

My Home Is Your Home

By Julie André

Canning vegetables hadn't necessarily been on Mollie Coody's bucket list. Golden milk wasn't even on her radar, but she actually enjoys the mix of turmeric, almond milk, cinnamon and honey.

And while she loves animals, as a petite woman with a hip problem, Mollie was not planning on routinely handling a strong female rescue dog who might lunge at other canines during her nightly walks.

Yet she has done all this and more since September 2021, after she started sharing a Eureka resident's home thanks to the Northcoast Homeshare program.

In January 2019, Mollie was 60 and a retired medical assistant when she decided to move from the Bay area to Humboldt County to support one of her daughters and her new baby — her first grandchild. She stayed with the young family at first, but in summer 2021, as COVID restrictions eased up, she started looking for her own space.

"It's very hard to find apartments in Humboldt," she said. "They are very overpriced ... scarce and competitive." Most shared housing "required me to be involved with ... four or five college people," which did not appeal to her.

Through Nextdoor.com, Mollie learned about the free Northcoast Homeshare program. After screening, she met Kathy Strickland, a 53-yearold Mendocino native who lives near Sequoia Park. Kathy wanted a reliable housemate willing to dog-sit her rescue dog, Rocki, in exchange for a break in rent when she goes out of town to visit her aging parents or new grandchild.

A year later, Kathy says homesharing with Mollie "has worked out perfectly" and helped



A WIN-WIN-WIN — Kathy Strickland, left, and her rescue dog Rocki share their home with Mollie Coody. Julie André photo.

her "110%." She has met Mollie's family and feels she has made a lifelong friend. She has become an advocate for the program.

Kathy has no qualms about taking in a housemate, "knowing that Northcoast Homeshare screens them and does the background checks." She sees the appeal of homesharing for someone looking for flexible, affordable housing; she might want to be someone's housemate one day, too.

For her part, Mollie feels like she's home. Northcoast Homeshare "gives me the dignity to have a decent place, to be my adult self, with another adult."

Julie André is coordinator of the Northcoast Homeshare program at the Area 1 Agency on Aging. Visit 1aa.org/homesharing.