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# Oodles of Poodles Mean Love for Lafayette Resident

By Diane Claytor



Patty Moulthrop, NorCal Poodle Rescue founder, with her own award-winning standard poodle, Spenser. Photos provided

It started many years ago with a routine visit to a local vet; it developed into a passion for poodles and grew into both a successful standard poodle breeding business and a well known nonprofit rescue organization. For Patty Moulthrop, a longtime Lafayette resident, it's all family.

The Moulthrops always had rescue dogs. After seeing an ad for a litter of standard poodle puppies, Moulthrop brought one home. That was more than 35 years ago. Life hasn't been the same since. "They are bright, beautiful, sensitive, and such graceful dogs," she said.

Moulthrop soon became interested in dog shows. A friend had a female standard poodle that she wanted to breed, so Moulthrop took on the challenge, forming Blue Skies Standard Poodles. The new company delivered its first litter in 1980. "I loved having the puppies, working with them, showing them and often winning." But Moulthrop soon realized that "I couldn't, deep down, justify breeding these dogs, knowing there were poodles in shelters that needed homes." So she printed cards, placing them at local vets, shelters, and

groomers and soon began rescuing poodles out of her Lafayette home. Any poodle that came in was cared for and quickly placed in a loving home.

Moulthrop remembers that she was getting 20-30 calls a day and it became overwhelming. She was interviewing people, going to their homes, and finding placements for each dog. "It got to be too much," she said. She contacted friends who had received Moulthrop-bred poodles and they happily joined in the rescue efforts. From this came NorCal Poodle Rescue (NCPR), "dedicated to rescuing poodles and enriching the lives of those who adopt them."

As Moulthrop explains, poodles are often the first dogs to be euthanized in shelters. Poodles have hair, which tends to tangle and mat when not regularly and properly groomed. "When they arrive in a shelter," Moulthrop said, "they're usually a mess. Dirt is clinging to the mats. They have to be bathed and groomed and, unfortunately, most shelters don't have the time, money or skill to make these dogs presentable, and thus adoptable."

NCPR "understands the breed and we are uniquely qualified to rescue, rehab and rehome poodles," Moulthrop said. Each poodle that comes through NCPR is spayed or

neutered, vaccinated, micro-chipped and groomed before being placed for adoption. Additionally, if needed, extensive medical care and training is provided. The adoption process is designed to match the perfect poodle with the perfect parent.

As the organization grew, Moulthrop realized they needed more space. They leased a small kennel in Walnut Creek, and built and fenced a yard so the dogs have room to exercise. They can house 12 dogs at one time; they annually rescue 120 poodles and poodle mixes and, since its inception, NCPR has re-homed more than 2,400 dogs.

As wonderful and fulfilling as this is, Moulthrop wants so much more. She has found a building in Concord that she describes as "perfect" for achieving her dream of being able to rescue even more poodles. "If this comes to fruition, we'll be able to house at least 24 dogs, possibly more," she said.

Even when Moulthrop is not working at NCPR, she's surrounded by poodles. She currently has six adult dogs and seven new puppies at home; she's keeping one of the new

puppies to show and the others already have homes they'll go to when they're old enough.

And then there's Moulthrop's Blue Skies Standard Poodles, where she breeds award-winning black standard poodles that she shows throughout the west coast. She has had five multiple all-breed Best in Show winners. In fact, in 2000, Moulthrop had the highest-ranking poodle in the U.S., with 52 all breed Best in Show wins. "A show dog has a certain attitude, carriage, an air about them," Moulthrop explained. "Think about a thoroughbred horse with its huge reach and stride, beautiful upright carriage. That's what a show dog poodle looks like."

Moulthrop's husband of 63 years, Bud, said that when they got their first poodle all those years ago, "we didn't know a poodle from a frog. Patty got into both the breeding and the rescue work because she loves the dogs, loves showing them and seeing them — whether pure-bred or rescues — go to good homes."

For information on how you can volunteer or adopt a dog, go to [www.NorCalPoodleRescue.net](http://www.NorCalPoodleRescue.net).



Some of the wonderful NorCal Poodle Rescue "parents" with their dogs.

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