

A Friend in Need

by Linda Tynan

Practicing veterinary medicine can offer many moments of joy, but there are some that are simply heartbreaking. There are times when we are completely horrified at what man will do to his best friend. On February 18, 2013, a woman in Athens, Ala. brought a pit bull into Town & Country Animal Hospital with a 22-pound logging chain padlocked around her neck. The 10-foot chain had actually grown into the muscle of her neck. The dog was severely neglected and abused, with scars on her front legs and face that appeared to be evidence that she had been used in dogfights. She also had other signs of abuse such as internal parasites.

Dr. John Hammons referred to the woman who brought her in as a "Good Samaritan." She claimed to have found the dog wandering near Salem in Limestone County. She acted concerned for the dog and even expressed the desire to adopt the dog after she was treated according to a story on al.com. After police investigated the situation, going door-to-door in the Salem community, they discovered she, in fact, was the dog's owner. Farrah Hope Michael, 24, was charged with cruelty to animals and was booked into Limestone County Jail.

Hammons volunteered his services to surgically remove the chain and provide her the medication and shelter the dog required for her recovery. When asked about the compassion he showed for the dog Hammons said, "I speak for all veterinarians, all veterinarians are kind-hearted and have a desire to help disadvantaged pets."

Hammons asked residents of the community to give her a name and "Honey" was their choice. Now, after surgery and treatment, Honey is doing well and has fully recovered. Despite her cruel treatment, she is a sweet, loving pet now waiting for her forever home.

Local author Barbara McGregor was moved by the story and participated in a book-signing



Honey feeling much better after surgery and recovery. (Photos courtesy of Town & Country Animal Hospital © 2013 All rights reserved.)



This 2-year-old pit bull was found near the Salem community in Limestone County with a 22-pound logging chain embedded into her neck. (Photos courtesy of Kelly Kazek al.com. © 2013 All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission)

event on April 6 to help raise money for Honey. Honey even made an appearance at the local bookstore for the first hour. McGregor donated the proceeds to cover the cost of care for Honey, and is also donating a portion of on-line sales. Any remaining funds will be used to help other animals in the area that have been abused or neglected. McGregor learned that Hammons had a history of helping pets in need, and said the fundraiser has become a Good Samaritans fund called "Turn the Page for Honey and Friends."

"We took Honey in because of the potential abuse and turned it into a situation that will help Honey as well as other pets," says Hammons. His compassion for animals spread through the community and as a result people came together to turn something negative into something positive. This friend in need found a friend in Dr. Hammons, a friend indeed.

