

## The Gift of Beau: When a Dog Becomes the Trainer



I am endlessly fascinated by dog behaviour and dog-to-dog interactions. I am often amazed at their unique lives, but I'm not often stunned by it. Recently, my youngest dog stunned me with his skills at shaping the play behaviour of my current foster dog, Gunner.

Gunner came to us with some stunted social skills. There is no nasty in him, but he doesn't entirely know how to play with

other dogs and is particularly befuddled by playing tug. Tug is a very popular game with my youngest dog, Beau, and he was ready to engage with a new tug partner.

Initially, Gunner would grab one of the shorter tug toys, and when Beau would join in, Gunner would begin to growl, the tone would shift, and he'd use

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### MARCH 2019

#### THE OFFICIAL SPEAKING OF DOGS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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##### About Speaking of Dogs

Speaking of Dogs is a Toronto-based organization that launched in 2001 and is dedicated to educating and enlightening people about dogs through seminars, workshop forums, outreach and rescue. Our goal is to end cruelty, abandonment, mistreatment and homelessness of man's best friend.

*Speaking of Dogs Rescue is the operating name of Speaking of Dogs Rescue Program, a Canada Revenue Agency-registered charity based in Ontario.*

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##### Newsletters

If you no longer want to receive our newsletter, email [newsletter@speakingofdogs.com](mailto:newsletter@speakingofdogs.com), with "unsubscribe" written in the subject line.



# Dogs Looking for Homes

## A friend in need is a friend indeed

Without a doubt, a dog is a real friend. Our dogs come in all shapes and sizes, but they have one thing in common—they all need loving forever homes. Open your heart and your home to a rescue dog. You'll be glad you did. For complete information about the adoption process, please visit [www.speakingofdogs.com/adoption-process](http://www.speakingofdogs.com/adoption-process). For more information on each dog, simply click on their name.

# Benji

SHEPHERD / LAB MIX  
MEDIUM, YOUNG, MALE



## FEATURED DOG:

Benji – a 10-month-old, 50-pound neutered male Shepherd mix – has a rough past that involved trauma resulting in brain damage. However, his past doesn't define him. He's a sweet boy who loves to snuggle and play with friends.

While Benji's physical issues have mostly resolved, some aspects of his gait and vision will need to be monitored. He currently needs eye drops, but the vet will be reassessing whether he still needs them at a follow-up appointment in a few months.

Sometimes wary around new people, especially men, Benji needs time to adjust to new situations and surroundings. However, once he feels comfortable, he acts like a regular puppy, playing with his toys and rough-housing with his dog pals. He does well with a calm, confident dog to show him the ropes. He also loves his crate – it's his "safe place."

Benji is comfortable and polite around cats and small animals. He would do well in a quiet home and neighbourhood, where he would not be overwhelmed by a lot of action and traffic. He needs patience and time to feel safe.

We don't know exactly what caused Benji's neurological damage, but we do know this sweet boy has a lot to offer. It will take time for him to trust a new family, but when he comes out of his shell, he shows you just how much love he truly has.

Benji needs a family that will understand that he has a learning disability and may take more time to "get it" than other dogs. An adopter who will not push him but will instead allow him to learn at his own pace and in his own way is essential.

Benji is a fun, quirky dog who gives nose bops, kisses, and sleeps on his back. He is excited to see you and, once there is a bond, gives you his full trust. He is very fond of playing and now realizes it's okay to do so, thanks to his foster family. He is housetrained and has not had any accidents indoors.

Benji will warm your heart and you will see that, despite his distressing past, he still has faith in humans. Are you the special someone who has faith in him?

