

Jacqueline Pinol:

The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay. Welcome to the Canine Condition podcast. My name is Jacqueline Pinol. I am an actor, documentary filmmaker, and animal rescue advocate. The Canine Condition podcast is a platform to bring awareness to dog adoption and to provide all dog lovers and pet owners with information and resources on how to raise a healthy, and well-balanced dog. If you are thinking about getting your first dog or just want to know where and how you can help a dog in need, this is also a place for you.

What is a hero? The textbook definition says a person noted for feats of courage, admired for outstanding achievements or noble qualities. We encounter heroes every day and may not know it, but if we stop to look, we will see them. And we all need heroes. They can inspire us to be better versions of ourselves and to make our society a better place. Some people find their purpose in life by giving back to others. It's their calling. Sometimes those others are of the canine species. To many dogs, a human is their hero. To some humans, a dog is their hero. And throughout a lifetime together, the roles can be interchangeable because we all need each other as we journey through the passage of time.

My guest on the podcast today probably doesn't think of himself as a hero, but he inspires many and is also the first to recognize the heroism and bravery in others, whether canine or human. It is my pleasure to have Zach Skow, Founder of Marley's Mutts, on this episode. Marley's Mutts is a licensed non-profit dog rescue organization based in Southern California, whose motto so beautifully states, you can't change a dog's past, but you can rescue its future. Hi, Zach, welcome to the Canine Condition podcast.

Zach Skow:

Thank you for having me. It's a joy.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I'm very excited to speak to you today because I haven't had a whole lot of the male experience and perspective on the podcast this season. And I think it's invaluable. So have you always been a dog lover, and what led you to this journey in advocacy in dog rescue?

Zach Skow:

Well, I have always been an animal lover, always been a dog lover and particularly... And my first memory actually was being bitted by a wolf-dog. That was my first. My very first memory was being bit on the butt on the thigh by a big old wolf-dog that my mom's friend had. And it didn't dissuade me. I don't ever remember being afraid of dogs, although that was definitely my first memory.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That happened to me. And I've expressed this in other episodes in the podcast that I was a bit when I was five, by my grandmother's dog. And yep, no dogs for me till I was well into my 20s.

Zach Skow:

Really?

Jacqueline Pinol:

I was afraid of dogs. I didn't grow up liking them. I was afraid of all of them. I was that person that would cross the street if I saw them coming down the sidewalk, and here I am.

Zach Skow:

Yeah, I do think it's interesting that you paired those questions together. I do think my history with dogs did kind of play a part in my advocacy because my mom, there was one dog in particular that we had. His name was Bentley. And I don't remember exactly how old I was, but we picked him up from the shelter. And then I remember, he kept getting out, and we live right at the beach. And so he would go down to the pier, and he, one time, got in the middle of a volleyball tournament, an actual professional volleyball tournament. And so my mom ended up just remember coming home from school one day, and he was no longer there. And my mom had taken it back to the shelter or something. I don't know what happened and that never sat well with me. I remember getting in an argument with my mom, but I was pretty young.

I do think that played a role in wanting to give back to dogs, but I've always been just dog-obsessed. So I started working in animal welfare in 2004. I started 2003, 2004, started volunteering for the Humane Society up here Tehachapi, where my dad lived. And I started working with a couple of other local non-profit organizations. And then, in 2008, when I moved back here, I'd been working at the Improv Comedy Club. And when I moved back, I got sick. I went into liver failure caused by acute alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver. So I drank and drugged myself into liver failure, and I was terminally ill. I was given less than 90 days to live and-

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, my God.

Zach Skow:

... went to, I was admitted to Bakersfield Memorial Hospital and basically told them I needed a liver transplant and that I wasn't going to get one. I needed six months of sobriety to qualify for liver transplant. And I hadn't had six hours of sobriety, much less six days or weeks or months. Again, to make a long story short, my dad and mom broke me out and took me to Cedars-Sinai, where I had a meeting with Dr. Tram Tran, who was the head of transplant there, this incredible woman. And she admitted me to the program.

The way dogs tie into my whole past is after getting admitted to the transplant program at Cedar-Sinai, they said, "Look, kid, it's not looking good for you, but if you can survive for six months, you'll get a liver transplant." So when I got home, I immediately went through opiate withdrawal, which almost killed me. That was an awful, awful experience, like 48 hours of really horrific stuff. And if I didn't have my dogs with me during that process, I'm not sure what would have happened. I was seeing things. I was hearing things. It was very suicidal. And my dogs were there for me through that whole experience. I was also on just a variety of medications that were really difficult to deal with. One is called annulus is in this family of medications called lactulose. And it tries to get the ammonia off your brain because when your liver isn't functioning, all these dangerous chemicals are in your blood, and they're causing you to... They call it wet brain. You're literally not functioning correctly.

Cognitively, you don't know what's going on. You can lose your balance. You vacillate between being present and completely on another planet. So it's a really dangerous condition, and it was just scary all the way around, but my dogs just always, always were there to help get me through whatever the next hurdle was.

Jacqueline Pinol:

No matter what you were going through, do you feel like, at that point, you still felt that their presence was obvious to you that being around them made a difference?

Zach Skow:

Yeah. Always made a difference. There's just something about... Especially Tug and Marley. Those were my two big dogs at the time.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, I was going to ask you. And who is Marley?

Zach Skow:

Marley and Tug both come from the Mojave Animal Shelter here in Kern county. Marley was a Rottweiler-Pit Bull, Tug was like some kind of a lab shepherd thing, and Buddy's is still alive. He's 17. I got him for the Rosamond Elementary School, but those dogs have always had an extreme connection to me. And when I was at my lowest points, there was a lot of times before I got sick that I considered taking my life. And Marley and Tug were both very much the impetus to hold on. And there's a real pivotal moment. I'm skipping through a lot of stuff, but there was a moment where I was very, very ill. I didn't want to wake my dad up. It was in a really low, low, low space. So I tried to get up, and I was going to the bathroom to clean myself off. And I looked in the mirror, and I'm nude. And I connected with myself, and I just looked at myself and couldn't fathom what was looking back at me. I just couldn't believe that that was me.

I had all this vanity attached to me till I was a young kid because when you become spiritually bankrupt, sometimes that's all you have is vanity. And up until that point, I didn't remember ever having that experience where you look at your own eyes, and you don't recognize who's looking back at you.

Jacqueline Pinol:

What do you think was the turning point?

