



April 2023

The official Speaking of Dogs Monthly Newsletter

Ask the Trainer

What Does it Mean to "Advocate" for Your Dog?

By Emily Fisher

It's great to hear that this concept is being heard more and is becoming mainstream – but what does it mean?

"Advocating" means that you are prioritizing your dog's needs in a given situation, and proactively managing a situation to coordinate and meet both your dog's needs and your goals. This sounds simple enough, but it can be complicated! For the purposes of this column, we're focusing on needs and goals relating to training and behaviour, but this is certainly applicable to all other situations.

Understanding your dog's needs is paramount, and this takes a lot of learning on your part. You can't advocate for your dog's needs if you don't have a clear idea of what those needs are or the best route to accommodating them.



This is an educational component that requires a willingness to learn and potentially change your views or approaches by seeking out solid resources. The catch is that you need guidance to facilitate your education... but you need the education to facilitate finding a guide! Reading through past issues of this column on our [web site](#) is a great place to start.

When you have some clarity as to your dog's needs, the next step is to research service providers - be that a trainer, a vet, a groomer, or another professional. There is, unfortunately, very little oversight of acceptable approaches to training or behaviour in most animal industries, and in many cases "anything goes." Your first step might be to investigate the professional's credentials. Do they belong to organizations or have certifications? If so, research those organizations and determine if they promote training methods that match your own values. Do they include names of trainers or mentors they have taken courses with, and can you find out more about these mentors? What do they share on their business' social media accounts? In many cases, you can find out a lot about what type of equipment is likely to be used if you know what to look for in pictures and video. Be aware that language used on websites is often heavily influenced by marketing or what they think a consumer wants to hear. For example, "positive reinforcement" has a specific definition, but is very often used in a way that misrepresents the training techniques that are actually employed.

Once you find a professional you're comfortable with, reach out to them and ask questions. Trainer and behaviour consultant Jean Donaldson created a consumer protection campaign with the goal of helping pet owners cut through the vague marketing language that has become so popular in training in recent years. She instructs pet owners to query their choice of trainer the following three questions:

- ***What exactly will happen to my dog when she gets it right?***
- ***What exactly will happen to her when she gets it wrong?***
- ***Are there any less invasive alternatives to what you propose?***

You can read more on this at [Eileen Anderson's blog](#).

If you're comfortable with the answers provided, congratulations on finding your trainer! Having found someone you trust, it's now a matter of negotiating the day-to-day details throughout each training class. For example, if you're in a group class with a hyper-social puppy, ask to have a visual barrier put up so your pup isn't overwhelmed by the activity in the room. Likewise, that hyper-social puppy may not be a good choice as a class demo dog, so you can ask to take a spot in the room away from the demonstration area. If these accommodations aren't immediately available upon entry into the classroom, just remind your instructor rather than assuming that they are not willing to make the accommodation for you.

When you're working with a trusted service provider, there needs to be clear communication and give and take in the relationship. Advocacy doesn't mean getting exactly what you want exactly when you want it. For example, if you ask for accommodations in a group class for your reactive dog and these are not, in the eyes of the trainer, reasonable for a group class, you will need to be flexible in having your needs met through private training instead of a group class. Mutual understanding and respect are critical in finding the middle ground. You know your dog best, and your trainer knows dogs best.

There can be situations in which, despite best efforts, you need to find a new service provider. Sometimes there will be a matter of mismatch between what you understood in discussion and what's available to you, and sometimes it will simply be a matter of finding a better personality match between you and the professional. Simply start the process again to find a service provider who is a better fit with you, and your dog's, needs.

Advocacy is key in finding your ideal fit of service provider and making best use of your training sessions. Being clear and kind in your communication will reap the best rewards for your advocacy efforts, both for your own learning and your dog's progress and well-being.

Emily Fisher *is a Certified Dog Behaviour Consultant through the International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants (IAABC), and a Certified Professional Dog Trainer through the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT).*



Adoption Update

To: Speaking of Dogs Rescue
From: Jen

Subject: Bear

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,

We love Bear soooooo much! He's affectionate, cuddly, and for a little old man he still has lots of spunk! I call him "Beanie Bear" because he's full of beans. Bear first came to us as a foster and we quickly realized he had some separation anxiety but we were able to work with SOD's trainer. She was a huge help to us. We also had a dog walker for the first 10 months, which helped break up his day, and definitely helped with managing his anxiety. Bear sometimes still has anxiety, but my husband is retired now, so Bear doesn't have to be on his own very much.

In April of last year, we noticed Bear was drinking and peeing a lot! We found out that he had become diabetic. Luckily, we caught it early though so he's doing quite well.

It took a while for him to get used to all the pokes, but we won him over with a little liver pate.. Now he's a superstar! We're so glad that he was able to join our family. He is very loved. ❤️🐾

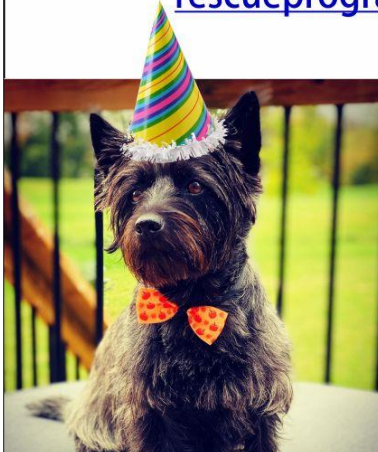
Thank you for all you do!
- Jen



Pepper's having a Party! A Match Party that is!

It's Pepper's birthday she'll be 5 on May 2nd!
All Pepper wants for her birthday this year is to help
homeless dogs, so she (and her hooman) are offering
a \$5KMATCH fundraiser!