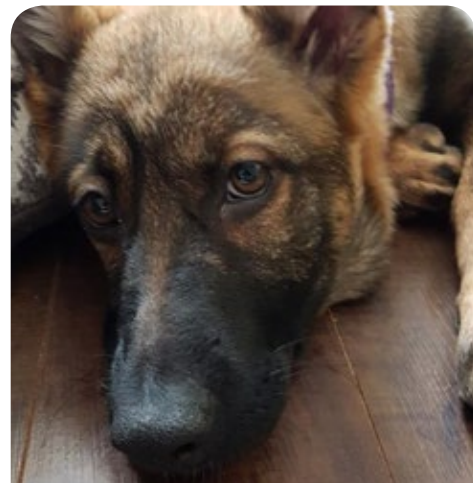




*Chico*  
LAB / BOXER MIX  
MEDIUM, ADULT, MALE



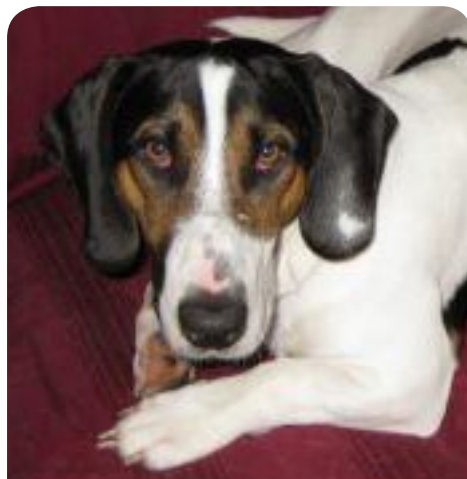
*Mylo*  
SHIH TZU  
SMALL, SENIOR, MALE



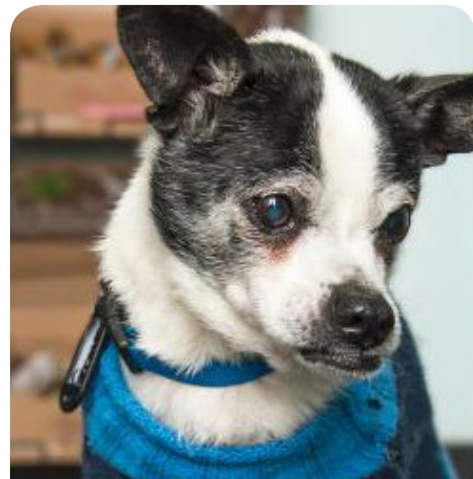
*Ellie*  
GERMAN SHEPHERD  
LARGE, BABY, FEMALE



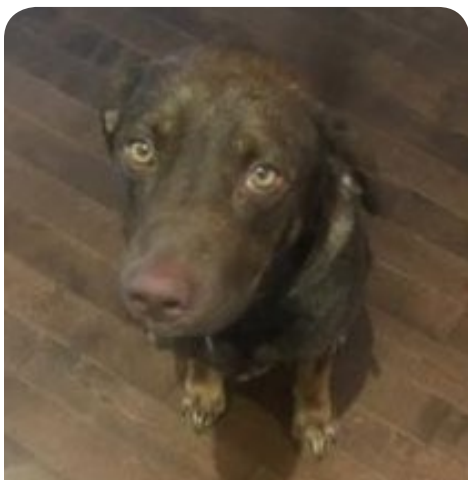
*Jack*  
BORDER COLLIE / LAB MIX  
MEDIUM, ADULT, MALE



*Pete*  
BEAGLE / BASSET HOUND MIX  
MEDIUM, ADULT, MALE



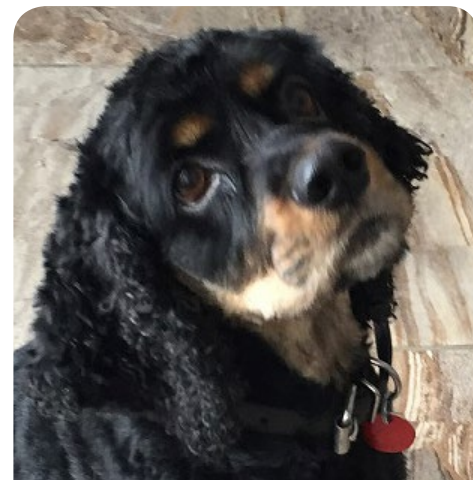
*Grover*  
CHIHUAHUA  
SMALL, SENIOR, MALE



*Hank*  
LABRADOR MIX  
LARGE, ADULT, MALE



*Lexi*  
GREAT DANE / LAB MIX  
X-LARGE, YOUNG, FEMALE



*Lou*  
COCKER SPANIEL  
MEDIUM, ADULT, MALE



*Ruby & Remington*  
SHIH TZU / BICHON MIX & TERRIER MIX  
MEDIUM, ADULT, FEMALE & MALE

# Events

## FURRY FRIENDS 5KS ARE COMING!

Speaking of Dogs Rescue is proud to be a part of the Furry Friends 5K run/walkathon circuit. These important fundraisers help us help more needy, homeless dogs, including the wonderful dogs in our Forever in Foster program.

