

GETTING TO KNOW WILDLIFE

THREE LEGGED FOX



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Even though we no longer do wildlife rehabilitation, the animals we have helped over the years are never far from our minds.

It was a cold and snowy February day when we got a call from an elderly lady in Lynwood Village, there was a fox curled up in the snow in her backyard. It had a serious injury to its hind leg and there was blood everywhere. She had no way to contain it. Although we normally did not have the resources to go to a site, it was the off-season and it was near the Centre, so we thought we could check it out. A few minutes later we were piled into the van with towels, nets, gloves and carrier in hand on our animal rescue adventure.

We located the house, and the four of us unloaded the supplies and were off in search of Mr. Fox. He was still curled up in the snow, and the caller had not exaggerated the amount of blood. Things did not look good.

Our plan was to spread out and slowly surround the fox. As we approached he got wary and still had enough gusto to start to run. One of his hind legs looked to be holding on by a thread. He retreated to a woodpile and we were able to quickly get him into the carrier. We were relieved and maybe a little bit impressed with ourselves but we were anxious to get him to the vet.

As always, Alta Vista Animal Hospital and their dedicated staff quickly squeezed us in and we were very relieved to get some hopeful news. Although the hind leg was severely injured and could not be saved, they were confident they could amputate it and

once recovered, the fox would be releasable. We had heard of dogs with three legs, but a fox? We decided to give it a try.

Antibiotic treatment and wound flushing went well and before we knew it, it was time to get the fox moving on three legs. The vets were very confident the fox could compensate but he would need to strengthen his remaining legs, and that meant lots of exercise. The space in his cage would not be sufficient so we constructed a makeshift run that included part of a closed off hallway that led from the fox's cage. Within several weeks the fox was moving so fast we could not tell he was missing a leg. The day he jumped onto the top of his 4 ft high cage and curled up for a nap we knew he was ready to go. We released him back in the area where he was found and when the carrier opened he sniffed around a bit and then casually strolled away.