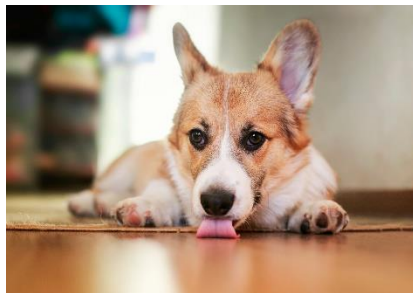




Having a dog is rewarding, but it also comes with its own hurdles. We have so much information about dog behaviour available at our fingertips, and it can take a lot to sort through what is fact and what is myth. Sometimes what is seen as “Common Sense” isn’t actually sensical at all! Let’s break down some of these common myths about training and behaviour.

“Tail wags and kisses means a dog is happy!”

Sometimes this is true... sometimes this is a myth! I’ve worked with many owners who were baffled when Fluffy bit the neighbour... “her tail was wagging, it didn’t make sense!” Tail wagging can be an indication of emotional arousal or excitement, but not always indicative of the true underlying emotion – or a signal of what might happen next. The tail wag needs to be taken in the full context, both of body language (does the dog have a soft, wiggly expression in their body? Or hard, tight-mouthed rigidity?) as well as knowing how a dog has responded in similar situations in the past.



The same is true for licking. Licking can be a socially affiliative behaviour, which is what we call kisses. But sometimes licking is indicating that the dog needs space. Again, the broader context will have the answer. A dog who is wiggly-bodied with a soft, squinty expression is likely to be licking in an affiliative way. A dog who has had her space intruded upon and licks the person, then turns away, is likely asking the intruder to step away. Likewise, a little flick of the

tongue in a stiff-bodied dog with a furrowed brow and a hard gaze means you need to get the dog out of that situation ASAP!

“I’ve had dogs before so I don’t need to go to training class with my new adoption.”

This is truly one of the toughest things to hear as a trainer! Even if you’ve had five dogs before this, five dogs is a very small sample size on which to base an opinion of how to raise, train and live with a species of animal. There’s so much variation between dogs, even those of the same breed, that there is always more to learn. Every professional trainer I know seeks out continuing education opportunities with other

trainers, and will attend classes, seminars and webinars to continue learning about training and behaviour. If pro-trainers can find more to learn after decades of experience, so can you!

“I only adopt puppies, because I can shape them into whatever I want as they grow up.”



If only it were that simple! Every dog is a product of both “nature and nurture” – never exclusively one over the other. Not only that, we humans don’t get to choose which traits will be malleable, and which will be resistant to change (for example, propensity toward fear, reactivity, aggression, separation issues, resource guarding, etc.) This fact is why we can breed dogs that exhibit specific tendencies in a line or breed – these are heritable, genetic traits!

Thinking we have control over exactly what our puppies will develop into can be a dangerous idea when it comes to selecting the right dog for your home. While there are many things that are yet to be seen in a young pup, what can be profiled when it comes to behavioural tendencies (whether in the breed or in the individual) and the dog’s needs must be taken into account when seeking out the right pup for your home.

Likewise, thinking that any puppy can be molded into exactly what you want leaves older adoptable dogs out in the cold. A foster home can tell you so much about a mature dog who has been in their home for long enough to settle in and let their true selves show. With this information, you can often better determine if this mature dog is a fit for your home, versus guessing at the future traits that may develop in a puppy as she matures!

“Some dogs just need a heavier hand.”

This is usually reserved as a description for aggressive dogs and “tough breeds” (whatever that means!). Have you ever noticed that when you fight fire with fire... you end up with a bigger fire?! The same thing often happens with dogs. I’ve worked with many aggressive dogs who were made worse through heavy-handed training, because it gives the dog a reason to act in self-defence. Quite often, the training looks like it “solves the problem” because the correction inhibits the behaviour, only to have an explosive increase in aggression down the road. The dog’s only strategy for dealing with overwhelm (barking/lunging/etc.) has been taken away, and on top of that, they experience increased stress from the training itself in addition to the stress of the original trigger. Like a pressure cooker, a dog may flip her lid when that stress builds up.

This can easily be avoided by using your brain instead of brawn in training. I once received an email from someone who was at the end of his wits with his aggressive dog who was getting worse with corrections. He signed off with “I have tried literally everything except a professional trainer.” If it seems like you are out of options and that heavy-handed training feels like the “tough love” you need, just take a step back, take a deep breath and seek out a new perspective and new resources! There is so much support available to owners who want to get to the root of their dog’s stress, rather than just shut them down.