But it's not just the dogs who benefit! These races are always a fun day, and there are great goody bags and prizes. Racers can walk with or without a dog, and all activity levels are welcome. You can even join as a team! But it's not just fun and games – more experienced runners can test their mettle and race against the clock!

There will be three races this year:

### Oshawa

Sunday, June 2

### Caledon

Sunday, June 9

### Burlington

Saturday, October 5

Please note the Angus Glen event scheduled for Saturday, April 13 has been cancelled.

To find out more about this year's Furry Friends 5K events, please visit <https://www.furryfriends5k.ca> and, of course, keep reading the monthly Speaking of Dogs newsletters to learn all of the exciting developments!

## JOIN US AT SPRING PET EXPO!

Please stop by Speaking of Dog's booth at the Spring Pet Expo, Canada's largest indoor pet festival. We'll be there to promote our dogs and provide information about responsible pet adoption and ownership. Whether your pet walks, hops, or slithers, they'll be welcome at the festival! You just need to complete and sign a waiver.

**Date:** Friday April 19 to Sunday April 21

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday

**Location:** International Centre, 6900 Airport Road, Mississauga (entrance is at Hall 2)

## WOOFSTOCK IS HAPPENING IN MAY!

Speaking of Dogs Rescue will be back at Woofstock this year, the 16th edition of this annual event that celebrates all things dog. The festival will be back at Woodbine Park in Toronto on **Saturday, May 25 and Sunday, May 26**. Stay tuned to the newsletter for more details!





# Ask the Trainer

*continued from page 1...*

his paws to cover the toy. Beau would immediately let go of the toy and lie down. He'd quietly wait for Gunner to calm down and then re-engage in tug.

After attempting this several times with the same result from Gunner, Beau walked over to the toy box and got a long tug toy, started to play with it, and then tried to engage Gunner in tug.

When I initially saw this behaviour, I thought, "Coincidence. There's no way Beau deliberately knows to try a longer toy."

However, again and again, Beau would not engage in tug with a short toy and consistently went to get a longer toy. I could only assume he *did* know something about how to change up the play.

As the tug play progressed, I watched Beau continue to carefully shape Gunner's play. It sounds anthropomorphic, but I don't know how else to describe it. If Gunner moved his mouth up the long toy toward Beau's end, Beau dropped his end and took up the other end – farther away from Gunner – and then re-engaged the tug game.

On a few occasions, Gunner could not adjust his play and continued to move up the tug toy, getting closer and closer to Beau. After a couple of attempts to keep Gunner at one end, Beau dropped the tug toy and began to engage Gunner in a totally different game – another favourite of both of them – the "chase around the yard and through the tunnel" game.

And on a few other occasions, I noticed that Beau just walked away to play with one of my other dogs.

Over two weeks, there was a significant shift in Gunner's play style and his ability to play with Beau without guarding or going over threshold. It was utterly fascinating to watch.

I can't teach a dog to do this. Beau just has this ability. He essentially shaped Gunner's behaviour by figuring out ways to engage him without it going off the rails. It has been, frankly, completely riveting to watch this.

I can certainly help a dog learn to play with me or interrupt play between dogs when it seems to be headed for trouble, but I cannot shape dog-to-dog play the way Beau can. And I certainly cannot teach a dog how to shape the play behaviour of another dog.

Gunner also had hip surgery, and so we had to do some at-home physio work. Beau decided to lend a hand here too!

We did a bit of low-impact weight shifting to make sure Gunner used the surgical leg and didn't always rely on his other three legs. Gunner likes to play tug, and I figured I could use a slow and easy game of tug to make the weight shifting a bit more engaging. He took one end of the tug toy, I took the other, and as he tugged (gently), I moved the toy side to side to get him to shift his weight from leg to leg.

Beau, of course, desperately wanted in on the tug action, so I let him take the end I had been holding, and I took the middle (just in case Beau decided to get too rambunctious). Beau would tug (to his credit, gently), and I'd move the toy back and forth. To my surprise, after I let go, Beau continued to move side to side to tug with Gunner – and still was very gentle about it. He did this a few

times (under my supervision), and he consistently stayed gentle and continued the side-to-side movement.

