

DECEMBER 2024



Ask the Trainer

“Making the Holidays Special for Your Rescue Dog”

Tis’ the season to be jolly! The holiday season is a time for joy, celebration, and gatherings with family and friends, but for rescue dogs, it can also bring new challenges and stress. With all the hustle and bustle, it’s essential to keep your dog’s well-being in mind. Here are some tips to ensure your rescue dog has a festive and calm holiday experience.

Create a Calm Environment

The busy holiday time can be overwhelming for dogs, especially those who are not used to it and sensitive to loud noises and gatherings. Creating a peaceful atmosphere is key to their comfort.

Safe Space: Designate a quiet room where your dog can retreat when company arrives. This space should be stocked with things that make them feel secure and comfortable – their favorite bed, toys, and a cozy blanket. If possible, get them used to this room before guests arrive, so your dog can acclimate to the situation at their own pace and see it as a safe zone.

Crate Comfort: If your dog is crate-trained, consider setting up their crate in this quiet area away from where the gatherings will be. Make it inviting by adding an interactive toy or a stuffed Kong filled with treats. This will not only provide a comforting space but also keep them occupied while you enjoy your holiday festivities.

Pre-Visit Preparation: Before guests arrive, consider taking your dog for a long walk to help them expend energy. If the weather is too cold, you can do enrichment games or indoor activities. This can reduce anxiety and make them more likely to relax when people start arriving.

Holiday Enrichment Ideas

Keeping your dog’s mind engaged is crucial, especially during the holidays when routines can be disrupted.



DIY Puzzles: Create holiday-themed scent games using items from your home. For instance, take 3-5 empty boxes or plastic cups, hide treats in one, and let your dog sniff them out. This not only provides mental stimulation but also encourages your dog to use their natural instincts.

Advent Calendar Fun: Consider getting an advent calendar filled with daily treats or activities for your dog. This can be a fun way for both you and your dog to enjoy the season together, as they will eagerly anticipate each day's surprise.

Scent Work: Get creative with scent work by using an old towel or scarf to roll up treats and loosely tie it. Watch your dog work to figure out how to extract their goodies! This engages their brain and encourages problem-solving.

Festive Training Activities

Incorporating holiday-themed training can make for some memorable moments.

Obedience Games: Teach your dog to fetch or open "gifts." You can wrap an empty box with treats or a toy and teach them to open it on cue. These playful activities can strengthen your bond and enhance your dog's skills.

Outdoor Adventures: If your dog enjoys the outdoors, take them on walks to see holiday lights. Use a comfortable harness and leash to help them feel secure while exploring new sights and sounds. Ensure they're comfortable with any decorations that may be unfamiliar or frightening, like large inflatable characters or bright lights. Maybe do the walk during daylight first and let them sniff and explore the new things.

Photo Opportunities: If your dog is accustomed to wearing sweaters or coats, take the opportunity to capture festive family photos. This not only creates lasting memories but also helps your dog get accustomed to wearing clothing if it's not already a part of their routine. If they aren't comfortable with clothing, try a festive bandana or create a holiday theme setting for the photo.

Safe Celebrations

It's important to include your dog in holiday traditions while ensuring their safety.

Dog-Friendly Treats: Make or buy holiday treats specifically for dogs, ensuring that they do not contain toxic ingredients like chocolate, grapes, or certain nuts. You can get creative and bake your own homemade treats using dog-safe ingredients such as pumpkin or natural peanut butter. Avoid feeding your dog turkey as it has high fat content and can cause an upset stomach.

Safe Decorations: Choose decorations that are safe for pets. Avoid tinsel, as it can be harmful if ingested. Avoid lighting candles, and ensure decorations are placed out of reach and ornaments on a tree placed higher, to prevent accidents.

Guest Awareness: When guests arrive, remind them to respect your dog's space and boundaries. Encourage your visitors to ignore your dog initially until they feel comfortable approaching. This can help reduce anxiety for your furry friend.

