



National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance Newsletter January 2026



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Letter From the Presidents

Dear NISRA Friends, Supporters, and the Icelandic Sheepdog Community:

Reflecting on 2025, we thank you for being a community that transforms uncertainty into safety for Icelandic Sheepdogs in need. Founded in 2009, the National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance (NISRA) is a volunteer-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit and the only specialized rescue in the United States dedicated exclusively to Icelandic Sheepdogs. Our mission is straightforward: to serve as a safety net for the breed, making sure every “Icie” in need has a direct route to a safe, permanent home.

Most of our work centers on owner-assisted rehoming—a compassionate, non-judgmental process that helps families manage life changes while focusing on the dog’s well-being. We strive to place each dog in a carefully vetted, breed-savvy home. Additionally, we support dogs from shelters or vulnerable situations by coordinating foster care and transportation and making sure they get the right medical and behavioral support for a smooth transition.

Stories From 2025

This year’s dogs reflect the wide range of needs NISRA addresses—and the impact your support makes possible.

- **Bella:** After her owner’s illness and passing caused instability, Bella needed a safe transition. NISRA matched her with an experienced adopter from our network. She is now thriving on a small farm with daily exercise, attentive care, and a calm canine companion.
- **Charlie:** At 14, Charlie faced urgent removal when his elderly owner was hospitalized with dementia and couldn’t return home. NISRA arranged local boarding while we mobilized to find a foster-to-adopt solution. He was placed with a loving family ready to meet an older dog’s needs.
- **Helly** (now Sheba): NISRA was contacted about a young “Ice-alike,” approximately 6 months old, at a Texas shelter. After veterinary care, she was placed with an NISRA-approved foster who is a professional trainer, an Icelandic Sheepdog breeder, and a rescue expert. After the temperament and social skills assessment, Sheba traveled to her new home in Virginia, where she’s enjoying hiking, swimming, and working toward the Canine Good Citizen title.
- **Southstar’s Litja and Southstar’s Yifa:** When travel issues left these two 14-year-old dogs (and two cats) stranded in a boarding facility, NISRA helped boost fundraising so they could safely return to their owner in the United Kingdom.
- NISRA also provided courtesy postings throughout 2025 to help connect owners and shelters with suitable adopters.

Our Community’s Impact

None of this happens without you. Donations support veterinary care, boarding, and transportation; fosters provide stability; and volunteers handle the logistics that rescue depends on. In 2025, **over 75% of NISRA’s expenses went directly to helping Icies in need**, reflecting a mission-first approach and a volunteer community committed to maximizing every dollar for direct impact.

Thank you for supporting NISRA and for your dedication to safeguarding the dogs we cherish. In 2026, we will continue to respond promptly when needed, thoughtfully place each dog, and maintain the high standards of care this exceptional breed deserves.

With gratitude,

Paula E. Sanderson and Elaine Mozur

Co-Presidents, National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance (NISRA)

Dogs Helped in 2025

Bella

In February of 2025, NISRA received a request to help rehome an Icie. Bella was a nearly eight-year-old Icelandic Sheepdog. Her owner became ill, and Bella went to live with the owner's daughter. Unfortunately, Bella did not get along with the daughter's dog and caused severe fights. The daughter put up with this for her dad's sake but once he passed away, she began to search for a better long-term solution. She reached out to NISRA. We were able to determine who Bella's breeder was and with their blessing, began to search for a new home.

We looked through the list of people who had filled out Volunteer Forms from the NISRA Website indicating their interest in adoption. We were able to find a very good fit and now Bella is thriving on a small farm with lots of exercise and attention. She even has a dog "sibling" that she doesn't fight with! She and "Pippin" play and sleep together. They get to go on hikes and sometimes camping weekends with the family.



Her new owner also reports that Bella has successfully lost weight and can now jump on the couch and run full out. (She was unable to do these things when she first moved in due to her obesity).

Bella's first owner's daughter is very happy this has worked out so well, as is her breeder. It's been great for everyone!

