

Douglassville Family's Home is Filled with Love

In the midst of their everyday busy lives, the Kleinert Family also manages organizations that help rescue animals and serve youth with special needs.

By [Gerry Dungan](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 2, 2013

<http://pottstown.patch.com/articles/the-kleinert-family-a-house-of-love>

When you walk into the Kleinert Family home, it's likely you'll have an enthusiastic welcome by four smiling faces, five wagging tails and various screeches and squawks by excited creatures donning feathers, scales and—yes—even more tails.

"My neighbors refer to me as 'The Rescue Lady,'" Linda Kleinert said.

The Kleinert's Douglassville home has a warm and cozy feeling to it, with lots of room to move around, which comes in handy considering the home's many occupants.

Living there are Linda and Greg Kleinert, their sons Brandon, 14, and Jason, 12, as well as:



The Kleinert family, (from left) Greg, Brandon, Jason and Linda. Credit [Gerry Dungan](#)

- **Logan**—A 14-year-old Maltise, rescued from a puppy farm in Lancaster (he was used as a stud there for years).
- **Chase**—A 4-year-old Yellow Lab, rescued from a family that didn't want him anymore.
- **Bernie**—An 8-year-old Maltise, rescued from a family that couldn't take care of him anymore.
- **Chooch**—A 1-year-old Black Lab and Great Dane mix, who had a debilitating disease and was nursed back to health by the Kleinerts.
- **Lester**—A 3-year-old Chihuahua-mix, who is currently in temporary living there in foster care.

The Kleinerts also have a rescued iguana named Caesar; at least a half-dozen Zebra finches, saved from a divorcing couple; a hairless rat named Josephine, saved from being sold as feed for snake owners; and some recuperating wild turkeys and ducks in the backyard.

The driving force behind all the family's rescued animals is Linda Kleinert.

Along with her full-time position as a special educational aid and high school brailist in the Daniel Boon Area School District, she volunteers with A Tail To Tell Puppy Mill rescue in Mount Gretna. She is also a volunteer foster parent for Dad's My Angel Puppy Rescue in Trappe.

However, the more wild or exotic animals she rescues, and eventually places in a caring home or sent back into the wild, come to her through her word of mouth.

"Every animal I get has a story," Linda Kleinert said with a smile.

Becoming 'The Rescue Lady'

Linda Kleinert grew up in Hatfield. She recalls always living with rescued dogs. By the time she was in the second-grade, Linda already had a growing reputation as an animal rescuer.

“As a kid in my neighborhood, I used to bring impaired animals to my house,” Linda said, recalling the number of squirrels and rabbits hit by cars.

She said her parents would allow her to rehabilitate the animals before releases them back into the wild, often calling the [Schuylkill Valley Wildlife Rescue](#), located in Cheltenham, for advice.

“They talked me through ... several times,” Linda said. “I always had my hand with something to do with animals.”

She attended [Arcadia University](#), then known as Beaver College, but didn't pursue biology or set herself up for veterinary medicine, rather she majored in Fine Arts.

However, she didn't give up her passion for animals while attending college, as she took up various jobs working with animals, such as cleaning the rat cages in the school's science labs and working with the SPCA to walk dogs.

After graduating in 1992, Linda held a job at the [Mount Airy Animal Hospital](#) as a receptionist and veterinary assistant, where she would sometimes bring in stray animals for treatment.

“The doctor was very understanding,” Linda said.

She eventually started the hospital's first adoption program.

At this time, Linda was living in Hatboro, when she and her husband had Brandon in 1998. Two years later, they would have Jason, and decided to move to a yet-to-be-constructed development in Douglassville in 2001.

Linda claims she doesn't know how, but her reputation for helping animals followed her to the new home. She says it's likely to have happened after making small talk with the construction crews building her neighbors' homes.

The crews would occasionally give her little surprises every now and then.

“We were digging and we found this turtle,” Linda recalled. “Or, we found this nest of rabbits at a tree we had to move.”

In 2004 she joined a friend with [A Tail To Tell Puppy Mill rescue](#), and headed to Lancaster, where she found Logan. In 2006 she decided to become a foster parent for rescue dogs, volunteering with [Dad's My Angel Puppy Rescue](#). The wild and exotic rescues, she said, just seemed to enter her life naturally.

“People come to me,” Linda said, laughing heartily. “I don't go looking.”

There was the time her family nursed back to health a pig with a skin disease, which Linda found out through an unexpected Facebook message.

“He outsmarted us all the time,” Greg Kleinert said, explaining that the pig was an expert escape artist.

Greg, who recently helped his wife rescue a hurt Red Tail hawk, said that he always loved dogs, but the other animals took a little getting used to, which he was more than willing to do.

“I realized how happy it makes her, and that makes me happy,” Greg said. “I know all the stuff we give up on any given day, that's more her outlet, me, I play golf.”

A Smile From Jason Foundation Annual Golf Tournament

The same year Linda Kleinert volunteered to become a foster parent for rescued animals, she and Greg started a charitable golf tournament.

The golf tournament takes place on the first Friday of October at the Reading Country Club.

According to Greg Kleinert, the tournament was organized to raise funds for the Shady Hallow Assisted Riding organization, located in Birdsboro.

According to the [nonprofit's website](#), Shady Hallow Assisted Riding, whose motto is "Horses with Heart," provides equine riding therapy programs for individuals with physical, mental or emotional challenges.

Greg and Linda's son Jason benefits from Shady Hallow therapy, as he was born with Coffin Lowry Syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects an individual's mental and physical abilities.

Linda said she had jumped at the opportunity for Jason to work with the therapeutic animals, after researching physical opportunity options for her son online.

According to Greg, Shady Hallow is the closet program of its kind in the region, pulling youth from areas including Pottstown.

He said he noticed the nonprofit's facilities were in need of maintenance, and that the therapists were in need of certain special equipment.

"Originally, we wanted to raise just a couple thousand, but we raised so much more," Greg said.

According to Greg, the first year of the golf tournament raised approximately \$14,000, and the [Smile from Jason Foundation](#) was born.

"We'll change the world a couple of kids at a time, if we can," Linda said.

In addition to supporting the maintenance and employment of therapists, the Smile from Jason Foundation also provides scholarships to youth seeking the services of Shady Hallow. The foundation also supports other nonprofit organizations, including the Easter Seals.

In recent years, the organization has also branched out to organizing [Buddy Ball](#) tournaments in the Kleinert's hometown. Buddy Ball matches able-bodied and disabled individuals to work as a team in various sporting events.

Jason participates in local Buddy Ball events, and his Buddy Ball partner is also his big brother Brandon.

Brandon, who was proudly wearing his Daniel Boone Buddy Ball t-shirt, said that his experience in his family's Douglassville home has made him feel a great deal of love for his parents.

"I think it's great, I love helping the animals," Brandon said. "And, with Jason, I love everything they do."

The Keinerts have also made the connection between supporting animals and serving special-needs youth by supporting the K9s for Kids organization, which helps pair special-needs children with service dogs.

<http://hugahorse.com/>

For more information about A Smile From Jason Foundation, visit the [foundation's website](#).