Traveling with Your Dog

For those traveling with their dogs here are some tips to ease the process and avoid stress:

Preparation: If you're visiting family, aim to make their environment comfortable for your dog. Bring familiar items, such as their bed or favorite toys. This can help create a sense of familiarity in a new setting.

Routine Maintenance: Stick to your dog's regular schedule if you can. Mirror their home routine by going for their regular walks and maintaining normal feeding times. Incorporate playtime to minimize stress. Consistency is crucial for your dog's comfort, particularly in a new place.

Car Safety: If you're traveling by car, use a pet seatbelt or crate to keep your dog safe. Plan for regular stops to allow your dog to stretch, relieve themselves, and hydrate.

By focusing on these tips, you can create a holiday season that is enjoyable for both your family and your rescue dog. The goal is that your dog feels comfort, safe and secure during this festive time. Celebrate the holidays with mindfulness, and your rescue dog will appreciate the effort you put in to make the season special.



Written by

Corey McCusker, CPDT-KA

Corey is the founder of [Muttz with Mannerz](#) Canine Academy located in Stouffville. In addition, Corey is an evaluator for St John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program and created the first Kids & K9 Camp in Canada.

amazon wish lists

Want to help our dogs?

Consider making a donation from our Amazon wish list of priority dog supplies.

[Click here to view list](#)



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.

Meet our December Feature Dog **GIGI**



Sweet little Gigi, a Poodle mix, was picked up as a stray and not claimed. She is approximately 12 years young, 15 pounds, playful, sweet, and is looking for a family to call her own. She has been fully vetted and has recently been spayed, had a hernia repair and several teeth removed. She is up to date on her shots, and is microchipped.

Gigi's favourite thing to do is be with her person. She loves to cuddle and will sit by your side looking for belly rubs and ear scratches. If you stop petting her, she will tap your hand with her nose to remind you to pet her. She loves to sleep with you and will get right under the covers and curl up beside you.

Gigi eats twice a day and will be your best pal if you offer her the occasional treat. She gets wet food because she has so few teeth, but also enjoys a bit of kibble in a separate bowl.

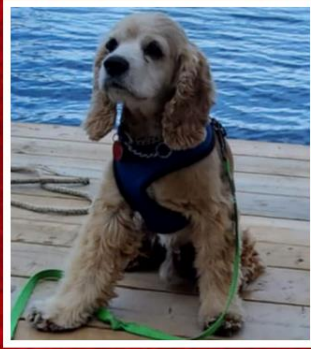
She goes to the door to be let out and his well housetrained. Gigi knows the commands sit, stay and off. On walks or going for a ride in the car, Gigi will often try to chat with people or other dogs that she sees. Saying thank you will often get her to quiet down. She will also bark to alert if she hears someone outside but quickly settles. Gigi loves everyone and is quick to approach people for affection. She is currently in a foster home with 2 other small dogs and gets along well with them.



The best placement for Gigi would be with people who are home most of the time and have a fenced yard where she can go out several times a day.

If you think you are the right fit for Gigi, please fill out an application for our consideration.

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



Beau
Cocker Spaniel
Long Coat
Medium, Senior, Male



Niko
Alaskan Malamute
Long Coat
X-Large, Senior, Male



Josie
Maltese / Poodle (Toy)
Short Coat
Small, Adult, Female



Beau
Mastiff / Mixed
Short Coat
X-Large, Adult, Male



Fifi
Yorkshire Terrier "Yorkie" / Mixed
Short Coat
Small, Adult, Female



Piper & Prudence
Chihuahua's
Short Coats
Small, Senior, Females



Lydia
Hound / Mixed
Short Coat
Medium, Adult, Female



Coco
Corgi / Jindo (Korean) / Mixed
Long Coat
Small, Senior, Female



Genevieve
Poodle (Toy) / Mixed
Medium Coat
Small, Young, Female



Sassy
Shih Tzu
Short Coat
Small, Adult, Female



Zach
Poodle (Miniature)
Short Coat
Small, Adult, Male



Maverick
Shih Tzu
Medium Coat
Small, Senior, Male

♥ GIVING TUESDAY ♥
DECEMBER 3RD



Donate to Speaking of Dogs Rescue this Giving Tuesday

[Donate Here](#)



New Adoption Fee for 2025

Please note the Speaking of Dogs Rescue adoption fee will be increased on January 1, 2025, from \$525 to \$550 to keep up with the rising costs of veterinary care, medication, grooming, microchips, and other dog-related supply costs.