Another activity I did with Gunner is encouraging him to go over low jumps. These are often called cavalettis and are useful for getting a dog to put weight on their surgical leg and to increase their hind-end awareness. Beau, of course, insisted on helping with this as well.

He would place himself at the end of six cavalettis, play bow, and offer play invites. This encouraged Gunner to cross the cavalettis. I will say that I had to work on keeping Gunner going slowly, as Beau's encouragement tended to make him want to speed up, and the key to successful cavaletti rehab is going slowly. But Beau's willingness to engage certainly made all of Gunner's at-home physio more enjoyable for all of us.

Beau's outstanding dog skills and ability to engage with Gunner during our physio workouts are a huge gift to me, not to mention to Gunner. I have often said that my dogs do as much of the fostering work and behavioural rehabilitation as I do.



*Blanche Axton is a dog trainer and coordinates the fostering program with Pugalug Pug Rescue. She has been a volunteer and foster parent for Speaking of Dogs for many years.*

# Bits & Bites

*Simply click on a summary to be whisked away to the internet page where you can read the full story.*

- This winter, the City of Toronto is offering pet-friendly spaces in its warming centres.
- This blog post explains why managing a dog's environment is an essential step in training, particularly when dealing with unwanted behaviours.
- Toronto's Pearson Airport now has 15 dog teams from the St. John Ambulance roaming the terminals to help ease travellers' stress.
- Learn about the Hierarchy of Dog Needs and its accompanying infographic, created by force-free trainer Linda Michaels.
- The winter weather is not yet finished! Check out these tips to cope with winter hazards from the Toronto Humane Society.
- Alaska's Iditarod dog-sled race, which kicked off earlier this month, lost one of its major sponsors when Coca Cola backed out. The beverage company joined Costco, Jack Daniel's,

## THIS MONTH'S RECALLS:

**Click on a recall to be directed to further information online.**

- Hill's Prescription Diet and Science Diet dog foods

Maxwell House and Wells Fargo, who've all dropped their sponsorship of the race amid accusations of abuse.

## Walk with ResQwalk!

ResQwalk is a free mobile app that allows you to raise money for Speaking of Dogs Rescue while out for your regular walks!

All you need to do is download the app to your iPhone or Android phone and track your walks (with or without your dog). It's free. It's easy. It can help the amazing dogs in our program find their second chance at life and love.

Once you've downloaded the app, please remember to mark Speaking of Dogs Rescue as your favourite rescue!

For more information, you can visit [bestfriends.org/resqwalk/faq](http://bestfriends.org/resqwalk/faq).

## Help Us Raise Funds Through FundScrip!

Speaking of Dogs Rescue is excited to be participating in FundScrip. It's an easy way to raise funds for the rescue by the buying gift certificates you were already intending to purchase – and it doesn't cost you anything extra!

### ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS:

1. Visit Speaking of Dogs Rescue's page at FundScrip at [www.fundscrip.com/support-a-group/SJ3TQQ](http://www.fundscrip.com/support-a-group/SJ3TQQ)
2. Follow the instructions to create your login account (including the email verification)
3. Buy your gift certificates

How does it work? You buy your gift certificates at no extra cost to you – meaning you get the full value of your gift certificates – and a portion of the sale is donated to Speaking of Dogs Rescue.

Participating retailers include Winners, Walmart, Food Basics, Sobeys, Loblaws, Shoppers Drug Mart, Canadian Tire, Tim Hortons, PetSmart, and over 200 other retailers of all types and kinds.

Whether you're looking for a gift for someone special or just want to raise funds for the rescue while doing your groceries, check out FundScrip!

# Happy Tails

## FEBRUARY ADOPTIONS:

A big thank you to our foster parents and our new adoptive guardians for helping give these loving dogs a second chance.



