

The Story of *The Faith Fund*

This is a story of tragedy, healing, love, happiness, disaster, and a hope for a new beginning:



She was born in Canada in March 2003. Her coat was a rich mahogany color, her long elegant nose and pointy ears were as black as coal, and the tips of her long legs were splashed with black that always made her look like she'd just run through a puddle of used motor oil. Those familiar with the breed would immediately recognize her as a lean and elegant Belgian Turvuren.

Richard Kim was a respiratory therapist and his wife Terri was a high-school math teacher in Mt. Spokane, Washington. They bought the little puppy, named her "Faith", and soon she became not only a beloved part of the family, but an agility champion and the couple's happy hobby.

The Kim's daughter, Jessica, was doing well in college and their son Bryan, who was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, had violent tendencies, and had a terrible temper. He was nineteen years old, still in high-school, still lived with his parents.



On December 5th, 2006 life for the Kim family was about to change forever. Tired of the trouble Bryan caused, Richard and Terri sat him down to tell him he had to move out. The conversation became a loud, angry quarrel. Furious, Bryan finally left. Faith hid in the bathroom shivering in fear.

The next day Richard and Terri came home from work, and each was killed in cold blood by Brian as he waited in ambush. Faith's bloody paw prints bore witness to her frantic running around trying to bring an end to the catastrophe that was destroying her beloved family. Bryan then loaded both bodies into the bucket of a Bobcat and left to go on a lavish date with his girlfriend using money he had taken from his dead father.

Faith, with her home shattered, did something we normally only see in the movies. She ran to the neighbor's house to try to get help. The neighbors called the police who discovered the grisly scene and arrested Bryan who claimed innocence.

Bryan's legal proceedings went on until February 21st, 2008 when he was found guilty of aggravated first degree murder of his parents and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Coincidentally that day was also the day that I picked Faith up at the airport to give her a new permanent home.



My goal was to give her a quiet, simple, happy life, free of any more misery. I gave her love, peace and affection, yet she she still bore scars from that fateful day -- when ever there was a beeping sound of any kind she'd lock up in fear- the sound apparently reminded her of the back-up alarm from the Bobcat. Loud voices had the same effect on her.

Faith also decided that she had to assure the safety of anyone she cared about lest that dreadful day repeat itself. This is how she earned the nickname "Officer Dog". She was always watching and listening – on guard ready to protect those she loved - an ever-vigilant canine guardian angel.



For nearly six years Faith was my constant and devoted partner in all my adventures, travelling everywhere with me. She even spent a year exploring the western United States helping me escape city life by finding land in a remote corner of New Mexico which was to become the ranch we eventually called home.



Soon memories of collars, leashes, and fences faded away, to be replaced with roaming free, chasing rabbits, going on trail rides, splashing around in puddles and rolling around making "dog angels" in the snow. Gone was staying home alone waiting for me to come home from work - now she and I went everywhere together

every day - we were inseparable. Twice she even rode with me in our little town's fire truck in our annual Fourth of July parade. Faith had gone from hell to doggie heaven and I had found a new happiness I had previously only dreamt of.

Faith was the dog I'd always wanted. She came when called, stayed near me constantly, never ran away, refused to tear up or destroy anything. And when I needed someone to talk to, she would always listen to my problems with her big brown eyes gazing lovingly at me, not understanding a word I was saying. And when life got particularly tough, I'd hold her tight and cry into her thick coat. Faith was my very best friend; my confidant; my partner.

In November of 2013 Faith stopped eating. All the tests came back negative - it was a complete medical mystery until the vet finally found a "mass" in her larynx which was making it painful and nearly impossible for her to swallow.

I put all other tasks aside to attend to "my girl". Every two hours I force fed her liquid food with a syringe along with various medicines. Despite my efforts I



watched her go from 55 pounds to 37. Yet, through all of this, she never left my side, and never complained.

I was in the process of scheduling her for surgery when one morning she woke up a bit wobbly, but still strolled outside to sit out on the snow in the sun. Hours passed and I found her still sleeping outside. I couldn't get her to stand up on her own, so I carried her inside.

Her gums seemed pale so I took her temperature and found it very

low. She just laid there, looking up at me with her loving eyes. I attributed the cause to be the exposure to snow, so I laid her on my bed, wrapped her in a blanket, opened the curtain thus bathing her with warm sunlight, then I stepped out of the room.

Just a few minutes later I was startled by a huge racket. I ran in to find Faith scratching at the corner of the room, half upside-down, screaming, completely disoriented.

I'd never been this close to a seizure before. I struggled to figure out what to do. I fortunately had the sense to lift her onto the bed and do my best to comfort her.

She was crying, her heart was racing, and all I could do was to pet her and to tell her that I was there to help.

Then suddenly her respiration stopped. I did rescue breathing and CPR as best I could. She was alive again! Then she stopped breathing again. This macabre cycle repeated over and over for what must have been fifteen minutes until finally she stopped responding.

Then the realization hit me. My beloved dog - my devoted, loving companion - was lying lifeless on my bed. And I had failed to save her.

I'll admit that I blubbered for a long time, crying my eyes out into her thick coat one last time. I just kept apologizing, over and over, for not doing more. I was a quivering emotional mess.

I've had to put dogs to sleep in the past, but in the big city it was a simple, clinical, push-button affair. I made the decision, the vet administered a drug, the



dog passed gently, I left her in the examination room, and a few weeks later a wooden box with ashes arrived in the mail.