Zach Skow:

I looked down at my dogs, and during that experience and I turned around at my lowest point, really, really, really low, just weeping, looking in the mirror, just going, "I cannot believe this is where we are." And I look at Marlene, Tug, and Buddy, and they're all three sitting next to the toilet, and they're all looking at me like I am the world's greatest person. Like I'm the sexiest man alive. Like I've got all the answers. Like I'm the reason the sun rises and falls. And they just looked at me like everything was going to be okay. And they looked at me like they saw me. They saw me. They saw the person inside me that struggles with depression and struggles with happiness, that struggles with approval and acceptance. They accepted me for exactly who I was in that moment. And I couldn't accept myself for so long. I couldn't get close to accepting myself into get to feel that love from them and to be in a position to actually absorb it.

It made all the difference in the world, and I kind of just shook it off. I cuddled with my dogs and cried it out and kind of made this commitment to try to get better, to try to put one foot in front of the other and beat this thing. And that night, I just journaled a whole bunch. And I remember thinking that night, if I ended up dying and someone finds this journal, I'm going to be so embarrassed because my handwriting is so terrible. No one's going to be able to read it. I was still having these problems with my brain.

So I remember that being a real critical thought that the business is the last thing I write. I'm so embarrassed because people are going to find it, and they're going to laugh it out. They're going to think I'm ridiculous.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Is that funny? The things we think you know, and meanwhile, the dogs are looking at you like you're the most perfect being, and we just want to be with you.

Zach Skow:

I think it just says something about dogs that they don't care what you look like. They don't care. They just want you to be happy, and they want you to feel loved. And how many things can you think of in this world? How many, anything can you think of in this world that views its sole responsibility almost as reciprocating love? I can't think of anything.

Jacqueline Pinol:

No, because even our own children don't do it. I think about, my son is five, and already when I tried to kiss him and hug him, he's pushing me away, and I'm like, "The dogs don't do that to me."

Zach Skow:

Don't tell me that happens. I just turned three years old, and a six-month-old, and they love kissing me, and I hug them comfortably. And they've not told me no yet. I don't even want to consider that as a possibility.

Jacqueline Pinol:

So just milk it while it lasts. Yes, absolutely. So then, how did you get to the point where Marley's Mutts was founded?

Zach Skow:

Yeah. So Marley's Mutts that the reason I had to kind of go through such a long story is because that's how it started is that next day we started to walk, and we started to try to walk. My doctor kept saying, "If you don't move, you're going to die. You have to move. You are in liver failure, and you have ammonia on your brain, and you have Esophageal varices, and if your varices burst, you're going to bleed out of your mouth, and you are dead. So if you expect to live, you have to work." I didn't have the courage. I didn't have the motivation. I didn't think I have what it took but doing it with my dogs, that's what I had done before I got sick was walking. So that's what we started to do. And I couldn't get like 50 feet when I started. I would just walk like 50-feet, pause, sit, walk back up the driveway, go rest, walk back down the driveway, walk them again.

We live in the mountains in Tehachapi. It's about an hour and 45 minutes North of LA. And it's just beautiful. And there was just a real experience of connecting with nature and connecting with a power greater than myself and connecting with my dogs. And I started to get a little bit better and a little bit better. And in a period of a couple of weeks, I had gotten remarkably stronger in terms of being able to walk. And so, at that point, I started to volunteer with Canine Canyon Ranch. I started volunteering with Dobie SOS.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Are those shelters in the area or?

Zach Skow:

These are organizations up here. Yeah. These are rescue organizations. So one is a Doberman Rescue, and other was an All Breed Rescue. And then, of course, the Humane Society. And I started bringing on foster dogs through the Humane Society. And one became two, became three, became a litter, became several dogs in a litter. And every day I was walking many, many times a day. I started bringing in dogs into my pack; Marley and Tug, and Buddy were critical in helping me create homeostasis and some sort of a balance. I started to write. I started to write about the dogs.

So I started to write kind of a newsletter. I started to write their biographies. I started to get creative. So all this mental energy that had been spent hating myself, all this creative I got from creative, new, and creative ways to hate myself. So this was new and creative ways to market these dogs to help find homes for these dogs. So I would just try to get comical and ridiculous and be funny and stupid and ludicrous. And this was pre-social media. So I put everything up on different businesses.

So I would take my dogs, and we drive all around town, and I would take stacks of flyers. And I would just put them up. And this was when I was doing it for the Humane Society. And at some point, the veterinary hospital in town, Tehachapi Veterinary Hospital, and a bunch of the staff said, "You know what? You should just do this. You could start a rescue. You could just do this." And I was like, "No, I can't. Are you crazy?" And one of the gals was like, "Yeah, you call it Marley's Mutts because all the other rescues are purebred rescues, and you're with Marley all the time, and all you do is rescue Mutts. So call it Marley's Mutts." I was like, "That's brilliant."

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, it is brilliant.

Zach Skow:

I didn't even come up with the name. Yeah.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Little did she know.

Zach Skow:

Yeah. My community just believed in me. And at the time, I was still very ill. I still looked very ill. And so you had this yellow person, going all over town with dogs, putting up flyers and posters, and people would start to congregate around my bank of flyers. And then, I started to get support, and I decided to start Marley's Mutts. So in early 2009... So I finally got six months of sobriety, and I went in for my six-month review, and they said, "You do not need a liver transplant anymore. Your meld score has dropped. We don't know how you've done this or how this has occurred." You very rarely recuperate from end-stage, especially end-stage with the kind of meld score that I had in the complications that I had.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It was the dogs.

Zach Skow:

100% it was. It definitely wouldn't have happened if I was by myself, the dogs, and my dad 100%. And it was really just the shift into purpose. And for the first time, I was living for something other than myself, which is exactly what I needed to do. I didn't have a God in my life. I didn't have understanding of a power other than my ego and the end and the ego bouncing off each other in my mind. And it's just such a dangerous place to be. So I finally had something to put myself into and, and it was just beautiful.

So we incorporated the organization in 2009, and I started making T-shirts. I went and bought every T-shirt out of Kmart. Then I'd get the iron-on transfers. I'd print them up on my printer. And I'd iron them on. And my buddy Chris made the logo. And so I'd sell shirts at AA meetings. I'd sell shirts in town, and people at meetings and AA meetings would donate money for the organization. And that's how it started. It was just panhandling for money meetings and selling T-shirts that I made, and I would mess up, and they look crooked, and sometimes I'd have like quality control was terrible because I had so many different kinds of shirts, I just buy all of them. So that's how it started. And we incorporated as a company in 2009, and then we became non-profit retroactive 2010.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's awesome. Thank you for sharing such personal and deep stories. And I'm sure there are listeners out there that may know someone, or they themselves have gone through similar stories. And also, that canine-human bond always brings me back to why it's so important that we keep advocating for them.