It will run for the entire month of April! Donate via EMT at:
rescueprogram@speakingofdogs.com



or through our website at:
www.speakingofdogs.com/donate

Remember to reference

Pepper's Party Match!

*Money raised will help our Forever in
Foster dogs and other dogs like little
Kenna who needs heart surgery.*

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.

[Click Here to Learn more about our Adoption Process](#)

April Feature Dog

Introducing Miley!

Miley is a sweet and very smart, loving 12-year-old chihuahua. She is large with personality but tiny in stature - 1.6 kg (3.5 lb) to be exact!

Miley is housetrained but, given the winter weather and her size, has been using pee pads as well. Miley has spent quite a bit of time alone in the past so she really enjoys company.



She loves playing with her foster mom's dog and even picked up one of his toys but wasn't quite sure what to do with it! She has luxating patellas in both of her hind legs, so her play is in short spurts and she is being carried up and down stairs. We have had her patella's x-rayed and also had an orthopedic consult. It was decided that, at her age, patella surgery would not be in her best interest. She does not like a leash and will stay in place and shake if you put one on. The same goes for a coat or sweater! Miley loves people, but if she feels overwhelmed, she will head to another room, where she can be alone (unless of course, there is food involved). Miley will lie next to her person on the couch or be under foot when you are cooking. She wants to be where you are.



The perfect home for Miley would be with a single person or small family, where someone is home most of the time. Another small dog that she can play with is optimal, with a secure fenced yard.

Miley is fed homemade food twice a day with President's Choice Nutrition kibble on the side. A natural joint/mobility supplement is added to her homemade food daily. Want to be her best friend? Share a tiny piece of that (xylitol-free) peanut butter on toast you are eating!

If you are interested in giving Miley her forever home, ***click below to fill out an adoption application.***

Click Here to visit our Adoption Application

Learn more about each of our wonderful dogs ready for adoption by simply clicking on their name below



Poppy
Poodle (Standard)
(Medium Coat)
Large Adult Female



Missy
Boston Terrier/Pug
(Short Coat)
Small Adult Female



Sir Stevie Winston
Poodle (Toy)
(Short Coat)
Small Adult Male



Athena
Terrier/ Basenji/ Mixed
(Short Coat)
Medium Young Female



Bruce
Golden Retriever/
Labrador Retriever/ Mixed
(Medium Coat)
Medium Baby Male



Danny
Mastiff/
Labrador Retriever/ Mixed
(Short Coat)
X-Large Adult Female



Kallie

Collie
(Long Coat)
Large Senior Female



Kenna

Poodle (Miniature)
(Medium Coat)
Small Baby Female



Reggie

Catahoula Leopard Dog/
Labrador Retriever/ Mixed
(Short Coat)
Large Adult Male



Montana

Terrier/ Mixed
(Short Coat)
Small Senior Male



Nella

Shih Tzu
(Medium Coat)
Small Senior Female



Penny

Beagle/ Mixed
(Short Coat)
Medium Adult Female

Can you Lend a Paw?

Speaking of Dogs Rescue benefits from:

ResQwalk App

People walking and using the ResQwalk app with Speaking of Dogs Rescue as the selected rescue

FundScrip

People purchasing gift certificates from FundScrip.

BarkBox

BarkBox sales - use code SPEAKING OF DOGS at checkout and the rescue will receive a \$15 donation from BarkBox. Plus, you will receive **10% off your subscription!**

Gifted

Gifted - is an online invitation, RSVP management, cash registry and fundraising platform that allows hosts to donate any portion of their cash gifts to a charity of their choice. Speaking of Dogs Rescue can now be chosen as the charity that will benefit from a GIFTED party

Visit our donation webpage by clicking [here](#)

Happy Tails

Recent Adoptions

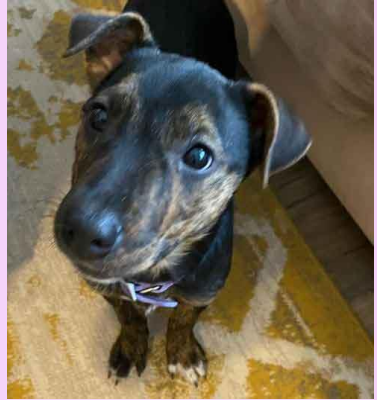
A big thank you to our foster parents and our new adoptive guardians for helping give these loving dogs a second chance.



Stanley



Sammy



Vesper



Genny



Alfie



Betty



Alvin



Eddie



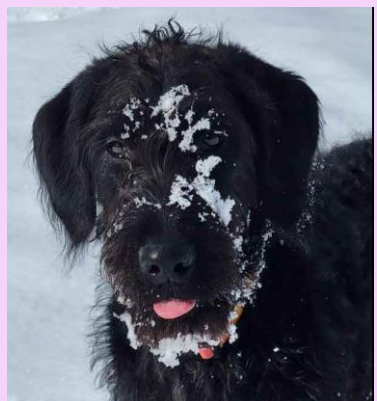
Pancake



Lily



Maizy



Freddie



Pepper

In Memoriam



Maddy

Loved by Lisa and family,
Sixteen Mile Vet Clinic and all of
us at Speaking of Dogs Rescue
Forever in Foster



Gunner

Loved by Nicky, Trevor, staff at
Mountain Vista and all of us at
Speaking of Dogs Rescue
Forever in Foster



Dashie

Adopted August 2018
Loved by Gabe and Lorne

About Speaking of Dogs

Speaking of Dogs Rescue Program is a Canadian registered charity established in the Greater Toronto area (with foster homes across Ontario). Launched in 2001, we are a foster-based, all breed rescue with a focus on senior dogs. We are run solely by volunteers with a mission to help homeless dogs in need by providing shelter or sanctuary, necessary medical care, adoption and education.

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