

## *Gryffin's and Romeo's Story*



I was born in Tokyo, Japan. Even though I grew up in one of the biggest cities in the world, I was never a city-girl. I used to watch a Disney movie about a family who moves to the Rocky Mountain wilderness. I used to dream of living in a place like that, beautiful mountains and serene lakes. Years later, I found myself living in Denver, Colorado, a few minutes from beautiful mountains I used to dream about. My dream of my childhood became true, but I didn't feel



fulfilled. I felt lost in my utopia, I didn't know what I was supposed to do here. I had a good job, a loving family, a nice house and I enjoyed fishing and hiking, but I didn't have an inspiration in my life. Gryffin and Romeo came into my life in December 2002 and changed all that. They completed my life in this dream world by giving me a life's passion.

When I started to think about adopting a dog in 2002, I knew I wanted a large, short hair dog. One afternoon, volunteers from a greyhound rescue group were on a local news channel, talking about adopting retired racing greyhounds. They called the breed "40 mph couch potatoes". It sounded like a perfect fit for my life style! I went to the group's Meet & Greet at Petsmart to meet them in person, and I was surprised how calm and docile they were. I read a few books about them and I liked the idea more and more. One of the books I read had a list of activities greyhounds were good at, and I was particularly interested in one of them, therapy dog. The book said because of their calm, gentle personality and easy-to-reach-from-wheelchairs-and-hospital-beds size, they were very good for this kind of work. I started to research about it on the Internet and found the Denver Pet Partners' website.

My husband and I adopted Gryffin and Romeo in December 2002 from [Friends of Retired Greyhounds](#), a rescue group in Fort Collins. We adopted two dogs because my husband picked Gryffin and I picked Romeo and we could not decide. Also, we thought having two would help Romeo's separation anxiety. I took basic obedience classes offered by Denver Dumb Friends League and later, advanced classes from Petsmart. They weren't the brightest students in the class, but Gryffin passed Delta Society's Pet Partners evaluation in September 2003, and Romeo passed it in August 2004. Some people have asked me if greyhounds can be trained. My answer is "Yes, it can be done! It takes a lot of patience and hotdogs!"



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Romeo was born on July 29, 2000. His racing name was Romanov. The rescue group called him Romo at first. He was adopted once, and was returned to the group due to his separation anxiety. The group changed his name to Romeo to change his luck, and I fell in love with him. I think the new name fits his sweet and affectionate personality. He has never showed any symptoms of separation anxiety since we adopted him. He weighs 74 lbs. and he is an average sized male. He didn't race at all and I think I know why. He does not like a challenge and he would not chase a rabbit if he knew he would never be able to catch it. He would say "Why bother?" I think he will be a very good therapy dog and am looking forward to starting therapy activities with him.

Gryffin was born on October 24, 2000. His racing name was Valley Gryffindor. All of his littermates were named after names from Harry Potter books. He weighs 97 lbs. and he is one of the biggest greyhounds you'll ever meet. He is not your typical skinny greyhound. He loves to eat and eats anything. He does not have a favorite food, "It's All Good". My husband and I call him Bubba at home because his personality reminds us of Bubba in the movie, Forrest Gump. He loves children and lots of attention. I registered him as a Reading Education Assistance Dog and he enjoys once a month session at Highlands Ranch Library.

Currently, Gryffin and I visit Life Care Center of Littleton a few times a month. At one of my shadow visits there, there was a patient who was in pain that day. She told us that she took a pain-killer a few hours earlier, and needed to wait for another hour before she could take another pill. Because of our visit, the hour felt shorter and easier to pass.

We usually visit the short-term care wing of Life Care Center. The patients are there for short term for physical therapy or just waiting for long term rooms to open up, so my client list changes all the time. I remember one lady in particular. She was a roommate of one of my clients. She remembered Gryffin's name on our second visit to her room. Although she was allergic to dogs and did not want to pet him, she seemed happy to see us. She always yelled to her roommate "Gryffin is here to see you. Oh what a beautiful dog he is." Although she was not on my client list, I tried to make some conversation with her before continuing to visit her roommate. I suspected that she did not have many visitors and looked forward to our visit.

I enjoy sharing my dogs' love and affection with people. Through the therapy work, I hope I can make someone's day a little brighter or pain a little easier to bear. I hope a little bit here and there would eventually add up to something. (Mino would be happy to answer any questions about adopting a Greyhound. Please contact her at [minofuller@hotmail.com](mailto:minofuller@hotmail.com) ).





Editor's Note: *From ex-racer to a dog with a heart racing with love.....these elegant and noble Greyhounds with a rich history dating back to 1450 B.C. Egypt possess a unique demeanor that makes them natural candidates for doing therapy work. They are calm and dramatic at the same time.*

*This month's Pet Partner team of the month is a tribute to this wonderful breed's long standing contribution to humankind. Their unique spirit is something to be celebrated. Our hope is that this story will only begin to deepen your appreciation and understanding of this regal breed. Perhaps you'll catch "Greyhound Fever" and your life will be changed forever!*

*Just to give you an example of their extraordinary loyalty, there's a touching tale of one particular Greyhound's attachment to a little girl, remarkable considering that, before he became a pet, he had never even seen a child - it's the tale of Tuxedo, a male Grey who missed the little girl he lived with so much that on her first day of kindergarten he went into her room, collected all of her stuffed toys, and slept on the pile of them until she returned home.*

*Mino, Denver Pet Partners feels greatly enriched by having you, Gryffin and Romeo on our team. May their ability to make our hearts race last a long time. You have our gratitude for not only adopting Gryffin and Romeo, but for enhancing other's lives by sharing them.*

Diana McQuarrie

### **Links to Greyhound-Related Web Sites**

Friends of Retired Greyhounds, the rescue group Romeo and Gryffin came from.  
<http://www.forgreyhounds.org/index.htm>

Available Dogs Page  
<http://www.forgreyhounds.org/available.htm>

Greyhound general info  
<http://www.forgreyhounds.org/generalinfo.htm>

Other rescue groups in Colorado

Recycled Racers: <http://www.recycledracers.org/>

Rocky Mountain Greyhound Adoption: <http://www.rmga.org/>

Colorado Greyhound Adoption: <http://www.coloradogreyhoundadoption.com/>

Colorado Greyhound Companions: <http://www.cogreyco.org/>

[National Greyhound Adoption](#) which have a list of rescue groups nationwide.

Adopt A Greyhound: <http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org/>

Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies by Lee Livingood

<http://www.retiredracinggreyhounds.com/rrghfd.html#anchor76397>

Lee Livingood's website (very informative)

<http://www.retiredracinggreyhounds.com/>