Zach Skow:

Yeah, they are medicine. What it was that helped me get better was obviously diet and removing all alcohol and drugs. And it was finding something that inspired me finding something that could substitute for the void left by drugs and alcohol.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Sure, of course.

Zach Skow:

Just trying to face life without this coping mechanism that I'd had all my life was really challenging. And I had no idea how to do that in cert dogs again. So my dogs went with me everywhere. I had Marley with me all the time. Like, I ran into my drug dealer at the market one time. I'll never forget it. It was early on, and I panicked, and Marley was in the truck waiting outside, and I just committed to myself that I was going to take the dog with me everywhere. Because I was scared. I was scared of everything, people, places, and things. And by having Marley with me, I always had a conversation topic. So I could always talk to someone about... I always had something to connect with a person about. I always felt comforted. I always felt supported. And I always felt I can always like borrow his confidence.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, I love that.

Zach Skow:

He was this dog that he walked into a room, and even human women would be like, "Demn, what a good looking dog?" And he is Denzel of dogs 100%. And is it a little naughty for you even to think about it because he's a Rottweiler and a Pit Bull. So like I know people are like, "Well, I shouldn't find him so hot," because he's not a lab or a golden, but, whew.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, Marley.

Zach Skow:

He's so special.

Jacqueline Pinol:

He really changed your life.

Zach Skow:

And just helped me get out there and help me practice. And then we started going to schools immediately. So when I was still somewhat ill, we started doing that. I became the guy who teaches, who says his testimony and shares about his experience with drugs and alcohol, as well as my experience, strength and hope in general, which I never, in a million years, would've thought I would be the guy. We all remember the person who came to our high school and talked about drugs.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh yes.

Zach Skow:

The crack head who comes to school. We all remember that, it's ubiquitous, and I'm that guy. I'm the guy. I'm the drug addict who comes to school. Only I get to bring dogs with me, and I still am to this day.

Jacqueline Pinol:

You still advocate it.

Zach Skow:

Yeah, I still do it.

Jacqueline Pinol:

For people who don't know, our listeners who are not rescue advocates or familiar with Marley's Mutts, talk to us about the location. You're saying you're out in the mountains into Tehachapi?

Zach Skow:

Tehachapi, yeah.

Jacqueline Pinol:

So tell us about the layout of the land out there. What's it like?

Zach Skow:

Well, about two hours North of LA. We are our biggest city center is to our West, and that's Bakersfield. So out of Hub is Bakersfield. We have an office. Our organization has an office in Bakersfield, and we have a 20-acre ranch up here which has about 40 dogs and a handful of livestock. And it's an incredible place, just an absolutely incredible place.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It sounds like it.

Zach Skow:

It's exceptionally beautiful up here. I live in a suburb called Bear Valley Springs. We have bear. We have mountain lion. We have elk. We have deer. We have bobcats, it's teeming with wildlife here, and there's hiking trails and wildflowers. And it's a beautiful mountainous community. My home is at about 5,000 feet. It snows here in the fall. Sometimes those are the springs.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's awesome. And so are there... I mean, I'm assuming you guys say you pull from shelter, so are there shelters in those areas, and are they always full? I mean, do you guys constantly have an influx of homeless dogs?

Zach Skow:

Yeah, we do.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Where do they come from?

Zach Skow:

We pull from shelters all over the world. Really. We pull primarily from Bakersfield City Shelter and Kern County Animal Services. Kern County is our shelter Hub. We work very closely with our county shelter, and we always have. When we started well over a decade ago, the euthanasia rate was about 80%. A little bit higher than that actually, that's tens of thousands of dogs euthanized in our county every year. And the idea of going no-kill is impossible. We never thought we would get to... I mean, I did. I knew we would get there. And in our county Animal Control Director, Nicole, and believe we would too. And he put out this call like six years ago and said, "Kern County is going to get to no-kill. We're going to get to below 10% euthanasia." And a bunch of people swore them off. They called them a madman and really talked a lot of smack about him, but I've always believed in that man, and he's always believed in us, and we did it. We became no-kill a year and a half ago as a county.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, awesome, really?

Zach Skow:

Well, we poured \$2 million into spay and neuter, and we supplemented the county spay and neuter effort dollar for dollar, every dollar they spent on spay-neuter. We spent a dollar on tireless rescue efforts. We have three shelters, three county shelters, one municipal shelter, and then many rural municipal shelters. So there's about nine shelters in the region.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's a lot.

Zach Skow:

But we also pull from Los Angeles, and we pull from all over the place. So the issue is far less prominent than it was, but it's still definitely an issue. I don't want to be incorrect, and I don't want to overstate things and say we've solved the problem. We haven't at all. It's still Kern County being rural and being very spread out, there are urban centers, but they're very spread out. There's a lot of deserts mutts the mountain. So there's a lot of nooks and crannies on a farmland that can support stray dogs. So there's still considerable issues to be dealt with.

Jacqueline Pinol:

But spay and neuter is still necessary, and the education to the community is important.

Zach Skow:

Yeah. We have a real melting pot of cultures in Bakersfield, big time. It's a very oddly segregated community. Each community has kind of different issues, and you have to really target those communities and try to reach them differently, which our communities done a very good job of.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And it's interesting you say that, but you're right. You do have to reach out to them differently because you have to see it. It's like, know your audience sort of thing. And it's important some communities are more accepting of education and resources, and others feel more like you're infringing on my rights and my property. And I don't want you to tell me what to do. So that always presents a problem when we're trying to rescue dogs and minimize the population.

Zach Skow:

I think part of the issue is, for far too long, we've treated black and brown people and black and brown communities, well, poor communities in general as just the problem you guys were the problem. When are you going to get your act together? When are you guys going to get your act together and fix your issues? Instead of welcoming those communities into the discussion to help solve the problem. And they've felt maligned and ostracized because they have been. In our community too, there's been a lot of blame on Hispanic communities because of cultural tendencies that they'll bring with them in terms of how they care for animals in their home country. And rather than have discussions and open up dialogue and find ways to communicate, there's this cultural ethnocentricity, this is judging them by our culture standards rather than opening up a dialogue to have an exchange of ideas.

