

Sam's (Sergio's) Story

In 2015, we adopted Sam. We met a number of dogs on the adoption day and out of the group marched this very large, aloof and slightly intimidating-looking greyhound. Unlike the other dogs that were vying for our attention, Sam didn't seem very interested in us!

We weren't 100% sure if Sam was the hound for us, but we relied on the advice of GAP's Hampton Downs kennel managers, and they thought that Sam would be the best fit. They were absolutely right - Sam has turned out to be a fantastic match.

We knew that Sam was a retired racer and stud dog, but we didn't know the extent of his racing success. What we found out blew us away. He was known to the racing community as Sergio, the 2011 Greyhound of Year and 2016 NZ Sire of the Year. We had taken a celebrity into our midst and hadn't even realised.

Sam has brought so much happiness into our lives, as well as companionship, friendship, loyalty, laughter and fun. He has become our best and most loyal friend.

In February 2017, Sam was viciously mauled by another dog while walking. The injuries he sustained were extensive. He was rushed into emergency surgery, as his body was starting to shut down. Following his emergency surgery, he required around-the-clock intensive care to keep him alive and manage his horrendous pain. It was an hour-by-hour situation and many times we were told he may not make it. This was stressful and very expensive for us, as unfortunately, we had been unable to secure pet insurance for Sam when we adopted him, due to his age.



Sam enjoying retired life (racing name Sergio)



Lincoln and Natalie Lane with Sergio's (Sam's) 2017 NZ Sire of the Year award

We didn't know initially, but the greyhound community were doing what they do best and starting to rally around.

People were fundraising and sending us messages of support. A Give-a-Little page was set up. The New Zealand Herald saw the Give-a-Little page and wrote about Sam. Following that story, the donations to the Give-a-Little page skyrocketed; we received donations from as far away as Australia and the UK. People from the GAP community, the racing community and many people that didn't know us donated. It was amazing.

In the end, Sam's veterinary bills came in at \$8,000. They would have been considerably more, if his former owner/trainer and veterinarian hadn't stepped in to help us with his rehabilitation and care afterwards.

In the end, \$9,025 was raised. We were able to give Sam the round-the-clock intensive care that he needed to pull through. We will never be able to express how thankful we are for all the people that helped us save Sam. Because of their generosity, there was a surplus of funds once we had paid all our vet bills.

It was important for us to "pay it forward" and we couldn't think of any better organisation to donate the extra funds to than GAP, the organisation that had brought this beautiful soul into our lives.

**WRITTEN BY NATALIE & LINCOLN LANE
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY NATALIE LANE & DAVE ROBBIE**