

ANDREA CAIRNS 33

Fionn MacCool is his name, and Andrea Cairns is his foster mom. The brown-eyed pooch is Cairns's newest household member, rescued with 21 other huskies from a life spent living on a chain. After naming her fair share of foster dogs that have come and gone from her home, Cairns jokes, "You start to get creative."

Her days are at full capacity. As well as being a full-time employee with Alberta Health Services, she dedicates much of her time to helping the Second Chance Animal Rescue Society (SCARS) spread its wings. "We're still growing," she says, "but I think we are the biggest [animal rescue] organization in Alberta now."

JOB TITLE: Volunteer director of public relations at Second Chance Animal Rescue Society

WHY TOP 40: For dedicating her spare time to rescuing animals and helping SCARS become the biggest rescue organization in the province

poor situation some animals were in, and just how out of control it was in several small communities in northern Alberta, where some towns don't have a vet and the dumps are overtaken with diseased dogs.

The organization started with Sylvia Christiansen, a kind-hearted woman in Athabasca who had a big acreage and a big heart. Today, Cairns is on a mission to promote the adoption of rescued animals, create awareness and educate the public about how they can help. Cairns's work as an advisor with Alberta Health has helped her realize the importance of education, she explains. "I think people need to know that these are not bad dogs, and that they are perfectly adoptable, wonderful animals."

SCARS concentrates on rescuing animals, mostly dogs, in dire situations, with a focus on saving animals from pounds that have high kill rates.

"When I came on with SCARS, it was a really small organization doing great work," she says. Cairns hopped on board five years ago after learning about the



SCARS is a no-kill organization, so Cairns and her colleagues have helped find homes for over 3,000 dogs, many of which needed major veterinary attention. "I think it's so hands-on, and you see these animals come in, and just feel so compelled and driven to help."

Due to the increased publicity, SCARS has become a viable society, one that continues to rehabilitate animals in need and treat them as we would our pets. "The stories we get back are so heart-warming," says Cairns. "We even had a dog that got prosthetic eyes." — *Lynsey Franks* >>