



## ***Ask the Trainer***

### **For Bark's Sake!**

Living in the city, I hear dogs barking pretty much all day; dogs barking while on a walk, from nearby parks and from inside their home. When I'm with fellow dog trainers, we like to try to guess what breed the barking dog is, and what it's trying to say, based on the pitch and tone of their bark.



However, most people think barking is annoying, not interesting. Barking is the number one complaint about dogs in the city, especially in condos or apartments. This has caused a rise in shock, vibration and citronella collar use, because people are desperate to find a quick fix to avoid complaints and even eviction.

But here's the thing; a dog's bark always has a purpose and, if we suppress their communication, this can cause a new, worse behavior. I once worked with a new rescue living in a condo. My clients received several complaints that the dog was barking while they were at work. They got a citronella collar that sprayed every time the dog barked. The dog stopped barking but ripped apart their couch instead!

By understanding the reason behind the bark, we can apply useful, positive techniques to decrease it. Before you consider any sort of training, ensure that your dog's basic needs such as water, food, and when they need to eliminate are being met. Then, is your dog getting enough and balanced physical and mental stimulation every day? Running your dog three or four times a day may not satisfy the mental needs they have. Providing the right balance of needs can sometimes eliminate the barking.

But dogs love to bark – it's communication! Although there are many reasons why dogs bark, the following are the three most "problematic":

#### **Alert Barking:**

***What your dog is saying:*** "Did you hear that? Did you see that? Should we do something?"

Many dogs, especially guardian breeds, enjoy alerting their people that there is something going on. This can be fun and intrinsically rewarding to certain dogs.

### ***How to tell it's alert barking:***

- Head up in the air
- They will usually look to you (even from the corner of their eye) to ensure you are noticing
- Tail is often wagging in the middle
- Ears will be in the middle or back
- Happens mostly when you are home
- Dog is easily redirected

### ***What it typically sounds like:***

- A medium to low bark, sometimes with a growl or a whine
- There are usually breaks between barks, to listen or wait for your response.
- Often you might hear a “woo” sound in the barks

### ***What can we do? Recognize and Redirect***

I teach a cue such as “it’s ok!” or “Thank you!” that signals a dog to stop and relax. If your dog is alert barking, say your cue words and then lure your dog away from the door, ask for a sit or a down and reward when your dog is calm. Waiting for calm is key because smart dogs may think you are rewarding the barking! Each time you practice, try saying your cue farther and farther away from your dog so that “Thank you!” means come find me and relax for your treat. Then you can fade the food by rewarding some of the time until “Thank you” becomes an automatic redirect and relax cue. Here is a video example: <https://1drv.ms/v/s!AtbFr0Aly4vCriU810tXuDGsH1dd?e=wTdp6>

### **Demand Barking**

***What your dog is saying:*** “I want something; food, play, outside, attention, etc.”

Dogs train us very easily, especially when it comes to demand behaviors. We often give into demand barking because we want it to stop, unknowingly reinforcing that behavior just with attention “hey, stop that!”.

### ***How to tell it's demand barking:***

- Dog is around the thing they want
- Barking, jumping up, with their head up, looking at you in the eye
- Sometimes back to item they want to ensure you’re paying attention
- Tail is slowly wagging

### ***What it typically sounds like:***

- Medium to high pitch
- Long pauses between barks
- Usually quite loud
- It sounds the equivalent of “hey! Hey!”

### ***What can we do? Ignore & Walk Away***



Literally turn around and walk away. No eye contact, no speaking, no touching. Sounds easy right? Just ignore my dog's demand barking (unless they need to go outside or are sick of course!). But, because this worked before, many dogs will bark louder and harder before the barking stops. This is called an extinction burst and means that it is working, even though it might be driving you a little crazy. If you live in a condo, you might want to warn your neighbours that things may be a little

louder for a few days while you take care of this issue. Once your dog is calm, then you can come back, ask for a different cue such as a touch or a down, and if you know what they want, you can give it to them. Here is a great article about demand barking: <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/behavior/demand-behavior/demand-behaviors-in-dogs/>

### **Fear Barking**

***What your dog is saying:*** "I hear or see something that is really scaring me, and I am barking to make it go away."

A dog's first defense is their bark, so if your dog is barking at particular things or noises, you can help your dog overcome the fear of those things. Some rescues might bark at everything in the beginning because they aren't sure what anything is.