Every breed and every dog is different – just like people! The key to a successful relationship with your dog is to ignore the “myths” and get to know your dog intimately. What works, what doesn’t work, what triggers her, what calms her. Seek professional guidance with a force-free trainer to continue the

education of both you and your dog. This will enable you to work as a team towards the best, most mutually rewarding partnership with your canine companion.



Written by Emily Fisher

Emily 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).

Betty White Challenge

**January 17, 2024 would have been
Betty White's 102nd birthday**

Betty was an advocate for all animals. She was a pioneer in the animal welfare field and made inroads few could. One of her famous quotes "Animals are near and dear to my heart, and I've devoted my life to trying to improve their lives" gives many of us the motivation and strength we need to do our day-to-day rescue work. We are continuing to honour her through the Betty White Challenge. If you are so inclined, our giving site is: www.speakingofdogs.com/donate and our e-transfer address is: rescueprogram@speakingofdogs.com.

Happy heavenly birthday Betty!



Looking Back On 2023

Last year was pretty much a rinse and repeat of 2022 in terms of the number of dogs needing rescue intervention and assistance. Animal shelters were consistently full of unwanted dogs (cats and other pets too, no doubt). Northern indigenous dog groups were desperate for help with their overwhelming homeless dog population. Puppy mills and backyard breeders wanted their 'inventory' moved out, and owner relinquishments were unrelenting. Our volunteer force worked tirelessly to aid, support and/or facilitate the many 'vulnerable dog' situations that arose on a regular basis. Adoptions have been slow – very slow, and still are. Dogs need adopters to commit and care for them, however in the current economic climate, people are struggling to make ends meet, to put food on the table, and housing is hard to find and even harder to afford.

Despite these challenges, we've been fortunate in other areas of the organization. We've been able to grow our foster base which, in turn, has helped more dogs. We've continued to network and work collaboratively with other rescues which, as the saying goes, "teamwork makes the dream work," especially when it comes to saving dogs.

Overall, 2023 seemed to have a more positive feel to it; perhaps because we can now meet people and dogs in person, laugh, play, and interact with less anxiety about contracting or transmitting COVID. Our

spring walkathon gained traction and we enjoyed seeing the dogs and their humans bonding over a good cause on a sunny Sunday. Our social media platforms have attracted more followers as we proudly share our dogs in need, training tips and behaviour modification philosophies – which always have patience and understanding at their core. We also enjoy posting some humour along the way!

Let's recap and celebrate some of this past year's achievements! Into the win column:

- In February 2023, we were a sponsor for a spay/neuter clinic in the remote area of Tadoule Lake, Manitoba. We paid for medical supplies and medications for the surgeries, thanks to our Leg Up program.
- The Blackie's Fund sponsored 37 dogs last year in various ways: supporting Flights for Hope, offering immediate veterinary care to abandoned dogs, and funding costly surgeries and procedures for the medical case dogs we took into our rescue.
- Our Forever in Foster (FIF) program cared for over 25 palliative care and special needs dogs last year. Created in 2005, the FIF program has given hundreds of dogs a loving last chapter, surrounded by a caring, and kind foster family. All dogs in the program receive prompt, quality healthcare which is funded by the rescue.
- In October 2023, we were again a sponsor for a spay/neuter clinic, this time in Moose Lake. We feel strongly that proactive initiatives like spaying and neutering are urgently needed, and solution based. We helped pay for surgical staff this round.
- We found well-matched homes for over 120 of our 'ADOPT ME' dogs.
- We've increased our newsletter reach and found several wonderful new foster families as a result. Everyone's favourite column is 'Ask the Trainer' which features a wide variety of topics with helpful advice and tips.
- Our annual calendar continues to be popular and is a great holiday fundraiser – designed from start to finish by another incredible volunteer talent.
- We continue to have amazing supporters; as examples our anonymous Leaf's hockey ticket donor, and our gifted, artistic quilters!

Without a doubt, we'd never be able to help the dogs we have without our incredible team of volunteers, and our partner veterinarians. Their determined dedication, miraculous medical feats, and can-do outlook are why our rescue continues to successfully soldier on year after year. We remain honoured and privileged to be in a position to make life better for dogs. It's been our mission for almost 25 years, and we stay committed.