We are a country that is so quick to talk smack. So quick to blame. So quick to say, "It's their fault. It's your fault. It's not me. It's you." And we're finally getting past that. I sit on the board for an organization called Care for Equity, which really focuses on inclusion and equity and animal welfare and targeting black and brown communities, targeting communities of color to bring them into the fray and have them join in the conversation and really find out what are the best ways to open these conversations. What are the fairest ways to open these conversations, and how can we... Let's get together, man. If we can start, if we can make this a team effort, we'll win no matter what.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Absolutely. That's my goal too, and I am a Latina from Latin background, and Spanish was my first language. So for me, I noticed in my own Latin community is the language barrier. For me, it's really important to also spread this message in Spanish because I do feel that it makes a difference when you reach out to someone and you let them know, "Hey, I'm just like you, and you're just like me. How can we work on this together?"

Zach Skow:

Yeah. Oh gosh, does it? I mean, we had the coolest experience of grinning from ear to ear. I have goosebumps, too, because we got tons of food donated from Wishbone Pet Food, which Wishbone type is very expensive food. It's incredibly high quality. And this is in the middle of COVID, and no one's leaving their home. And specifically in Arvin Lamont area, which is a 98% Hispanic community in Bakersfield. It is the poorest community in California. There is no poorer community. This is migrant farming and people who are deathly afraid of COVID virus and could not go outside of their home.

So we had people fill out forms on our website, and we made deliveries all over our community for like four months. I grew up in a Costa Rican Mexican household as a kid. So both of my parents worked. So my first 10 years were spent in that house. So Spanish was my first language as a child as well. And my enunciation is terrific. My syntax and sentence structure is terrible. My tenses are awful. But-

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh you are funny.

Zach Skow:

... delivering food to all these people and saying, "Me llamo Zach[Spanish 00:24:16] necesitar practicar espanol," And so I just practice my Spanish with them. I'll be dropping off food.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And they love it.

Zach Skow:

And they loved it. Just love it. Every second they're like, "Oh, boy, no, pinch me in the cheek and just get close to me." And that's how you engage. That's how you engage. You don't go by there and... You don't post articles about how the stray dog numbers in the Hispanic communities are off the charts and get people polarized. And you have to be realistic and logical, and you have to understand all the data points and where are the stray dogs coming from? You have to know all that stuff, but it's so much more valuable to be sensitive and relatable and connect as opposed to be reactive and kind of push people away. And the feedback was instantaneous. We had so many people want to get involved. Many people want to donate. Everyone wants to have conversations. I mean, it was instantaneous.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And it's nice to know. I meet a lot of Latinos obviously because of my background. And I'm very immersed in my culture. And I ask questions in Spanish, and I want to know, "Hey, where'd you get your dog?" A lot of people don't know about even just the right vaccines. And it's just not knowing doesn't mean you don't want to do it. It just means they just don't know. But hey, any little bit of knowledge we can share and resources we can give out to those communities it's super important because then they jump on the bandwagon, and they want to be a part of the movement for the dogs.

Zach Skow:

People don't magically assimilate to a culture. It doesn't just magically happen. They have to be welcomed. And if you ostracize them off the bat and make them feel separate, then they're going to continue to be separate. If you bring them in and welcome them into this... It's a pretty vast cultural conversation. I mean, it's not that simple getting people to adjust to how they're accustomed to interacting or stewarding animals, it's a complicated conversation, and it runs deep. It's a complicated thing.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It really is.

Zach Skow:

It doesn't even have to snap your finger and say, now that you live in California, you're expected to behave this way.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right. And I've spent a fair amount of time in other countries, China being one of them. And I'll tell you when you go there, you're the oddball American. So not everybody thinks like you. They don't do things the way that we do. And you can't just go there and impose your ways because you think they're right. You have to be a little bit more careful about how you word things and how you may be suggesting things.

Zach Skow:

Yeah, very much so.

Jacqueline Pinol:

So it's a real learning experience. Let me ask you, Marley's Mutts has a lot of doggies in foster homes. You guys have a lot of support with foster homes, obviously. I'm sure you're always looking for more. So I do want to hint to my listeners, fosters are always welcome.

Zach Skow:

Yeah. Anybody in Northern LA County or Kern County, please marleysMutts.org/foster.

Jacqueline Pinol:

You also take in severe medical cases or some that need rehabilitation with behavior training. Can you talk to us about one or two dogs that maybe had a really difficult journey, but they were worth every effort because they reached that new beginning, and maybe thousands of people had happy tears after the story?

Zach Skow:

Yeah, definitely. There are too many to count. I'll talk about the two that we adopted, that we brought into my family. So the first is Hooch, and we rescued Hooch from Kern County Animal Services. And he was in very bad shape. He had viral pneumonia. He's a French Mastiff. And so the first thing we did was, was taken from the shelter too. And they set a bunch of other things that were wrong with him. He had a broken tail. He had a bunch of lacerations on his face. His ears had just been cut off. By cut off, they weren't cropped. They were cut off, is really horrific. And he was also having some other issue that they couldn't really pinpoint.

So we took him straight to the hospital, and when they anesthetized him and then intubated, you move the tongue aside when you intubate, when you put the intubation tube in, and there's no tongue there. So his tongue was gone. His tongue had been cut out of his mouth or ripped out of his mouth.

So that was a shock. That was one of those things we go, "Oh my God, what do we do?" I Googled it. I couldn't find anybody or anything or whatever, dealt with a dog with no tongue. I did find out from the doctor and speaking to somebody at oral surgery at Davis that they need their tongue for everything. He said, "Dogs need their tongue to drink. They need their tongue to eat." You have to move food to your pre-molars and molars using your tongue. If you and I, while talking, if you would bear with me for a second, when you swallow, you have to put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. That's how you close or open the pathway to your esophagus or your airway.

So I'm going, "Oh my God, we're going to have to euthanize this dog. This is horrendous." And I just couldn't. None of us could bring ourselves to that point. So first thing we did was put an esophageal feeding tube in his neck, so punched a hole in his, and we're giving him food and water that way, all the while, trying to figure it out, what are we going to do? What are we going to do? And he started to drink out of a bucket at the hospital, out of a cleaning bucket. So he put his face in there and was like, sucking water, almost like a horse.

Jacqueline Pinol:

So he was responsive, even though he had had these terrible injuries once he was out of anesthesia?

Zach Skow:

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. He was almost like a normal dog. You could tell he was afraid, but other than his ears having been cut off and these other injuries, you couldn't tell there was something that amiss. Once you realize he has no tongue, then you can't stop thinking about it. Then it's very obvious.

Jacqueline Pinol:

He's beautiful. I've seen photos. I love him.