#### ***How to tell it's fear barking:***

- Body will be stiff, and head lowered
- Back legs splayed – ready to fight or flee
- Whites of eyes will show
- Teeth may show
- Hackles up
- Tail tucked or high with a stiff wag
- Very difficult to get their attention
- Will bark at things when you aren't home

#### ***What it typically sounds like:***

- Barking very quickly and menacingly
- Short low growls in between – "bark, growl, bark, bark, growl"
- Continues until threat is gone, and often a minute or two afterwards

### ***What can we do? Minimize Stress & Create Positive Associations with Scary Things***

If your dog has a generalized fear, meaning your dog is fear barking at everything, it is important to minimize exposure to these things as much as possible while you are helping your dog gain confidence. For sounds, you can minimize them inside with fans or white noise. If your dog is afraid of things, dogs or people outside, you may have to shorten walks as you are training.

Creating positive associations can take time and practice. Make a list of things that your dog is afraid of and work on them one by one, slowly and carefully. Here are some videos to give you an idea of how counter conditioning works:

Creating a positive association with brooms and vacuums:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIZmJlIP7Y>

To create positive associations with certain sounds, start at a very, very low volume and pair the sound with something WONDERFUL like your dog's favorite game or favorite food. As your dog is enjoying, you can slowly increase the volume. Only do this for a few minutes. Each time you start your training session, the sound should start off a little higher each time. If your dog will not play or eat, you have gone too high too soon and need to start three notches lower. Here is a video to demonstrate:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AtbFr0Aly4vC0WkuwewyTI2mDynM?e=G6RcZ>

If we really listen to our dogs and figure out what they are trying to communicate, this is not only the fastest, longest lasting route to change, but to a wonderful relationship with your dog.



### **Andrea Dinan, CPDT-KA, LFDM-T, FFCT**

In addition to the certifications above, Andrea is certified through the Karen Pryor Foundations and Kids Around Dogs, and she has also taken the Masters Course in Dog Aggression through AggressiveDog.com. She is the founder of EduCanine and City Dogs Training & Behavior and also created "The Rescue Plan."



## **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](#).



## Dogs Looking for Homes

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 pictures and you'll be taken to our available dogs.

### Meet our February Feature Dog: Tapioca

Tapioca is a very cute looking shih tzu, who is about 2 and a half years old.

When Tapioca was picked up by her foster family, she settled down quickly in the car, walked well on leash and adapted to her foster home very quickly. She enjoys belly rubs, chasing toys and relaxing with her new caretakers. She can be possessive about her toys, and will growl if she wants her space. She may be mouthy if too excited or mishandled, so she may not do well around small children.



Though she became comfortable quickly with her new foster home and caretakers, Tapioca is not good with meeting strangers (dogs or people), and may bark a lot at anyone who approaches or enters her home. This makes introductions with visitors difficult. She is also reactive when seeing other dogs on her walks (but she does love her walks!) She is smart and highly food motivated, so is learning to be better around strangers, and likely just never had much experience meeting new friends. She will sometimes bark at unknown noises, including at night, but this is lessening as she gets to know her new home's sounds. She may not be suited to condo life with the many sounds from neighbours or other dogs.



Tapioca enjoys playing fetch and tug, belly rubs, and working on her dog puzzles. She has been fine being left alone for up to 5 hours without any issues, and is fully house trained. She enjoys chewing on her toys (so they may not always last long...) but has never been destructive (though she likes to steal socks and keep them in her bed.)

Tapioca is comfortable with men but may prefer the company of women. She has no issues with being handled appropriately, and will usually listen to a few basic commands (especially if you have a treat!)

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

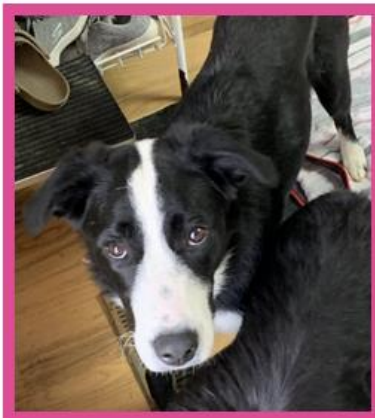
**Click [here](#) to visit our adoption application.**





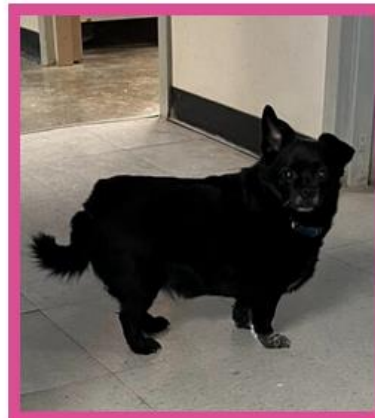
### **Willie**

Shih Tzu / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Small, Adult, Male



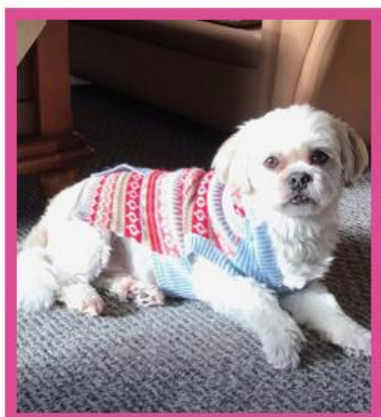
### **Ruby**

Border Collie / Mixed  
Short Coat  
Medium, Adult, Female



### **Fifi**

Chihuahua / Pug / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Small, Senior, Female



