



**SPEAKING OF DOGS**  
Seminars, Outreach & Rescue

### **New Beginnings**

Stories of Speaking of Dogs rescues from their forever family

#### **Maggie**



Oh my gosh! Look! There she is! Our first foster dog, Maggie the 130 pound, 10 year old St. Bernard is walking toward us with the lady who runs Speaking of Dogs Rescue in Toronto, Ontario Canada. We are already in love! My husband Lou and I had talked about fostering for a while and had finally made the plunge. We'd had our telephone interview, a home visitation and signed the foster contract. We were ready! We got the email about Maggie and read that she had been abandoned in a house and needed a foster home. While we were told an All Breed rescue takes dogs of all sizes and mixes, we weren't really thinking we'd

be saying yes to a Saint Bernard, but after reading that she was a gentle, older girl we answered the email that we would be happy to foster her. That was over three years ago. We have fostered 20 senior dogs since then. All of them have been adopted. Along the way we adopted one to become part of our family. We love them all, big and small. Fostering feels good and we love doing it. We've had dogs with us for a few weeks and ones that have stayed for many months. The question we get most is how do we do it? How do we let them go? The answer is a simple one; we are helping many dogs find their path, which is what we have chosen to do. Yes it is hard the day that they go to their forever home but it is also a happy day because we have been involved in the adoption process. Our foster dogs come through our lives for a reason. They are on a journey to their New Beginning.

Tammy Andres - Bolton, ON

#### **A Network of Many saves a Mix of Many**



Found hungry, cold and matted on a Montreal street, she was taken to the local, overcrowded municipal shelter. The stunning dog, a 'mix of many', joined the hundreds of dogs who waited to be claimed by their owners. This scene occurs every day at shelters around the globe. Sadly, as happens all too often, no one came for 'stunning mix' and she was taken to the

veterinarian for euthanasia. However, this day guardian angels intervened.

With one telephone call, her life was spared. The veterinarian called an independent rescuer who networked to her vast list of contacts. A caring, compassionate man working at Toronto Animal Services opened the email and answered her plea, agreeing to bring her into their Pet Partnership program. Once in the program, she would either be adopted directly from the shelter, or placed with an approved rescue.

As a volunteer with Speaking of Dogs Rescue in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, everyday I read about the many dogs who need rescuing. My husband and I always had two dogs but one recently passed and our remaining dog, Dakota, was 15 years old. We were unsure if adopting another dog was in his best interest. In April I read about the timid dog from Montreal that our rescue was taking in. When I opened her picture I instantly felt connected to her. If she were destined to be part of our family, it hinged on whether she and Dakota were compatible, and to our delight, they were. We adopted this mix of many and named her Nikki. She has truly blossomed and brings great joy and laughter to our family. We are grateful to Speaking of Dogs Rescue and to this rescue network that save many wonderful lives like Nikki's.

Kim Gladding – Toronto, ON

### Clara



Gentle hands have moved me from one car to another. I am not accustomed to being handled with such tenderness and caring. They must understand how frightened I am. I'm not sure where I'm going but I am glad to leave life at the puppy mill.

"We're home" they say. They call themselves my 'foster parents'. They have another dog, Tommy, who greets me and seems very happy. He teaches me that my foster parents can be trusted and I am learning to like their kindness and soft words. They say "Clara" when I am near. I like the word. It makes me feel special.

Some new people come to visit me. They speak soft words of encouragement. I don't know these people so I don't look right into their eyes but they are nice to me. The new lady is patient and waits for me to come to her.

She says "Clara" and stretches out her hand. Sometimes hands scare me, but I am not frightened of this lady and I lick her hand so she will know I trust her. She and the big man she is with stay with me for a long time. Soon, the new lady is holding me close and carrying me outside toward her car. We drive for a while and I feel safe.

I have been with my people for a very long time now. I hope I stay here forever because I have never been this happy in my whole life. I play with my dog friends. Nobody ever yells at me, I am warm and never hungry. I have almost forgotten all about my old life at the puppy mill and

have a new life now. My mom says it's thanks to Speaking of Dogs Rescue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Cheryl Lamb - North Bay, ON

### Jesse



Then, one day as I was checking rescue agencies on the web, I came upon a photo of a puppy that bore an eerie resemblance to Archie (on the left). He was at the Speaking of Dogs Rescue in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

It turned out that the resemblance was apparent only in photos and that he was one quarter of Archie's size, but we fell in love and brought him home.

As he was a rescue from Malaysia, I looked on a map of that country and was drawn to the name Kota Kinabalu, the current name for a city that was once called "Jesselton". The new pup became "Jesse".

Jesse used Archie's favourite areas in the backyard, rang the bells on the back door (they had been hung there as Archie didn't bark to go out), lay in Archie's special spot on my husband and then heaved a huge sigh and grumbled as Archie had while falling asleep. We were stunned. It was as though Archie had never left.

Months later I looked up the meaning of Kota Kinabalu. It is Malaysian for "Having the spirit of the dead".

Perhaps sending us this little, gentle and kind soul who filled the hole in our hearts and gave us all a new beginning was Archie's "thank you"; and a last loving gift.