Zach Skow:

He totally is. But it was a typical rescue experience. There was a whole lot of people saying a whole lot of negative things, I mean, really just blasting us about, "You're just keeping this dog alive for Facebook likes. You're a monster. You are an absolute monster, Mr. Skow." Some of the things that people say when you're trying to save an animal's life, I don't know what motivates people, but we kept going. And there was just a little bit of hope. Every week we get a little bit more hope and incredible people... There's this device called Bailey's Chair, which is designed for dogs with Megaesophagus. And they sent us a Bailey Chair for Hooch.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, yes. I've seen dogs that use these.

Zach Skow:

Yeah. So this is how we first started to get food in his body. Actually, hand-feeds him. So we're feeding him with our hands. And then that quickly developed to getting out of Bailey's Chair, putting him in a seat. And then he's also brachiocephalic. So he's got a large underbite. So I'm just putting my hand in his mouth and putting wet food and dry food in his mouth, and it's working, and he's not aspirating, so we kind of got into a groove, and the rest is really history.

We dialed in this whole process of how to feed him. Now we can feed him very easily. He drinks very easily. He's an incredibly social dog. We put him right into the mix, and we started training him for therapy certification. So he started going with me to all these different places, and he became a huge hit at the Valley Achievement Center, in particular, you're dealing with non-verbal autistic children.

So very socially unstable. And I say, unstable, not as an insult, it's just a matter of fact. Autism is a social affliction that prevents children from being able to understand normal social cues, normal social interactions. And when they're non-verbal, there's a lot of screaming. It's very loud. It's very chaotic, and Hooch would go to VAC and just lay down and let the boys and girls just... And most of these kids had never had a dog because they're non-verbal autistic. It's a situation that doesn't work well for them.

So we would go there with our miracle Mutts therapy team, and Hooch included, and Hooch was a rockstar, rockstar. So much so that this kid, Aiden, again, who is non-verbal, his first words. His dad will not let me forget this was Hooch. This kid who doesn't talk, his words were Hooch. And that was a huge thing for his dad, and he started and crawling all over my back using me as a jungle gym, and his dad remarked about how he's never done that with another man. He'd never felt that connection with another man, which was important to him and because of it usually repelled.

So many of the kids there did so well with Hooch. And so to see this dog who people were calling for us to euthanize him, and for a good reason, to a certain degree, I mean, you don't want to see unnecessary suffering, a dog who can't eat or drink, but when it goes to show you, is that the quality of life that he lives an incredibly high quality of life that he's paid it forward in such a big way. He's done countless hundreds of hours of therapy service. He's been to prison with me whole bunch of times. I mean, he's been to, I don't know how many schools and institutions and meetings, and he's really helped a lot of people through his story, through his resilience. Because people see a dog, his tongue's been ripped out of his head, and they say, "Shoot, if he can survive, I can survive."

Jacqueline Pinol:

Awesome.

Zach Skow:

Is it okay if I talk about Cora [00:33:02]?

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh yes, of course.

Zach Skow:

It's another similar situation because from a veterinary standpoint, they weren't familiar with this. So Cora came to us with two shattered legs. The shelter had amputated one of the legs, and we tried to save the other one.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And what kind of dog is she? Just so our listeners know.

Zach Skow:

She's a little Maltese poodle. So this little Maltese poodle scared up everything. She was terrified. She was in pain. She had a broken back, broken hip, a broken pelvis, broken legs. I mean, really, really in bad shape. And she had been cast it at the shelter for way too long, without the proper medical care. She came from a different shelter out of our area. And yeah, after taking her to VCA, the best hospital in the West Coast, they said, "Look, we'll try to fix it and didn't work. So we had to do the impossible unthinkable, which was amputate her other leg." So we're going to have a double front leg amputee. And again, same thing, the veterinary staff wouldn't do it. I mean, we had the lead veterinary technicians that I will not sit in on this surgery. I am not going to sit in while these people remove this dog's front leg, no way. What are they going to do? What's this dog going to do with no front legs? You're creating a monster.

I kind of understood where she was coming from. I empathized with her situation, that, this rescue not being logical by trying to keep this dog alive. And will she have an incredibly poor quality of life? They were concerned that she would have a terribly poor quality of life. And I understand where they're coming from, but boy, were they wrong.

So as soon as that leg came off, those legs came off, it was a very long process. It took a couple of months because she was broken everywhere else. But she started to get a little bit better every day, a little bit better every day. And then she found herself in this process. She's a fundamentally different dog from a personality standpoint than when it started.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I was going to ask you, how was her demeanor? Because dogs tell us.

Zach Skow:

She is a feral street dog. Cora was a feral street dog. She's still is the street dogs. She's still has all these tendencies of digging through things. And she's a little weasel, and everybody thinks she's like this glamour princess. She's such just ratty street dog at heart. But she progressed through this incredible personality development. That going through this process drew her. I honestly think it's instinctual. I think a big part of it is instinctual because she recognizes internally some sort of throwback like lizard brain part of her recognizes that she can't survive on her own. She only has two back legs. She must depend on people to survive.

So that's when she really started to cozy herself up to us. And when that happened, she won't leave me alone. She's now my shout-out, and my wife always makes fun of me and me and Cora and our relationship and how... She's always talking smack, always trying be-

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, that's so funny.

Zach Skow:

She went from being the most pathetic-looking thing I've ever seen. I mean, really, I just felt so bad for this dog. And it caused me so much anxiety seeing the state that she was in and knowing that I was responsible for her and wanting to do the right thing and not sure if I was doing the right thing and wondering if we amputate, is this going to be okay? Or people again, same things. So many people online saying, "You're a monster. You're only doing this for social media likes, unfollowing Marley's Mutts. I can't stand you blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." But this dog, I'm telling you, I have never met any one creature in my life that produces as much positive energy as that little dog.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, gosh.

Zach Skow:

You know what I mean?

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yes.

Zach Skow:

I've never met a little thing that has the ability to just make people who are in a really tough spot smile. I bring that dog to prison, and you just watch people light up. When she goes to Juvenile, we have a Prison Program at Juvenile Hall for the girls.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh yes, we're going to talk about that.