*Ben*



*Betty*



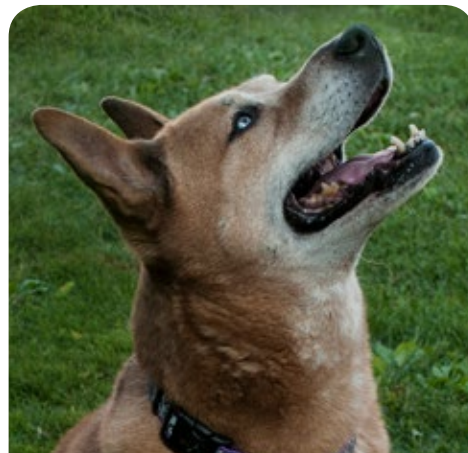
*Coco*



*Dixie*



*Finn*



*Gabby*



*Gordy*



*Laney*

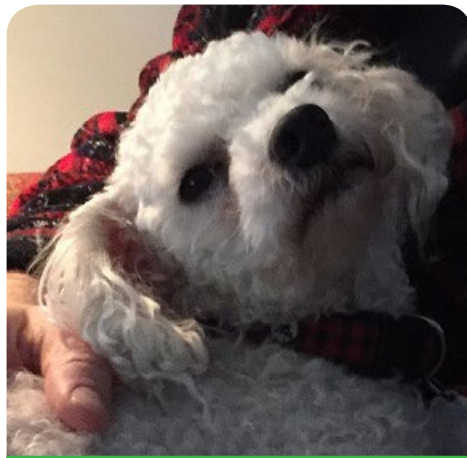


*Maxx*





Patches



Pierre



Woody



Lilibet



Skamp  
FOREVER IN FOSTER



# The 2019 Rescue Directory Is Now Available!

The 2019 *Province of Ontario Breed Specific and All Breed Rescue Contacts* directory is now available to download from the Speaking of Dogs Rescue website, at [https://www.speakingofdogs.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-Directory\\_rev1.pdf](https://www.speakingofdogs.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-Directory_rev1.pdf)



# Forever in Foster Pupdate

## MEET JOY!

Joy has been in Speaking of Dog's Forever in Foster program since December 2018. She came to us with large masses on her abdomen, rotting teeth, and anxiety pacing that totally consumed her. We also discovered that Joy has limited vision and hearing, which gives her the appearance of being confused and befuddled.

When our vet removed the masses, he found that one had some cancerous cells. The rescue discussed her situation with the vet, as we knew she could face some major health challenges in the future. We decided that the best place for her was the rescue's Forever in Foster program.

According to her foster mom, Joy is a joy! She embraces each day, soaking up adventures, beach walks, and the sun in her face!

Joy's anxiety pacing has disappeared, and she loves to go for walks, marching straight ahead at a quick pace like a dog on a mission. She is the quietest dog you could ever meet – and the gentlest.

Her foster mom knows how grateful Joy is to Speaking of Dogs Rescue for getting her out of the pound only days before Christmas – and giving her the best last chapter.

*With thanks to Joy's foster mom, Katherine.*



Speaking of Dogs Rescue focuses on compassionate care for senior dogs. When these beloved dogs come into our rescue, they often have needs that are beyond the scope of adoption. Still others are up for adoption for months without finding a forever home, and they eventually become attached to their foster parents. At that point we often feel that it is not in the best interest of the dog to be uprooted and put into a new home. And so, we keep some of our senior dogs in our Forever in Foster program, which has been running since 2005 and has seen many dogs live out their last chapter in a loving, caring foster home, cherished until they cross over to the Rainbow Bridge. Speaking of Dogs Rescue cares for these dogs financially for the rest of their lives, covering their vetting, food, and grooming costs.