Mare-Liis Balles - Toronto, ON, Canada

### My White Knight



I retired in late 2004. My father was ill with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and his health was quickly deteriorating. We moved my parents into our home to spend extensive quality time with dad.

We had always had multiple dogs in our lives but, at retirement, we had only one dog, our Sally, who was lonely after recently losing her beloved companion,

Pippin.

Speaking of Dogs Rescue of Toronto, Ontario, Canada was referred to me. I filled out an application and was impressed by the depth of their process. It was obvious they cared deeply for their dogs and wanted to find the best fit possible.

They helped us find our new family member, Rudy, a white terrier mix who had survived a hit and run and had been left by the side of the road. After making a full recovery he was posted on Petfinder and the moment I saw him, I knew he was the dog for us.

Rudy came into our home and lives knowing instinctively that my father needed him. He would spend hours playing ball and cuddling with dad. We watched as dad laughed at Rudy's antics and seemed to have a newfound purpose to life. A life that we feel was extended and enriched all because of a little dog who had fought to keep his own life.

After dad's passing, Rudy gave me the strength to get through my heartache and loss - he was determined to lift my spirits in a way only dogs can.

It is because of Rudy that I found the most rewarding volunteer work I could ever have imagined. I believe it was my destiny to be joined with others whose plight is to help so many 'Rudy's' with their new beginnings.

I know I found mine.

Angela Snikkar - Toronto, ON

### **Pumpkin finds a home**



The elderly poodle had been dumped near a road; she wandered in the October cold and rain long enough to lose five of her ten pounds and become flea infested. The shelter workers who retrieved her knew her chances for adoption were almost nil and her chances for euthanasia very high, but her sweet nature won their hearts. They called a foster parent for Speaking of Dogs Rescue and asked the rescue to find a spot for this sweet little old

lady. The foster parent stepped up to the plate and took the wee girl home. Since the dog's name was unknown, the foster parent named her Pumpkin to honour the month of her rescue.

Pumpkin settled into the foster parent's home, had her terrible teeth fixed by the rescue's veterinarian, and ate and slept happily which helped her gain her lost weight. Pumpkin was a perfect lady; calm, quiet, affectionate. She loved the dog pyjamas the foster parent got to keep her warm, and it was the picture of Pumpkin in her pink jammies that caught my eye. My last

dog had passed away 2 years before; it took me that long to feel ready for another. I met Pumpkin and took her home that day...and she has surprised me every day since.

Pumpkin loves her walks, especially in the spring and fall, and cuddles with her cat cousins when the temperature falls. She loves everyone, and makes people smile with her wagging stump of a tail and lolling tongue. If not for the kind shelter workers, the generous foster parent and Speaking of Dogs Rescue, Toronto, ON, Canada, I would not have my lovely, loving Pumpkin.

Dianne Singer - Toronto, ON, Canada

### **Frida**

My girl was lost, found wandering the streets of Toronto. She languished in a cage for weeks in hopes of finding a new home. But each time a new person came near her, she jumped and bucked and pounced around like a wild horse. Her energy would frighten even the bravest soul. But thanks to a good city worker, who recognized her inner peace, she was picked up by the shelter Speaking of Dogs. They all looked at her beautiful smile and exuberant nature and said “ She needs a home that she can call her own, to run and jump and play, and we will call her Cindy”.

So they listed her on Petfinder.com where, one day, a lady who missed the sound of a happy dog was looking for a new companion. She scoured the listings and found the two pointy black ears and huge smile very attractive. After a short visit and the interview, the dog was finally able to go to her new home. She discovered that her new home was warm, loving and full of treats. She could chase her tail and run in circles all she wanted. Long walks and warm hugs were also frequent. But the one thing that was wrong was her name, so her new parents looked at her and called her Frida.

Frida is vibrant, energetic, loving and beautiful. So beautiful in fact, in her first few months in her new home she was even selected as the poster girl for Dog Rescue Calendar. You might even call her a calendar girl!

Maria Doyle - Toronto, ON

### **Our Famous Amos**



He may be part Beagle, he may be part Doberman and he is certainly part crazy, but mostly he is a huge part of our life. A world without Amos would be a void no human could ever fulfill, and no shoes or paws could ever fill his energetic presence.

Amos is a rescue dog that we were fortunate to adopt some six years ago from a caring foster parent who had rescued him from an almost certain demise. Amos and his litter mates had been deemed too timid to ever become a family

pet. His beginnings were likely dealt with heavy hands giving him a sense of insecurity. But with patience and understanding his life began to take a step in a positive direction when Speaking of Dogs gave him a chance to prove he could love and care if someone could love and care for him.

Amos came along at a time when my wife and I were grieving over the loss of our long time companion Tubbs. He had been both a companion to Stuart (a miniature Schnauzer) and our best friend for many years. Amos took us in a different direction with his playful goofiness and ever present desire to be with us wherever we were. Stuart – although somewhat uneasy about his new mate in the beginning – soon was drawn into his good-natured mischievous ways and the two of them became peas in a pod.

Looking into Amos' bright eyes it is hard to imagine that his life could have been brought to a close before he had a chance to live. Speaking of Dogs Toronto ON threw him a life preserver and allowed us to give him a place to grow. A simple thank you from Amos and us seems hardly appropriate.

Michael Piggins  
Pelham, ON, Canada