### **Benji**

Shih Tzu  
Short Coat  
Small, Senior, Male



### **Reggie**

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



### **Roxy**

Terrier / Mixed  
Short Coat  
Small, Senior, Female



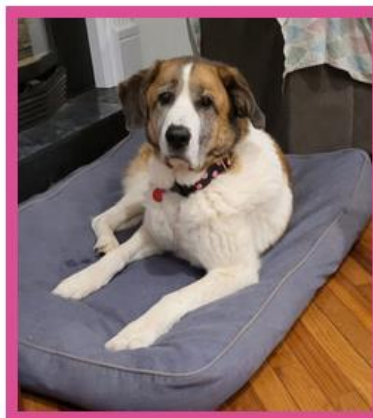
### **Pogo**

Husky / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Large, Adult, Male



### **Wally**

Retriever / Elkhound / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Medium, Baby, Male



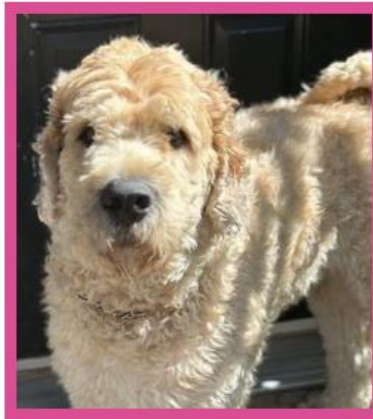
### **Hannah a.k.a. Anna**

Saint Bernard / Collie / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Large, Senior, Female



**Banjo**

Schnauzer / Shih Tzu / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Small, Adult, Male



**Alba**

Saint Bernard / Poodle (Standard) / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
X-Large, Adult, Male



**Morty**

Shepherd / Husky / Mixed  
Medium Coat  
Medium, Adult, Male



**Prince**

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



**amazon wish lists**

Want to help our dogs?

Consider making a donation from one of our AmazonWish Lists

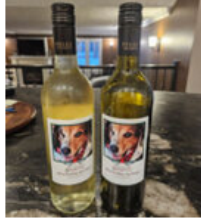
**Priority Dog Supplies**



## Adoption Update

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,

Poncho is doing great! He actually just had blood work done over Christmas and everything came back normal. Very good for a 14 year old!



He still pees in the house when we go out so we got him some doggie diapers/belly band, which he only wears when he has to be alone and that seems to have done the trick. Other than that, he is doing amazing for a sweet senior man.

I've attached a few pictures....one with his new belly band (which he doesn't seem to mind wearing at all), another in his favourite spot and then he also got his picture on some wine bottles for Christmas this year. It was a fundraiser for the Kitchener Humane Society! All our friends and neighbours got a bottle of wine from Poncho this year for Christmas! It was a big hit and everyone loved it.



Thanks for checking in!

Janice

## Happy Tails



Grace



Miller





# In Memoriam



**Ben**

Adopted March 2020  
Loved by Autumn Frazer



**Kody**

Adopted April 2021  
Loved by Joan Anderson



**Luna a.k.a. Chestnut**

Adopted December 2010  
Loved by Sue Hartlen



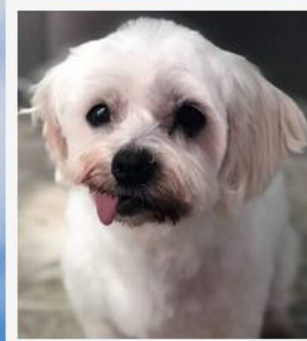
**Nan**

Adopted July 2018  
Loved by Ian & Patricia McIntosh



**Beanie**

Adopted August 2021  
Loved by Jodi, Hagan & Mackenzie  
Tavares



**Frankie a.k.a. Chico**

Adopted December 2021  
Loved by Susan Hancock & Family



**Olivia**

Forever in Foster  
Loved by Tamara & Family



**Rigo**

Adopted June 2013  
Loved by Katie & Steve



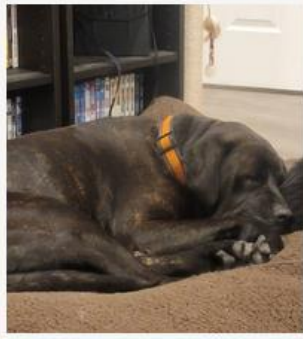
**Dory**

Loved by Katherine G



**Romeo**

Forever in Foster  
Loved by Tamara & Family



**Ben**

Loved by Sherri & Family

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## 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.

## Newsletter Team

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