Zach Skow:

But it's just remarkable to watch this dog's potential for positivity what she can inject into the world in terms of positive karma. She pays it forward like you wouldn't believe. And it's almost like she recognizes where she was. It's just beautiful. I feel so blessed and grateful. I experienced a lot of depression and doubt, and I'm also in the line of work that's just very demanding. And a lot of people say a lot of very negative things. People have tried to cancel me in the past. And I've had a lot of dark moments, a lot of really challenging dark moments. And that dog is there for me. Like you wouldn't believe. And if you can just take a step back from the pain and plug yourself into what these dogs are showing us, it's just remarkable. If you allow yourself to, they can change, fundamentally change your human experience for the better.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I believe it. Absolutely. I do. And I know what you're talking about. There's this term I saw on a post the other day, compassion fatigue. I saw that on a post the other day. And I thought I've suffered from that from time to time. It does get to be a lot. But we keep pushing because the human condition created the current Canine Condition of having so many dogs in these conditions that need us. They depend on us to survive, to thrive, or to let... They let you know. I think Cora or Hooch would have looked at you or someone and said, "I can't, I can't do this. It's not in me. You've got to let me go." And you would have.

Zach Skow:

Yeah. I mean, I've had to do that more times than I can count. And there is an exchange. There is a recognition there.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I think that's when people that are the naysayers and the negativity, it's like, they're not there in that moment. They don't know. But dogs tell you when they've... They're like, "No, no, no, no, I'm not ready to go. I'm here. Give me another day two." And then that becomes weeks and months. And then here you go with these two wonderful stories of Hooch and Cora. Thank you for sharing them. I love that you mentioned so the Prison Program, Pawsitive Change. And I think the use of the words paw and positive is so cute and genius for this program. How did this program come about, and what are some of the success stories that you see over and over again about humans and canines that have come out of this mission?

Zach Skow:

Well, the program developed over many, many years. We tried for a long time to get into a variety of different facilities. And we finally succeeded at California City Correctional Facility in large part because of Lisa Porter. Lisa Porter's, our head trainer. She's been with our organization for like 10 years. And it was just a lot of just dogged determination. We just wouldn't take no for an answer. So yeah, after about four years of trying, and we were inspired by a variety of things. One being the gentlemen I know who had just gotten out of prison and was really struggling. And we adopted a dog to him that was actually afraid of men. And when he came up with his mom to adopt this dog, it changed her life forever. It changed his life forever. He's gone on to start his own rescue. He's gone on to work for us. He's done a whole bunch of different things and watching that dog. He went to prison when he was 17 and spent like 12 or 13 years in prison. So his whole adulthood was incarcerated.

So to have him right after he gets out, adopt this dog and have it totally change his entire life. I just knew that, that was like an extra motivation to make this happen. So we were just very persistent, and we finally found a warden who believed in us at California City Correctional Facility. Shout out to Dave Long. We just got to make it happen. Leah and Lisa created the curriculum, and we started slow. I started with six dogs and 24 men, and then we quickly upped it to 10 dogs and 30 men. And then we add in another prison, North Kern State Prison, and then we added Wasco State Prison and Corcoran State Prison, which is the most dangerous prison in California. So all of a sudden, we're in four prisons.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I was just about to ask you, is it only correctional facilities, but they're also other types of prisons that you've started the program in?

Zach Skow:

Mostly high-security prisons. So these are state prisons that we operate in. So we operate now in six state prisons and one girl's juvenile detention center. So it's called Bakersfield Juvenile Justice. That's our girl's program. We have women's program, our first women's program coming online soon at Victorville Federal Women's Prison, that is our first federal program as well. So yeah, I mean the program, some of the stories that come out are too many to discuss. But-

Jacqueline Pinol:

Absolutely. I'm sure it's just life-changing.

Zach Skow:

They really are. I mean, in so many ways that I would have expected people see dogs working with inmates, people who are incarcerated and think, "Oh, that's adorable. That's great." Dogs being rehabilitated by them helps the dogs, and dogs will give them some love. And yeah, that's awesome. But what it is really is so much more than that. It provides a safer place in prison. So it creates a connection outside of your race. Prison is a very segregated place. So you have men of varying backgrounds working together to rescue dogs, to rescue and rehabilitate dogs. You're infusing them with purpose. They have a reason to get up every day. They're working their butts off to do this. All of our homework involves emotional vulnerability. It evolves... They're following the Canine Good Citizen certification. So they're having to master these 10 testing points.

There's so much involved in class. It's an extensive immersive class. We're not just going in there and peddling around with dogs. And these dogs live... It's a 14-week-long program. They live there for three months. Dogs are living in prison every day, all day long, for three months. We go in and visit once a week. Usually, for three to four hours, we bring about two or three of us in there, and we just hands-on. They are our brothers and sisters. I've been passionate about animal welfare and advocacy my whole life. But discovering prison advocacy and truly advocating for the most disenfranchised people on planet Earth. The people who are experiencing the most darkness and suffering has changed my life. I have plugged completely into my purpose, and I'm extremely grateful for it every day.

I was very much like them, and to be able to get to believe in them and to get to be one of the people that believe in them, to gets to show them what they're worth and the potential that they have, I just feel so blessed that I get to do that. Then I get to be this infusion of hope and opportunity for them.

We've had guys who haven't spoken to their kids in a decade, two decades, haven't spoken to their parents. They're basically out of sight, out of mind, and their families see them on Pawsitive Change Instagram, and then they reach out, and they say, "Dad, I want you to be my dad again." And they're there for them when they get out of prison. And half of our guys that have gotten out of prison are involved in animal welfare and involved in the pet industry. They're dog trainers, behaviorists, kennel technicians, rescue workers. There's of all different backgrounds, black, Hispanic, and people of color are largely left out of the animal welfare work. I'm not saying this to be negative or accusatory. It's always been kind of white women-dominated, whether it's dog training or just the rescue community and animal sheltering. But that's changing. And one of the coolest things about prison about our program is that it's also helping us culturally accept formerly incarcerated people back into our midst.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I was just about to ask you that because it's a big risk. Some people might be like, "Oh, are you sure you want to trust those guys with the dogs?" And, "Oh, do we want to hire them in those positions?" I mean, I can just hear, because I've been around so many different groups of people that you go, there's going to be skeptics and people with fear. But how do we educate them? How do we say, "Hey, this program works, look what it's doing."

Zach Skow:

Yeah. And we do just that. We inundate them with videos and pictures of who they really are. They've been taught that incarcerated individuals are to be feared or to dress them in blue and orange and lock them behind steel bars in concrete castles and keep them away from us for as long as possible. And if we let them out or to ostracize them, or to treat them unfairly, we're not to let them vote. We're not to let them get a job. We're to treat them as outcasts subhumans. We're to allow them no pathway to redemption, no way to redeem themselves, even though they've served their time and pay their debt to society. We're going to treat them as though they are forever stigmatic and that they have a scarlet letter on there.