I would be remiss if I didn't highlight two of our dogs who have been waiting for over a year to find their best-fit forever families. Reggie, a 6-year-old Catahoula Leopard Dog mix, is from the 2022 hoarding case we worked on with the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS). He's really coming along socially and emotionally, thanks to his devoted foster mom. Our other long timer is a quirky little guy named

Prince. He's a 4-year-old Maltese/poodle mix who admittedly has a foot fetish. Read more about shy man Reggie and funny footman Prince on our site at: <https://www.speakingofdogs.com/available-dogs/>

In closing, and on behalf of our volunteer Board, thanks to everyone for helping us help dogs. Whether you are an adopter, a donor, a foster parent, a volunteer, or advocate, we value and appreciate your time, support and kindness.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and fulfilling 2024.

Most Sincerely,

Lorraine and the Speaking of Dogs Rescue Program Team

www.speakingofdogs.com

Registered Charity # 841098791RR0001



Meet our January Feature Dog: Charlotte

Charlotte is an approximately 5-year-old Bichon Frise mix (coat feels like a Westie) and is a sweet girl. In her previous life she lived in a barn and gave birth to puppies every 6 months. She never lived in a house, never knew the love of a family or learned to walk on a leash. When she first arrived in her foster home, she was skittish and distrustful of humans. She's never been aggressive or snappy, but was cautious and avoidant.

Since being in foster care, she's really blossomed! Charlotte is quite the character, full of silly antics, big wags of recognition and curiosity.



She loves other dogs and should go to a home with another dog. Her housetraining is also coming nicely with big thanks to the other dogs in the family. She follows them outside and watches what they do – and then does it herself!

She also uses pee pads if you need to be away from the home for several hours. She's become affectionate and now lays beside her foster mom during movie time. You can see the trust building in

her eyes and in her body language – it's so rewarding to see the puppy mill moms start to become the dogs they were meant to be.

She can't yet walk on a leash; that will be a work in progress. She needs a house with a fenced-in yard and would not be a match for an apartment or condo. She loves the foster parent's yard and runs happily at high-speed, deking out the other dogs.

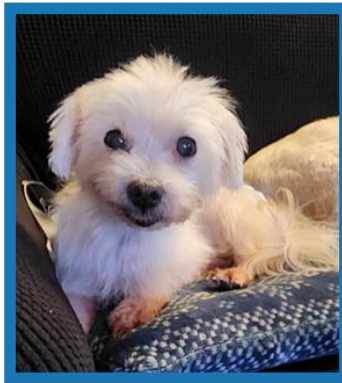
Charlotte weighs approximately 15 pounds and is crate trained, has been good at the groomers and the vets. She had an ear infection (that has since cleared up) and was fine with getting the drops done. She is a lovely, sweet and fun dog, more than worthy of a loving forever family.

If you are interested in giving Charlotte a place to call home, please fill out an application for our consideration.

Click [here](#) to visit our adoption application.



Pogo
Husky / Mixed
Medium Coat
Adult, Male



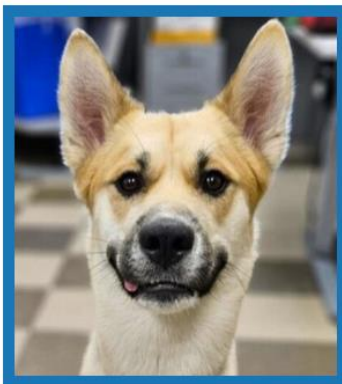
Sugar
Maltese
Senior, Female



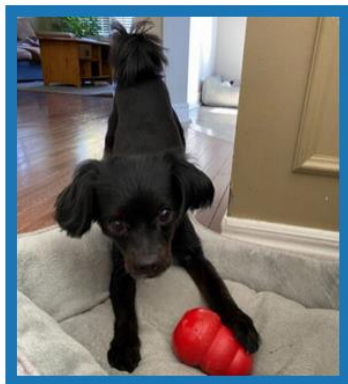
Reggie
Catahoula Leopard Dog / Labrador
Retriever / Mixed
Short Coat
Adult, Male