Don't hesitate to reach out to NISRA if you ever need help in rehoming your Icie. Life brings changes and sometimes a new home is necessary. We are also happy to help if you find an "Ice-a-like" dog in a shelter in need of help. We are here for you!

Charlie



In the afternoon of September 17th, NISRA received a frantic call on their mobile number (508.205.9772) from a gentleman in California indicating he needed to find a home for his father's 14-year-old Icelandic Sheepdog immediately. His father was in the hospital with dementia and was not coming home. Charlie had been the father's companion for 13 years and, as such, was used to companionship. Unfortunately, the son had cats and could not bring Charlie into his home. Charlie was relegated to the garage where he barked nonstop and tried to claw his way out to be with the son. The frustrated son needed the dog removed by the next day.

Knowing the next step for Charlie was a shelter, we told the son we would board the dog locally while we searched for a forever home. Google led us to a very hands-on boarding facility that housed their guests in their home and let them sleep in their bedroom. Charlie needed this TLC! The son transported Charlie to the facility where he settled into the boarder's home without hesitation and played with their lab pup. They reported that Charlie was the sweetest boy and they wished that they could keep him (but with 13 labs that was not possible). Charlie slept soundly, never barking once, and decompressed there while NISRA searched for a foster/adoption home.

Charlie didn't have to wait very long for a new start. We reached out to the Icelandic Sheepdog Breeder Facebook group to find out if anyone knew Charlie's breeder or of someone in California looking for a rescue to adopt. Within a few hours, we had a person to contact. After a day of discussions, the interested party felt Charlie was not a good fit. Meanwhile, another breeder put us into contact with a family that lived

within a few miles of Charlie's current location. Once the foster form was complete, the family picked up Charlie and introduced him to their dog and home. It took a few days for their dog to approve of Charlie but they became friends and the family had fallen in love.

Placing an older dog has its concerns but Charlie was deemed healthy by the father's vet. Unfortunately, what we thought was a case of being overweight was not. He had large masses thought to be lipomas that were inoperable. They were affecting his mobility but were not a threat to any of his organs. Happily, the family decided to open their home to Charlie and keep him comfortable for the remainder of his life. In a true gesture of kindness, the family asked us to reach out to the son to see if he and his father would like to remain in contact with Charlie. The son, extremely grateful, said yes. We hit the jackpot!

Lessons learned:

- Listen and don't JUDGE
- Estate planning needs to include planning for your pets' future when you are gone
- The Icelandic Sheepdog community is first-rate!



Helly/Sheba

NISRA was contacted at the end of March, 2025 regarding a young female dog, resembling an Icelandic Sheepdog, who was being held at the Little Elm Animal Shelter in Texas for five days. After having her shots, being spayed and microchipped, Helly was released into the care of a NISRA appointed foster who identified her as an Ice-alike, approximately 6 months old.



The foster, a professional dog trainer & Icelandic Sheepdog breeder with extensive rescue and foster experience evaluated her temperament, including Helly's play & work drive at her training facility to determine her needs for a permanent home. We received photos and regular reports of Helly's sociability and how well she fit in with the pack. The assessment was that Helly was a delightful dog that would be a good match for most good homes. After contacting the few volunteer adopters in the area



without any luck, we posted her availability on NISRA Facebook and immediately found interest from a wonderful family. Helly was successfully adopted on April 17, 2025 by a wonderful family in Virginia who were able to secure transport from Texas to Virginia. We are grateful to the Vaninnis, who fostered Helly and hustled her to the vet for her post spay and heartworm clearances at the last minute so that she could be prepared to catch a ride to her permanent home! We have received many photos and reports on Sheba's progress and activities from her new family (including hiking, swimming and canine good citizenship training) and are pleased to have been able to facilitate this rescue.

Southstar's Litja & Southstar's Ylfa

In May of 2025, NISRA helped facilitate the reunion of 14 year old Icelandic Sheepdogs "Southstar's Litja" and "Southstar's Ylfa" with their owner Elizabeth in the United Kingdom. Due to administrative issues, the elderly dogs as well as two cats were held up in a boarding facility in the US. Costs were mounting and their owner was desperate to get her animals back. NISRA was able to provide funds to supplement other money raised so these two sweet old ladies could travel safely to their new home in the United Kingdom



Here is an excerpt and update on the dogs from Elizabeth: "I'm not a person who is good at reaching out, but I knew that without the help of the community I would not be

able to get my dogs home to me.

