

Rosetta Graydon

By Cara H. Roy

Rosetta Graydon is a Champion for Alberta because she was the one and only founder of the SPCA (Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), now called the Edmonton Humane Society. Her society has given many animals a new life and many families a new furry friend.

Rosetta was born on February 14th, 1865 in Silver Hill, Ontario. In 1894, she got married to a man named George Graydon. Together they moved to Edmonton to take over a drugstore on Jasper Avenue. Today you can still tour their drugstore, which has been moved to at Fort Edmonton Park! Each day she observed from her window above the drugstore how people inhumanely tied their horses to a post in a vacant field while they went into the bar for the night. These work horses were left outside in the cold winter weather with no food or bedding overnight. She got so discouraged that one day she stole their horses and took them to a stable for overnight boarding. In the morning, the owners had to go to the stable and get their horses back by paying a small boarding fee. In 1907, she organized the first SPCA with a group of dedicated volunteers. In 1912, she was issued a charter- that meant that her society was given legal authority by the Canadian government. In 1918, she was made a city Special Constable. Then she could arrest those who were treating animals extremely poorly! Her compassion for animals didn't stop at horses. It spread to other farm animals, animals that were used for public entertainment and domestic animals, too. The first thing her society did was install public water troughs for horses and dogs. Then they opened an emergency hospital for animals. Many animals were humanely put down to stop the spread of diseases, such as rabies and typhoid. As well as doing all these things, they also managed to do over 5000 inspections of animals being

transported per year. She held tea parties at her house so community members could have time to interact and possibly adopt needy cats and dogs. She spoke in schools teaching kids how to properly take care of animals. By 1916, her society was already making a huge difference in Edmonton- cruelty to animals had been significantly reduced.

She was also loved for many other things including her role in politics with Nellie McClung. Together they strove for women's rights, like the right to vote. She also had a major part in the establishment of making Edmonton the capital of Alberta. Rosetta died in 1945, at age 80.

It's been 118 years and Rosetta's Society is still working hard. The Edmonton Humane Society still offers pets for adoption. They care for sick, injured, lost or stray animals, keeping them until they are healthy and can go to a new home. They offer spay and neuter services at a reduced cost. They also have dog training, pet sitting and educational courses. The City of Edmonton has recognized Rosetta as an important person in their history by naming an area of Edmonton after her, Graydon Hill.

Rosetta's work has impacted many lives, including mine. Our family has been a foster family for the Edmonton Humane Society for 5 years now. When we foster a dog, we get a call from the EHS staff and we quickly go over. Usually, the dogs come in a big crate with their food, bedding and toys that have been donated by generous community members. Sometimes, when the dogs come to us they look pretty rough. They have had fleas, kennel cough, overgrown nails, matted fur, or fur with stuff stuck in it. I clearly remember when we got our first foster puppy-

his name is Bounce. He is a teacup Yorkshire Terrier. When we got him, he weighed 800 grams. He had many problems, including kennel cough, two broken bones, hypoglycemia, ingested objects and blue glue stuck in his fur. The Edmonton Humane Society had named him Bounce because they hoped that he would be able to bounce back. He was almost dead when they found him on the streets in Edmonton. They told us to syringe feed him every two hours. It was not clear whether he would make it or not but we were determined that he would. After two surgeries and two months of slow-going care, he finally was a healthy dog again. He went up for adoption and we were the first on the list of applicants! After all this work we had done, we just couldn't give him up. Since then, we have fostered many other dogs such as a Corgi/ Lab mix, Pomeranian, Border Collie, and many others. At the moment we are waiting for a mother and kittens that should arrive tomorrow. The best part about volunteering at the Edmonton Humane Society is that I get to see the animal's personality come to life once they know that I love them and that they can trust me.

While researching Rosetta Graydon, I've noticed that I have a lot in common with her, like how both of us like volunteering, taking care of animals, and helping others. I personally have been inspired by her while writing. I also feel that she's had a big impact in my life even though I didn't know about her before my essay. I am so glad that Rosetta started the Edmonton Humane Society because without her Society, we wouldn't have our pet Bounce and I wouldn't have learned how to take care of animals properly. I love making a difference in my community, knowing that these pets are going to a loving home and that their new families are so happy to have them.

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