People will say, "Well, they didn't get face tattoos. Maybe they'd be successful in the world." They have a scarlet letter on them, regardless of whatever tattoos they have that is implemented by our society. And what's been incredible to see is everybody loves dogs, and everybody can relate to that human connection. And all you need to be able to relate to a person who is incarcerated or formerly incarcerated is something to connect over, some common form of connection, and to see how soft they are with these guys, to see how soft our guys are with the dogs, to see how much they give of themselves in the program. It's just beautiful to see it. It's very humanizing. It goes to show who they really are and what their potential is.

We are missing out on millions of individuals, two and a half million people incarcerated in this country. A quarter of the entire world's incarcerated population resides in the United States of America. Not China, not Russia.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh my gosh. Are you serious? I didn't know that.

Zach Skow:

33% of incarcerated women in the world reside in America.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh my gosh.

Zach Skow:

That should be 40. We also spent \$100 billion a year on locking people up. \$100 billion and \$80,000 in California per inmate per year. It costs more than I get paid annually to just put someone in prison. So to answer your question, Pawsitive Changes a variety of things. It gives them vocational help. It gives them emotional help. It gives them self-esteem, self-confidence, helps them plug into something that is positive, that is altruistic, helps them believe in themselves. And it helps our nation and our culture start to shift. Its own inner narrative about who incarcerated people are, and what they're capable of, what their true potential is.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And it's saying believe in the fact that if we can rehabilitate dogs, we can rehabilitate humans, and we have to give humans a chance to be rehabilitated.

Zach Skow:

We really do, man. We are all, I mean, how many of your listeners, if every person listening right now, if I asked, "Have you ever lied? Have you ever hurt somebody that you care incredibly about? Have you ever, maybe not treated your dog well? Have you maybe not treated your spouse well? Have you maybe not treated your kids well? Have you maybe done something that you're so unproud of that you don't even want to think about it right now, as I'm talking? Have you done something that you absolutely deep down inside hate yourself for, that you can't even come to grips, remembering the memory? And the answer is probably yes. And that's what all those people are feeling inside of prison, only they got caught, and they're incarcerated.

If we could just find a way to relate to other people and rather than focus on the worst thing they've ever done in life, focus on the redemptive aspects of their existence. What is positive about this person? Don't let what other people are saying about you try to change who you are as a person inside and the love and the respect and the connectivity that I got in that place. I mean, I walk out of prison on a cloud. I mean, it sounds strange.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It's so cool.

Zach Skow:

But I leave that place just on fire, spiritually on fire.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And I'm sure you leave them with the same, which is what I'm talking about. This whole rehab thing. It's reciprocal.

Zach Skow:

If we team up, if we all just cut the BS and team up, we have won already. It's done. We've won. We've won the animals. If we team up, if we quit this undercutting backbiting nonsense, where, I mean, we have won, if we can cut that out.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I agree. So now that you're talking about, if we could all just connect and help each other, I read on your website a very honest quote. And it says the reality in rescue is that no single rescue group can help rescue every single homeless dog in their community. That quote really spoke to me because it tells me that you guys at Marley's Mutts are advocates for collaboration and partnership with other groups so that dogs can have a greater chance at increasing the opportunity for adoption. Can you talk to us a little bit about the Mutt Movers program?

Zach Skow:

Yeah, absolutely. Well, let me first touch on how thrilling it is to get to work with a lot of people, to work with people in rescue. This is a soul-sucking, very challenging, physically emotional challenging work. It can really take the life force out of you because we give ours all into it. And anybody in rescue understands it's 24 hours a day. It does not rest. It is non-stop, seven days a week.

So when you get to collaborate, and you get to work with other people who you can relate to, it just builds you up. It fills you up. You feel part of a tribe, you feel invigorated, and you start to develop connections that really has helped me cope with all of this. I have a group of rescuers that I can reach out to about anything, and it's become my own little kind of psychiatric wellness group, and I think that's so critical in rescue. Collaboration provides that. It provides an opportunity for us to kind of connect and save lives together and create these kind of alliances that go on to do bigger and better things.

Mutt Movers focus is pretty simple. There are areas of North America that have essentially run out of shelter dogs, areas in Canada, Oregon, Washington, spots where there's a great need for adoption, but they don't have an inventory of rescue dogs of sheltering animals to adopt, and we don't yet want breeding to re-emerge and become another variable that we then have to deal with. So the solution is to move as many dogs out of the region as we can. So we get dogs from Los Angeles from whether it's Carson or Downey or wherever else. And we get dogs from here, and we get dogs from overseas. And sometimes we will partner with Pet Rescue Pilots. My buddy, Julian Javor he's an incredible pilot, an incredible guy. And we just did a flight last weekend. We took 20 dogs up to Canada, up to Victoria, where there are literally just a laundry list of people waiting for dogs, just waiting for dogs.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's awesome that people want to adopt there.

Zach Skow:

Yeah, we're just trying to get as many dogs out of the shelter, out of our area, into loving homes as possible. And it's essentially doubled our capacity. We can move 30 more dogs a month if 30 more dogs essentially adopted out of shelters and potential off euthanasia lists. Then that's the ticket. So that's what we're doing. And it's a great process. You're uniting all these different organizations. So you're getting to compare notes. You're getting to... It's really wonderful. It's really, really special.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And do you guys see the end result? I mean, do you guys keep in touch with, are they shelters, or are only rescues where you send them off to? I mean, you definitely feel like, "Hey, they are getting home. So they're not just going to go sit in a shelter?"

Zach Skow:

Yeah. We work with a reputable rescue organization. We don't send dogs to shelters. We send them to rescues.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, okay, great. I just like to clarify because sometimes listeners will hear the word shelter or Humane Society or rescue, and it gets all put into one category, but they're all so different. You were mentioning bringing dogs from overseas. So I wanted to ask you this, given the amount of dogs that are in shelters and homeless on the streets or in rescue on the United States, some people do ask, and they've asked me, why do rescue save and bring animals from other countries when we're so full here on still euthanizing? So from your experience, how would you answer that question?

Zach Skow:

It's a very valid question. I understand the logical math of, if we have dogs here that need saving, why on earth would you bring dogs from somewhere else and bring them here? And it's not just about those dogs. What we're doing is fighting for animal welfare and advocacy around the world. We want what's taking place in our country and the developments that we've had culturally, to take root in those areas. And so we've been to Romania, Thailand, Korea, Brazil, the North of Brazil near Amazonia all over the place to Morocco, Lebanon. And these are places that we go for a very specific reason. They are this close to losing the very tentative foothold that they have. And like for this most recent trip to Morocco, the SARA, Sunshine Animal Refuge Agadir, recently took on 1100 dogs with no resources whatsoever. And these dogs are being cold in the streets. That have been gathered up and shot. They're being poisoned. There are other videos you can look up. I don't even really want to talk about it.

