Ollie was still alive.

I guess it was his farewell to us both!

Beauregard, for the first time in weeks is taking a long nap.



Beauregard's last farewell



Charlie, Woody, Beau, Ollie & Barney – at the end.

*We Have a Secret
We have a secret, you and I
That no one else shall know,
For who but I can see you lie
Each night in fire glow?
And who but I can reach my hand
Before we go to bed
And feel the living warmth of you
And touch your silken head?
And only I walk woodland paths
And see ahead of me
Your small form racing with the wind
So young again, and free
And only I can see you swim
In every brook I pass
And when I call, no one but I
Can see the bending grass.*

- Anonymous