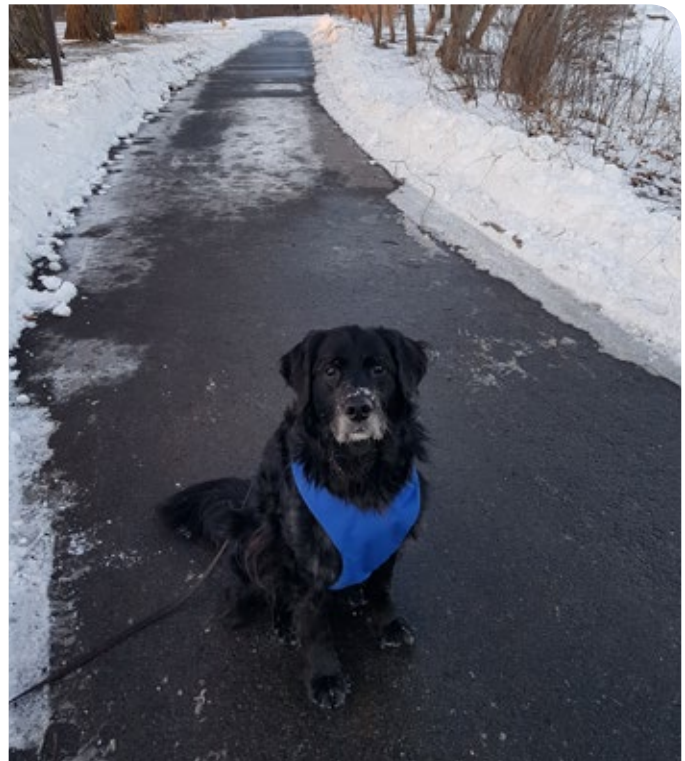
**To: Speaking of Dogs Rescue**

**From: John and Atsuko**

**Subject: Blackie**

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,

Blackie is doing really well and sleeping on the couch right now after a busy morning at the park. He enjoys going there to socialize with a particular gang of his friends who come with a dog-walker. Many people know him, and he is a big hit with everyone he meets. He seems to be very happy, and he runs and plays with his friends and spends the rest of his time relaxing at home. He enjoys his meals and snacks. He is getting his eye drops regularly but probably has trouble seeing as well as he used to. We give him his medication daily for his leg, and he has no trouble walking or going upstairs. He is always ready to head off for an adventure. He is such a wonderful friend, and we are so happy to have him with us. Everyone comments on what a nice and gentle personality he has. He's just a great, great dog, and we are so lucky he came to live with us, thanks to Speaking of Dogs Rescue.

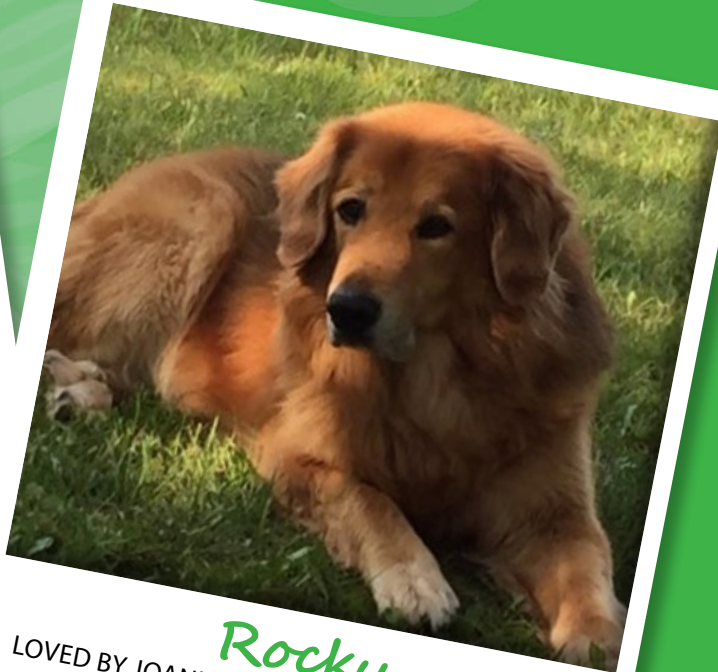


# In Memoriam



**Maggie**

LOVED BY CATHY, ERICK AND MILEY  
ADOPTED MAY 6, 2015  
PASSED FEBRUARY 7, 2019



**Rocky**

LOVED BY JOANNA, ROB, BONNIE, LILY AND ZEKE  
ADOPTED 2015  
PASSED FEBRUARY 2019



**Sarah**

LOVED BY MOM, DAD AND TRACY  
ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2018  
PASSED FEBRUARY 2019



# In Memoriam



**Mookie**  
LOVED BY BRETT M,  
FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
PASSED FEBRUARY 2019



**Sarah**  
LOVED BY DAVE D, FOSTERS AND FAMILY  
ADOPTED JANUARY 2015  
PASSED FEBRUARY 2019



**Roxy**  
LOVED BY DONNA, FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS AND THE PORT  
ADOPTED MARCH 2017  
PASSED FEBRUARY 2019