To start, Faith did not die gently. It was, in fact, a horrible experience. I witnessed the pain, confusion and desperation of a family member I loved, and I did precious little to help. I suppose that at least I was there to hold and comfort her, at least she died at home rather than alone in a cage, at least she died in my arms hearing my voice, feeling my touch, but I still wish I could have done more.

And then I had to deal with my girl's body. Burying her on the ranch she loved seemed like the only viable option. So I phoned up a good friend who happened to like Faith and who happened to own a back-hoe. He agreed to dig the hole the next morning.

I wrapped Faith in a blanket and laid her on a sofa in an unheated spare room. I know it's ridiculous, but I placed an electric candle near her for the night.

The next morning I looked for a grave site. I picked a mound of straw that she loved to sit on, from which she could survey the entire ranch. My friend dug the hole, I laid Faith gently into it, then I placed several objects in with her - her medicines, her dog bowl, a glass bottle into which I had placed a note I had written her, and finally a polished stone with her name laser engraved upon it.

I then spoke a eulogy that formed in my mind as I spoke it. My voice cracked, and all in attendance were in tears.

Then, using a shovel, I began to fill the hole. My friend finished the job with his tractor.

But even with the grief, I maintain that the episode had been somehow better than my previous push-button experience.

Rather than have death cushioned and hidden from me, I faced it head-on. I fought it with everything I had. Faith and I fought death together - we were partners even in this one last desperate adventure.

Since Faith has died I've suffered great sorrow. She was my best friend - a loving companion who adored me without a single condition. She was the dog I always



dreamed of - obedient, loyal, affectionate, intelligent, beautiful, and always right there by my side. I miss her terribly every day.

Weeks have passed. Tears have been shed. Stories of our adventures have been remembered and shared. Pictures of her beautiful face have been poured over. Dozens of friends and family members have expressed their condolences. Thoughtful heart-felt cards have arrived in the mail. The support and love I've received had sweetened, to some extent, the bitter sorrow.

Yet now I hear silence when I walk, rather than the click of her paws. When I ride my mule or drive my truck I do it alone. When I reach down with my right hand, her soft fur is no longer there to meet my finger tips. And saddest of all, her big brown eyes aren't there glimmering unconditional love to me anymore. Her silent absence is so loud it drowns out my every thought.

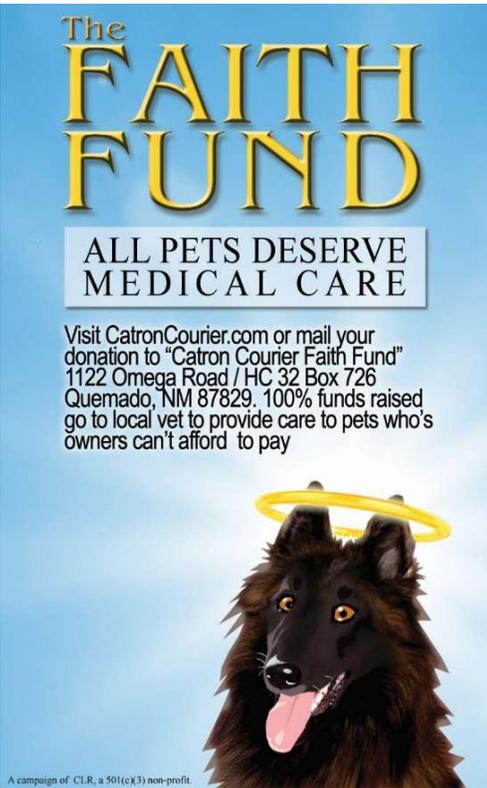
Sometimes the best way to wash away sorrow is to take action and help others eliminate their sorrow. So, in order to honor my beloved Faith's memory and to do some good for other, I have created a special charity project called "The Faith Fund" administered through our local newspaper "The Catron Courier" which asks kind people to donate a few dollars to help pay for medical care for animals who's owners can't afford the care.

Vet bills can be very expensive and a dog owner's financial situation is not the dog's fault. No animal should suffer because of a money situation.

Won't you consider making a generous donation? As the ad says, *"Anyone Can Afford a Dollar, No Family Pet can Afford to Be Sick or Injured"*

Thank you in advance for your donation!

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The
**FAITH
FUND**

ALL PETS DESERVE
MEDICAL CARE

Visit CatronCourier.com or mail your donation to "Catron Courier Faith Fund"
1122 Omega Road / HC 32 Box 726
Quemado, NM 87829. 100% funds raised go to local vet to provide care to pets who's owners can't afford to pay

A campaign of CLR, a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

The advertisement features a close-up of a dark brown, long-haired dog's head, possibly a Belgian Sheepdog, with its tongue hanging out. A bright yellow halo is positioned around the dog's head. The background is a light blue sky with soft, wispy clouds. The text is arranged in a clean, professional layout, with the title 'The FAITH FUND' in large, bold, yellow letters at the top. Below it, the slogan 'ALL PETS DESERVE MEDICAL CARE' is enclosed in a white box with a thin black border. The contact information and a call to action are written in a smaller, black font. At the bottom left, there is a small line of text: 'A campaign of CLR, a 501(c)(3) non-profit.'



"Faith"

*Devoted, Loving, Companion
March 2003 – November 2013*