

SJ author pens children's books about dog rescue



Celeste E. Whittaker , @cp_CWhittaker 4:02 p.m. EST November 11, 2016

Linda Greiner has written her third book in her children's book series. The latest is Sashi and the Puppy Mill Girl. Celeste E. Whittaker



(Photo: Celeste E. Whittaker/Staff Photographer)

MOUNT LAUREL – Linda Greiner calls her late Shetland sheepdog Sashi her “heart dog.”

She loved Sashi from the moment she saw after she had been turned in by a family for “excessive herding instinct,” chasing and biting at the heels of anything or anyone that went past her.

Greiner, a Mount Laurel-based author, was connected with Sashi by [Shetland Sheepdog Placement Services of New Jersey](#) and adopted her in 2001. She and Sashi were together until she “went over the rainbow bridge” in February of 2011, Greiner said.

Her experiences with Sashi and other dogs she fostered while trying to find Sashi a brother or sister sparked several book ideas, which turned into a series, the third of which is called “Sashi and the Puppy Mill Girl.” It was released in October.

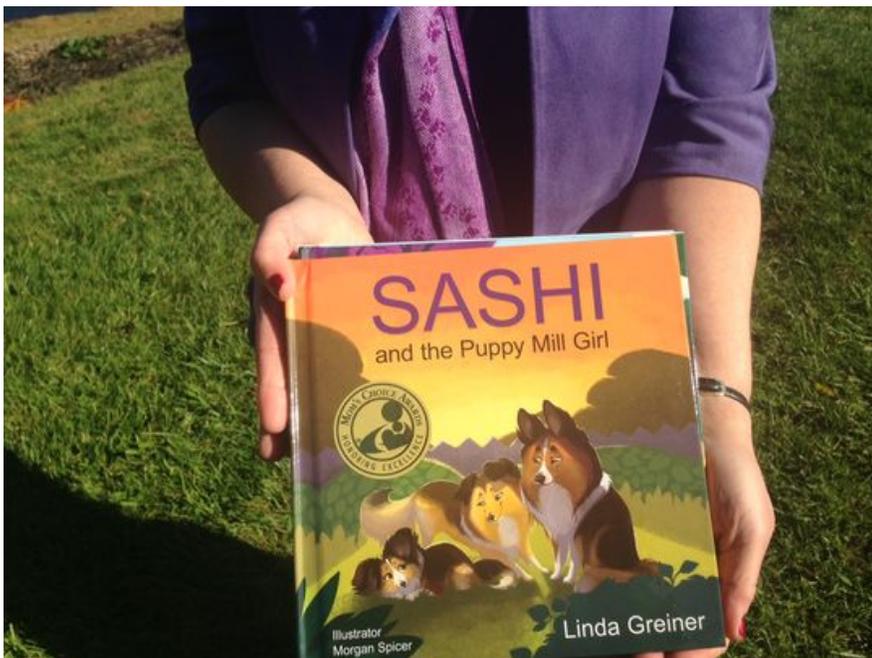
The story follows “[Sashi, the Scared Little Sheltie](#)” and “Sashi Adopts a Brother,” both released in the last two years.

“The idea for the children’s books came as I was fostering,” said Greiner, who works in community relations at TD Bank. “All of the books were in my head pretty much at one time. I felt it was important to educate people, not only about Shetland sheepdogs because people think they’re mini-Lassies (collies) and they really aren’t.”

Greiner said the books are meant to help people understand what goes into rescuing or adopting a dog and how to approach training needs regardless of the dog's background.

“You’re not going to have a perfect dog whether you buy a puppy or you foster or whatever. This also helps them see, this is how you deal with the training issues, so there are little lessons in each of the books,” she said. “Everything in the books are absolutely true.”

A portion of her book sales go to Shetland Sheepdog Placement Services of New Jersey.



Mount Laurel author Linda Greiner holds her latest book "Sashi and the Puppy Mill Girl." The book is the third in a series Greiner has written about her true life experiences with fostering and rescuing Shetland Sheepdogs. Her late dog Sashi inspired the series. (Photo: Celeste E. Whittaker/Staff Photographer)

The latest book focuses on a dog named Cinnamon that Greiner fostered in 2009. She was one of 11 Shelties brought in from a puppy mill in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Cinnamon was the oldest of the bunch.

“She had had puppies; they took the puppies away and gave her to us,” Greiner said. “This was the most depressed little dog I’ve seen in my entire life. She was matted, dirty. Cinnamon was with us for six months. She was adopted by a family that lived close by so I got to babysit her every time they went on vacation.”

Dorothy Christiansen is the founder and CFO of American Shetland Sheepdog Association National Sheltie Rescue Network and says the “third book in the Sashi series is an excellent addition to the first two. Vivid colors and ease of reading make this an ideal children's book — with a loving message.”

The books all feature Sashi as the main character. The stories include a young girl named Anna, who is actually named after one of Greiner's stepdaughters. The three books have received a Mom's Choice Award and two have earned Story Monster Approved awards.

The first, "Sashi, the Scared Little Sheltie," tells the story of Greiner and her stepdaughter Anna going to adopt Sashi and what transpired getting the dog acclimated.

"This sets the stage," Greiner said. "Because when Sashi comes to us she doesn't know anything about anything. She's afraid of trash cans. She's afraid of flags that blow in the wind, afraid of people and other dogs. By training her, she becomes the princess of the household ... and lords over all the other dogs."

Greiner currently has two Shelties – Buddy, 15 and Jenny, 5. Jenny, who she got soon after Sashi died, is the only dog Greiner has gotten from a breeder. The rest were from rescues. Buddy was a rescue, bound to become Sashi's brother.



Author Linda Greiner walks her two Shetland sheepdogs Jenny (left) and Buddy. Greiner recently released her third children's book in a series that deals with rescuing and fostering Shetland sheepdogs. (Photo: Celeste E. Whittaker/Staff Photographer)

Greiner began fostering dogs in February of 2003 to find a sibling for Sashi, figuring she would be better off with another dog around to help her "learn how to be a dog."

"My thought was by fostering, I would find the perfect dog to be her brother or sister," said Greiner, who says she's fostered 34 dogs. "At our seventh foster, Buddy came into our lives. He lost his home because of excessive behavior problems. He would destroy things, chew things up, dig things up and he was difficult to manage. Sashi thought he was the best thing in the whole world."

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