Happy Tails

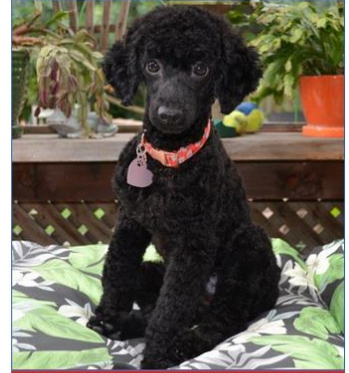
a.k.a. Recent Adoptions



Café



Daisy



Juniper



Lucy



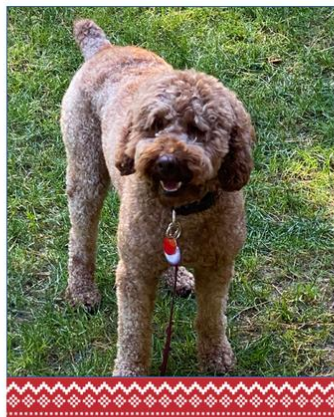
Mando



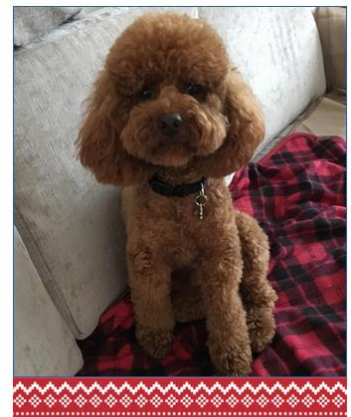
Mollie



Muffin



Murphy



Oliver



Stanley

Adoption Update

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,

Hope you have been well. Emailing with an update on Kubo, a dog your organization provided dental care assistance for in May 2024. He has come a long way and is learning new things about socialization from other dogs through regular attendance at the daycare where he loves playing and interacting. There is still a lot of training to be done with him, but I see potential and growth in him. Please see the attached photo comparison of Kubo from December 2023 to now. Thank you so much for your support and generous assistance with Kubo!

With appreciation,

KUBO'S FAMILY





Wiggles & Wags

a.k.a. Thank Yous & Shout-Outs

Christmas Canadian Pet Expo

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to assist with the Christmas Canadian Pet Expo. It sounds like everyone had a great time. We were able to make quite a few sales, helping raise funds for dogs in need. Here are a few pictures from the event.



Muttz with Mannerz open house

Thank you to Karen G and Dale for representing us at the Muttz with Mannerz open house. Also, thanks to Kathy R for transporting the items.



Holiday Photo's with Santa

Saturday's & Sunday
December 7th, 14th & 15th
12:00 – 4:00 pm

Pet Valu, 339 College St (Kensington Market)

* No appointment required *
\$18 Photo in a photo card + digital print

Proceeds support Speaking of Dogs Rescue





In Memoriam



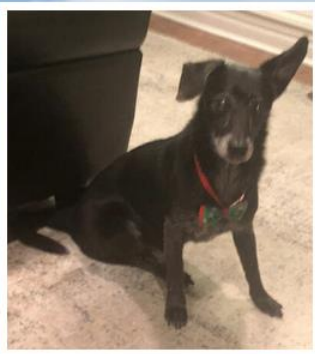
Cookie
Loved by the Houston Family



Jackson Browne
Adopted May 2023
Loved by Cari-Lynn Hill & Family



Maggie
Loved by Dorte & the Collingwood
Veterinary Staff



Murphy (a.k.a. Tank)
Adopted May 2021
Loved by Wendy Nivins



Sophie
Adopted November 2016
Loved by Catherine Grills



Toscana
Loved by Jim & Alex Kowalski



HAPPY HOWLIDAYS



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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