Jacqueline Pinol:

By just citizens or by their government?

Zach Skow:

No, by the local municipality. Because it's a public health issue having that many stray animals around. Dogs are our responsibility. We created dogs. We are responsible for them. They are an extension of us. They are, in many ways, kind of biological children. So for one, I believe we have a responsibility to them, no matter what. Two, I believe we have a strict responsibility to help support organizations and groups that are furthering the cause of animals and animal welfare in those regions. And specifically, why we travel to those regions is because there are groups of people with very little resources who have the guts and the determination to try to do this work. Oftentimes in completely hostile territory, they are operating animal welfare, sanctuary shelters, et cetera, in places that hate them, that actively try to sabotage them that will kill their dogs, that will attack them, and they need our help. And we, because of my story and because of whatever else, we were able to build up a social media following that is very large.

Simply by going there, we were able to raise \$30,000 for that organization, give them five or 10,000 more followers, get them, I think it was like 200 recurring donors on there. So that infusion of support is going to help them continue to exist and continue to push the narrative in Morocco. And if Northern Africa, they also have the only TNR program in Africa. They the only trap, neuter, vaccinate, release program in the entire region. And if they lose that, then that area's gone, it's gone. Forget about it. And so Dr. Richard Grossman taught me a long time ago that if you can, you should. If you can, you should. Meaning in terms of, if you can help somebody, you should, and we could help them, and so we should.

So many of these organizations reach out to us through social media, and they're desperate. And this is a husband and a wife and three in a Roma community in Western Romania that are dying, that have 500 dogs that they don't know how to take care of. No money and to be able to give them food for a year and rebuild part of their shelter. It gave them not only those practical things to help run their shelter, but

it gave them a shot in the arm of motivation and enthusiasm to keep doing their work. They're not alone. They're believed in. And I've been that guy.

I started in my organization, in my dad's garage, with no idea how we were going to do it. Three months in, I lost all my money to a litter of parvo puppies. Half of them died. I thought I'm done. This is, "I'm done." There's no way I can survive this. And these people are going through this experience where they don't know that they can survive this and we can help. And so we ought to help them. So we're helping them.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yes. Thank you, Zach.

Zach Skow:

I'm not tired of defending myself because it's a very simple logic drain.

Jacqueline Pinol:

No, but I do feel that the message has to be repeated constantly because people forget. It's very easy to think like, "Oh, they took care of the problem. Great. You guys did great. Moving on."

Zach Skow:

Yeah. It's a very short-sighted way to think when you just go, "Well, we have too many dogs here. Why are you bringing dogs in?" It's a very short-sighted way to think. [inaudible 00:56:31].

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, that's their problem. That's another one I've heard. Well, that's their problem. But I love that you said, "No, we have to go there and educate and help them better their situation. Or one day it might really be our problem, their problem."

Zach Skow:

When you get to go be a part of providing so much hope and practical resources to somebody, the bonds that are created are like nothing else. Getting to spend time with Michelle and Hazel and Lobby, who's my dude, out there in Morocco to have them go look at the computer and the results that were coming in from donations. And to know that we were bringing dogs home, that there were tripods, that they would never be able to do anything with. And to know that we were helping them out with resources and connecting them with other opportunities and to know that we're going to be back. It was very important for them. It was really, really special.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Absolutely.

Zach Skow:

And we are like family now. So yeah, I mean, from a selfish standpoint, it does a lot for my soul to help keep me moving in the right direction. And it does a lot for them. And I think it's just a beautiful thing. And I think if people spent even just a small percentage of the time they spend thinking about negative ideas on positive ideas-

Jacqueline Pinol:

Think of the change that could come about.

Zach Skow:

We'd be a much happier place.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Your rescue uses the phrase, All Breeds, All Creeds welcome, which I love so much. So let's get more Mutt Militia support. I've seen you use Mutt Militia too, which I think is so cool that you guys have these very good phrases that stick in your brain, and you know who they belong to. It's Marley's Mutts.

Zach Skow:

Sure.

Jacqueline Pinol:

So, where can our listeners find, follow, and share Marley's Mutts online or on social media?

Zach Skow:

Yeah. You can follow us at marleymutts.org. Everything you need is found on the website. The website was recently revamped. So check it out. Let us know what you think. Sign up for the newsletter there. On Instagram, we're just @marleymutts. On Facebook, Marley's Mutts Dog Rescue. For Pawsitive Change, it's separate social media accounts. So just go to P-A-W-S-I-T-I-V-E Change Program on Instagram and Pawsitive Change on Facebook. Yeah, you can follow Cora too. My little girl's on Instagram.

Jacqueline Pinol:

She has her own page?

Zach Skow:

She does; @thecorarose is the brightest page on Instagram I'm telling you, you want to get inspired?

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh my gosh. I haven't seen that one too.

Zach Skow:

Yeah, but you can foster, you can donate, you can volunteer for any number of things on the website and check out all the different programs we have and everything that's coming up or everything that's passed. We'd love to have you on board.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, great. And I will have those live links in the show notes for this episode. So anyone can scroll down and follow and support Marley's Mutts. Our listeners should know that I am not getting paid to advocate for anyone organization on this podcast. I choose to interview guests from organizations that I know are doing the good work for dogs and for people across America. And in this case, beyond. Marley's Mutts has the Canine Condition seal of approval from me. Zach, thank you so much for this conversation. You really have moved me. I tried to hold it back, so I don't interrupt you when you're talking, but I got choked up a couple of times. I have to admit.

Zach Skow:

Crying is contagious.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I hope that my listeners will connect with you. And thank you for everything you do.

Zach Skow:

I had an absolute blast. Thank you so much for inviting me.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Who are your heroes, and why? Have they inspired you to take action in an area of life that speaks to your heart? If you love animals and dogs have a special place in your heart, please consider being a hero for one. Even if you can't adopt, perhaps you can sponsor one or connect with Marley's Mutts to see how you can give back to a dog because you may be helping that dog become a hero to someone in need, someone who is looking for their soul mate.

Thank you for joining me on this episode. Please press Subscribe on our podcast and tell your dog-loving friends about it. Until next time, hang on to those leashes, The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay.