



media release

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EYE SPECIALISTS GIVE RUFUS BACK HIS SIGHT AHT vets remove cataract to give rescued Rufus back his sight

A two-year-old rescue dog from Cambridgeshire has had his sight restored thanks to complex surgery undertaken by vets at the Animal Health Trust (AHT).

Rufus, a two year-old Chinese Crested Powder Puff dog has had his first operation, which has given him sight in one eye. He will shortly undergo further surgery to restore sight in his other eye.

Rescued in July 2012 by the Chinese Crested Club of Great Britain from an abusive home in the South East of England, his foster family quickly noticed that Rufus's sight was extremely poor, leaving him extremely nervous and frightened. Vets confirmed that he could only see shadows due to cataracts in both eyes, which meant he was almost completely blind.

As Rufus's eyesight continued to deteriorate, he was rehomed in September 2012 to a foster family in Wyboston, Cambridgeshire, so that Rufus could benefit from the renowned ophthalmology specialists in the Cambridgeshire area.

Rufus was referred to the AHT, which has the largest team of ophthalmology specialists in Europe. The AHT team has given Rufus, and his foster carer Sarah Bunce, the support and guidance required to give Rufus back his sight.

Rufus needed two highly complex operations to remove the cataracts from his eyes, as well as a high level of aftercare and assessment by both the vets and his foster carers. Before Rufus could have the series of operations he desperately needed, two hurdles needed to be overcome.

The first was raising funds for the operations, and the second was the challenge Rufus's behavioural and temperament problems posed for the AHT vets. With a lot of hard work, determination and care, both

hurdles have been overcome. Rufus received his first operation on Valentine's Day and can now see for the first time in his right eye.

Rufus is not insured so in order to have the specialist surgery, his carer Sarah, and the Chinese Crested Club of Great Britain embarked on a huge fundraising campaign.

A lot of hard work and perseverance from everyone involved has gone into holding a series of raffles and auctions to raise the vital funds. Bucket collections at weekends have been held alongside a Facebook campaign, to raise enough money for the first operation.

Sarah, Rufus's carer said: "The task to raise the money was a bit daunting at first, but the amount of support the campaign has received has been really overwhelming. Rufus has had a tough start in life, but through obedience training and a lot of dedication, he is really coming along.

"The Animal Health Trust has been unbelievable. I know Rufus isn't an easy patient, but they have been brilliant at persevering with him. To be able to give a rescue dog the gift of sight is amazing, and the AHT team has been really kind and supportive.

"Rufus is really sweet, once he gets used to you. It has been amazing watching him react like a puppy to things, such as birds in the garden! He has clearly never seen them before, it is so special to be able to watch him experience things for the first time."

Claudia Hartley, the AHT's Head of Ophthalmology, said: "I'm so glad that we have been able to help Rufus. He was such a scared little dog, due to the possible abuse he may have endured, and the fact that he was almost completely blind.

"To be able to undo an injustice such as this really makes my job worthwhile. We are confident that by the time he has had the second operation, we will have been able to fully restore his sight. I hope Sarah is able to find him the good home that he deserves."

The campaign to give Rufus back his sight is still on going in order to raise funds for the second operation. Thanks to the support of everyone who has donated to the campaign so far, the AHT hope to be able to restore Rufus's full sight within the next three to four months.

Once Rufus's sight is restored fully, he will be looking for an experienced owner to work through his obedience and temperament problems and give him a loving home. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Chinese Crested Club of Great Britain by emailing rescue@thechinese Crested Club of Great Britain.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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Please credit all images to the Animal Health Trust.

Additional notes:

- The **Animal Health Trust** is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit our website at www.aht.org.uk