

Doulassville family fundraises for dog



Dolly, a 3-month-old black lab, suffers from a leg deformity and a genetic birth defect.

By Marian Dennis, mdennis@pottsmmerc.com,
[@MarianDennis1](https://twitter.com/MarianDennis1) on Twitter

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Black lab puppy, Dolly, sleeps next to Moose, the Regan family's older dog.

Douglassville >> Many people consider their pets an important part of the family. The Regan family is no exception.

When the Regans adopted their now 3-month-old puppy, Dolly, they felt a special connection to her. When they attended Barktoberfest at the beginning of the month, the Regans found Dolly, a black lab puppy with a deformed leg who had been rescued from a puppy mill in Lancaster.

My wife picked her up for a little and when we put her back and circled back around the dog saw my wife and started barking, said Frank Regan of how they adopted Dolly.

Frank's wife, Valerie, whose own experiences in a wheelchair connected her with Dolly, picked up the dog once more when the family decided they were taking Dolly with them.

Upon adopting Dolly, the family was told that she was suffering from a cold and was on an antibiotic that was believed to be making her breathing rapid and heavy.

Dolly adjusted to family life quickly and won the entire family over, including the family's older dog, Moose. When the family took Dolly for a walk the following Saturday, however, the dog appeared to be choking and had extreme difficulty breathing.

Dolly was rushed to Limerick Veterinary Hospital where Frank Regan found out that Dolly was suffering from congestive heart failure and that her heart was two times its normal size, causing constriction in her airways. Dolly was then admitted for oxygen and overnight observation.

The next day, Dolly made what appeared to be a miraculous recovery. Veterinarians could not explain how a dog in congestive heart failure could be so full of energy, with fully functioning organs the day after a near-death experience. After consulting a cardiologist, the doctor told the Regans to get Dolly short-term treatment until they could make an appointment with a canine cardiologist.

After a lengthy search for a cardiologist, the Regan family found Dr. Donald Schrope in Paramus, NJ who diagnosed Dolly with a common disease known as Patent Ductus Arteriosus. This genetic birth defect is a condition in which a blood vessel that normally closes after birth remains open, allowing irregular blood flow between two of the most important arteries close to the heart. Because this problem is genetic, it is likely that many other dogs from the same puppy mill will have that problem. The family was informed, however, that with a specific kind of surgery, Dolly has a 90 percent chance at living a long, healthy life.

The Regans are now trying to raise the \$4,000 needed for Dolly's surgery by hosting a yard sale at their home on Old Philadelphia Pike on Oct. 25 and 26 as well as selling their 2004 Mustang.

I like my sports car but I love my puppy more than I like my car," said Valerie Regan.

In addition to their sale efforts, the Regans have been searching for and applying to a number of organizations that offer grants for dogs with heart conditions. They have also set up a Facebook page specifically for Dolly called dollythewonderpup.

Our goal is to give Dolly love and comfort for however long she has," said Frank. "Dolly is truly a miracle and with all the