



On Oct. 9, 2007, Birmingham Boston Terrier Rescue in Alabama received an urgent call about a Boston Terrier who was only days away from being put to sleep in a Georgia shelter. After hearing the news, the organization quickly mobilized.

Twenty-four hours later, the female stray found wandering in a Georgia state park had been assigned a transport to Birmingham and a foster home.

Upon the dog's arrival, a Birmingham veterinarian pronounced her healthy, albeit blind and nearly deaf, and estimated her age at 12. The Boston Terrier also received a new name: Ruby.

But the surprises started coming when Ruby arrived at her foster home. She was scanned for a microchip and found to have one. According to the chip's data, "Ruby" was in fact Mindy, and she belonged to a family in southern Florida.

Mindy's foster parent, Austin Cooper, tried to contact Lee County Animal Services, the organization stored in the chip. He discovered that the group's phone number had been disconnected. Undeterred, he tracked down the organization's new phone number and tried again. This time, Cooper connected with the organization, which gave him the contact information for Mindy's family, the Thomases.

What he learned next was astonishing.

Mindy had originally been the pet of an older woman in Indiana. The woman had to move into a nursing home and couldn't take Mindy with her, so the Thomases, who were visiting family in the area at the time, decided to adopt the sweet Boston Terrier. Although the family lived in Lee County, Fla., they took Mindy back to Indiana periodically to visit her former owner.

In 2002 burglars broke into the Thomases' Florida home and

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stole Mindy. Despite the growing length of time that passed without the dog's return, the family continued to believe the Boston Terrier was alive, and they celebrated her birthday every year.

Three weeks after Birmingham Boston Terrier Rescue was first called about Mindy, the dog was reunited with the Thomases. Lee County media picked up on the story, and its coverage of Mindy's return caught the attention of SPAY-Lee Inc., a local animal welfare group. The organization was so touched by the story that it offered to pay for cataract surgery to restore Mindy's sight.

On Feb. 13, 2008, Mindy turns 14 years old, and for the first time in five years, the Thomases will celebrate Mindy's birthday with her at home. **DF**

—Evangeline McMullen

We want happy endings! Send us a 100- to 400-word essay, along with a quality photo, on how a real dog overcame adversity to become a happy, well-cared-for companion. Send submissions to Happy Endings, DOG FANCY, P.O. Box 6050, Mission Viejo, CA 92690-6050; or e-mail to barkback@dogfancy.com ("Happy Endings" in subject line). Because of the volume of materials received, we cannot use all that are submitted. Stories and photos become the property of BowTie Magazines, a division of BowTie Inc, which reserves the right, without further consideration, to use all photos and text in any publication, media, and related promotions. The company cannot confirm receipt or return entries. By submitting your materials, you agree that your contact information may be given to sponsor(s), which may use the information for marketing purposes. You further agree that your photo, text, name, and city and state may be posted on BowTie-owned websites.