Fortunately, I was able to raise enough money with the help of the National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Association (NISRA) and a GoFundMe page. I literally do not know what I would've done had this not been available.



Ylfa and Litja continue to plug along in their old dog ways and fuss with each other at meal times. They come out on walks multiple times a day around the beautiful property that I am renting and sometimes go for a run in the paddock, at least a slow walk anyway. They have made it as far as the pub twice and they really enjoyed the socialization. Again, I

have the purr of their breathing at night time as well as the symphony of the cats. These four pets of mine are quite remarkable. Not only have the two cats and two dogs been together since birth for 4 years, they have lived on three continents. While Ylfa is in better health, I do not take her out and leave Litja alone. We slowly take our walks around the property together. When I let her in the paddock she goes no more than 100 yards. I have been grateful to age alongside my dogs and we commiserate about stiff joints!"

Courtesy Postings for 2025

Here are some of the dogs (Icies and Ice-a-Likes) that NISRA provided courtesy postings for owners and shelters in 2025. They all found new homes.



Top: “Bailey”, “Chewy”

Bottom: “Leika”, and “Bingo”

Financial Report 2025

NISRA Expenses 2025



Funding NISRA's funding was based on individual donations until 2012 when the 2013 Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Calendar was created by Elaine Mozur & Dolores Porrino. The calendar was well received and has been printed annually through 2026, providing a reliable source of annual funding for NISRA. (If interested, you can still order a 2026 Icelandic Sheepdog Calendar on the NISRA website.)

<https://nationalicelandicsheepdogrescuealliance.org/>

In October of 2013, Jo Ann Secondino hosted the first Ictoberfest, a large weekend gathering of fun activities for Icies and owners in Maryland, which became a fall tradition. It was held annually for 7 years through 2019. Ictoberfest sponsored a variety of fundraising events including auctions, silent auctions and the sale of clothing & items with Ictoberfest logos, designed by Christine Vowles, to promote/

commemorate the events. The Ictoberfest provided a large source of funding to jump start NISRA in its early years.

As the need for NISRA rescue efforts has recently grown, the need for NISRA funding has also increased. In 2024, the ISAA BOD offered to provide funding assistance to NISRA on an annual basis. We are also considering new fundraising options and welcome entrepreneur's assistance with this endeavor.

NISRA Board

Paula Sanderson: Co-President:
Elaine Mozur: Co-President
Loren Dribinsky: Consultant
Moriah Schmidt: Secretary
Christine Vowles: Treasurer
Dolores Porrino: Data Manager
Cari Swanson: Advisor
Colleen Schmidt: Newsletter

Thank you to our 2024 and 2025 Donors for another year of lifesaving support for Icelandic Sheepdogs in need. Your kindness and generosity truly makes a difference!

Amadon Icelandics
In memory of Arbakki Kolgrimmur
Sylvia Beaudoin with thanks for Ollie
Carey Beckie
Karen Bonaventure
Athena Braun
Breezy Brae Icelandic Sheepdogs
Brosandi Icelandics
Jim Carroll
Crown Icelandics
Loren Dribinsky
EG ER Icelandic Sheepdogs
Mary Lou Engert
Patty Etzkorn
Karen Fabiano
Fox Meadow Icelandic Sheepdogs
Gera
Kent Goodier II
In memory of Jaime Hansen
Frank Heinrich
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Icelandic Sheepdog Association of America
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Lukehaven Icelandic Sheepdogs
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Elaine Mozur
Melissa Olund
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Orléans Bergers Islandais
Cindy Pratt
The Purling Princess
Lisa Richards
Dana Rhodes
RI K9 Teams: Noora (retired 2025) & Kobbi
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Runestone Icelandics
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Vereniging IJslandse Hond in Nederland
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