

SOPHIE & SIERRA'S STORY



THE GIRLS TODAY

Since The Wildcat Sanctuary is a rescue organization for wild cats, you might think it may seem odd that we have canine rescues on board as well. Case in point, Sophie and Sierra, the two huskies. But when we heard of their plight back in 1999, there was no way we would refuse to help.

We received an email from the non-profit group, Adopt A Husky, who needed help rescuing 20 dogs in Iowa. Authorities made the right decision to close a puppy mill where all 20 dogs were living in one room in a tiny semi-trailer (no windows.)

The conditions were deplorable. The floor was covered with fecal matter and the dogs covered in fleas.

They were living with a pack mentality and continually inbreeding. We arrived and began separating the dogs, giving them flea baths. They were malnourished, some with severe health problems from being mutilated by dogs higher in the pecking order. None of these dogs had ever stepped foot outside prior to the day they were rescued. One dog went into shock and passed away from being moved from his surroundings.



DOGS AFTER FIRST BATH



SIERRA DAY OF RESCUE

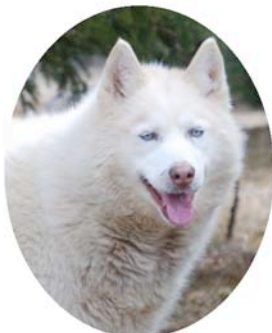
We drove all of the dogs back to MN for another bath, vet care and with a public plea for foster care. Adopt A Husky did a wonderful job ensuring these neglected animals received the best of care, especially since they were so difficult to place because of their lack of socialization.

TWS fell in love with Sophie and Sierra and they have been with us ever since. One can only imagine what it must've been like for them when they first arrived...

the first time feel of grass or snow under their feet, fresh water to drink, nutritional food on a daily basis, enrichment from a ball to chase or a bone to chew on, and simply a warm and safe place to curl up and sleep, allowed to be each other's constant companion.



THE EARLY YEARS



As has always been their way, the girls took it in stride when we moved from Isanti to Sandstone, and then moved two more times to their permanent enclosure. They enjoy each other's company as well as play dates with resident and keeper's dogs.



SOPHIE & SIERRA...

SPECIAL NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS

As human beings, we react to situations or changes in our environment based on our previous experiences. When we have new experiences, some of us are shy, some anxious, and some of us are exuberant. Sophie and Sierra are no different.

These very special huskies are in need of very specific treatment and care.

Sierra and Sophie have personality characteristics that make it difficult for them to trust people and they are resource guarders.

They are most comfortable alone with each other or with another dog, for example Kouza. They are leery of people.

They are always on alert when something new occurs in their environment such as new interns and new DACs/volunteers.

Because of this, we as volunteers, need to be consistent when we work with them.

Some things we can do to decrease their stress when we are near them include being neutral, use treats mindfully, do not use their food to get them to come to you, let them approach you first, use consistent socially acceptable behavior, for instance do not stare at them or invade their "personal space."

Sophie and Sierra need our love and attention, BUT on their terms not ours.

We need to respect them and meet them where they are, not where we want them to be.

This past year, Sophie has intermittently walked on a leash outside of her enclosure with staff members. Sierra is just starting to walk into the double doors and tapping staff and volunteer hands with her nose.

These two girls have come a long way.

They need our patience and time to continue building a trusting relationship with us.