Teppi
Poodle (Toy) / Mixed
Short Coat
Adult, Male



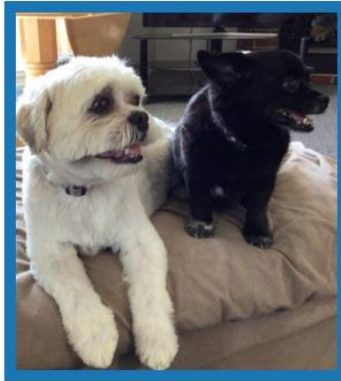
Morty
Shepherd / Husky / Mixed
Medium Coat
Adult, Male



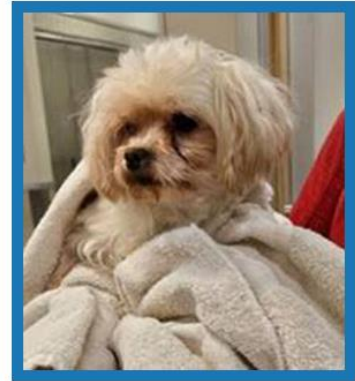
Prince
Maltese / Poodle (Miniature) / Mixed
Long Coat
Adult, Male



Miller
 Labrador Retriever / Shepherd / Mixed
 Short Coat
 Adult, Male



Benji & Fifi
 Shih Tzu / Mixed
 Short Coat
 Seniors, Male & Female



Allie
 Shih Tzu / Mixed
 Medium Coat
 Senior, Female



Sage
 Poodle (Miniature) / Border Collie / Mixed
 Medium Coat
 Baby, Female



Dude
 Shih Tzu / Poodle (Miniature) / Mixed
 Short Coat
 Adult, Male

ADOPTION UPDATE

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,

Matilda has been great! She was a bit fearful to begin with, especially of vehicles or loud noises. For the first several weeks she'd barely leave my side but she's become much more calm over time. She also bonded very quickly with the family. She's a really sweet dog who almost never barks. She loves the dog park, although she mostly ignores the other dogs. She's very snuggly and affectionate. She's like an 80 pound lap dog. We've had no medical issues. She's perfectly calm when we've taken her to the vet for her checkups. We couldn't ask for a better dog.

Tony and family



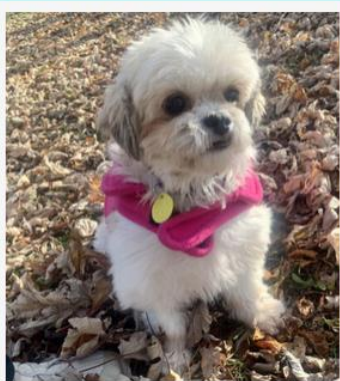
Scotia Wealth Management 'Share the Wealth' Award

A huge thank-you to Christina B. who nominated Speaking of Dogs Rescue for the 'Share the Wealth' award through her work at Scotia Wealth Management. The 'Share the Wealth' initiative celebrates the volunteer work ScotiaMcLeod employees do in their communities. Because of this, our rescue received a generous cheque from the ScotiaMcLeod Charitable Foundation.

**Thank you to everyone at Scotia Wealth Management
who made this happen.**



🐾🐾 HAPPY TAILS



Anita



Taco



Smarty & Lady



Harry



Dexter



Cinder



Peaches



Moose



Maddy



Lucy



Leela



Harvey



Barbara

Thank You Jodi T. & York University

A big thank-you to Jodi T and her co-workers at York University who provided us with a generous donation as part of Jodi's farewell celebration! Even her younger dog, Kevin, was part of the festivities. (Photo credit to Catherine).





Muttz with Mannerz Christmas Open House

Thanks to Corey and Muttz with Mannerz for inviting us to their Christmas Open House, and thanks to our dynamic duo Leanne and Dale for working our booth.

In Memoriam



Cookie

Forever in foster
Loved by Carol Lewis



Lolita ("Lola")

Adopted August 2016
Loved by Monick Binnick & family



Moose

Adopted August 2021
Loved by Chris and Allison Haid



Rosie

Adopted June 2016
Loved by Julie Gill



Tilley

Adopted December 2022
Loved by Kate Erickson & family



Can you lend a Paw?

Speaking of Dogs Rescue benefits from:

- People purchasing gift certificates from FundScrip. [Go to FundScrip using our link.](#)
- [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 web page by clicking [here](#).



Recall Alert



The FDA has warned pet parents not to feed their dogs
Blue Ridge Beef Puppy Mix

Click [here](#) to learn more about this recall.

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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