

The official Speaking of Dogs Monthly Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2025

Ask the Trainer

“Whistle While You Call: Teach Your Dog an Emergency Recall!”

Teaching your rescue dog an emergency recall is a game-changer—it could even save their life. It’s also a great way to increase your bond. Using a whistle makes it more effective: the sound cuts through distractions, carries over long distances, and keeps things consistent (as our voices don’t always hold up under pressure).

But what if your dog isn’t a fan of the whistle? Don’t worry—there are plenty of other options, and we’ve got you covered.

Let’s dive into how to make emergency recall training fun and effective for every dog.

Step 1: Find the Reward That Works for Your Dog

Not all dogs are foodies, and that’s okay! The best reward is whatever makes your dog happiest. Here are some ideas to try. Just be sure it’s something that they LOVE and change it up! Use trial and error to figure out what your dog loves best, recognizing that this will vary in different environments. Some popular ones are:



- **High-value treats:** Cheese, chicken, hot dogs, liver treats—something extra delicious! Try different foods to see what really makes your dog’s eyes light up. We need something really special for this one – no kibble allowed!
- **Toys:** A game of fetch with a favorite ball or a squeaky toy, if that is something they absolutely love.
- **Tug games:** Many dogs love the excitement of a good tug-of-war, if you are comfortable with this game.
- **Flirt pole fun:** Let them chase the lure on a flirt pole for a quick burst of excitement.
- **Treasure hunting:** Toss a handful of treats into the grass and let them sniff to find the treasure.
- **Chase me!** Run away from your dog (in a safe area), so they get to chase you—dogs love a playful game of tag.
- **Praise and affection:** Only use this if your dog genuinely loves it. Some dogs thrive on belly rubs and cheerful praise, while others may not find it as rewarding. Watch your dog’s reaction to see if it works for them.

The key is to find what motivates your dog most and mix it up to keep things exciting. Variety keeps them guessing, and they'll always be eager to come back to see what's next!

Step 2: Pick Your Whistle (or another sound or special word)

Not just any whistle will do! You want one that's easy to blow – plastic or metal – as long as it has a clear tone. The best are ones that you can put on a key chain, wear around your neck or put in your mailbox. There are some great ones you can buy on Amazon. However, some dogs may find the sound of a whistle startling.

If your dog is afraid of the whistle:

- Start with a quieter whistle or blow it softly to avoid overwhelming them.
- Pair the whistle sound with treats from a distance to help them build a positive association.
- If the fear persists, don't force it. Try other options like:
 - A distinct verbal cue that you don't already use (e.g., "Ready?" or a silly word like "POTATO" or "PUP PUP PUP!" in an upbeat tone).
 - A specific sound, like your own whistling, clapping or a unique noise from your phone.

The key is consistency, so choose something your dog feels comfortable with and stick to it.

Step 3: Make the Whistle or Cue Awesome

Once you've picked your whistle, sound or cue, it's time to make it the best thing ever!

- Be close to your dog and have your food/activity ready.
- Blow the whistle, make the sound or say the cue once and immediately reward your dog with something you know they LOVE. Change it up so that when your dog comes, it's always a fun surprise!
- Repeat this 5–10 times in a calm spot. Pretty soon, your dog will hear the sound and think, "This is the best thing that's ever happened!"

Step 4: Get Them Moving

Now it's time to add some action.

- Blow the whistle or use your cue when your dog is a few steps away. When they come running, reward them with their favorite treat, a squeaky toy, or even a mini play session. The key is to make it FUN!
- Gradually increase the distance in a low distraction environment – maybe try while you are in another room in your house or in the backyard. The farther they come, the bigger the celebration—whether it's a tug session, a huge amount of food dropped on the ground or a game of flirt pole.



Step 5: Practice with Distractions

Life is full of distractions—squirrels, toys, tasty-looking sticks. So, let's practice for the real world.

- **If you have a fenced area:** Practice in a safe space with low-level distractions, like a ball lying nearby or distant noises. Blow the whistle or use your cue, and when your dog comes to you, reward them with treats, playtime, or a quick game of fetch.
- **If there's no fenced area:** Use a long line (a 20–30-foot leash) to ensure safety while still allowing your dog the freedom to roam. Hold the line loosely, and when you use the whistle or cue, reward them generously when they come to you—it should always feel worth it!

- If they hesitate or seem distracted, stay upbeat and patient. Call them again, and when they respond, provide a reward they can't resist. You might want to decrease the distance or try again in a less distracting area.

Step 6: Take It Outside

Once your dog's recall is solid in controlled spaces, it's time to test it in the real world. Head to a secure off-leash area (or use a long line for safety), let them explore, and then give your whistle or cue. When they come racing back, give them a big reward—whether it's a handful of treats, a rousing game of tug, or an exciting flirt pole chase. Watching them sprint back to you will feel like a victory for both of you!

Pro Tips for Reliable Recall

- **Keep it special:** Save the whistle or cue for practice and emergencies only.
- **Reward with variety:** Mix up the rewards to keep things exciting—treats, playtime, belly rubs, or even a surprise game of fetch.
- **Be patient:** Rescue dogs might need extra time to build confidence. Celebrate their progress every step of the way.

Why It's Worth It

An emergency recall isn't just practical—it's empowering. It gives your dog freedom while keeping them safe, and it strengthens your bond along the way.

It's also a great back up if your dog decides to bolt. Having a whistle around your neck, in your mailbox or at your door in case your dog does a door dash is very helpful. You can even practice this with a long line out your door with the whistle as one of the exercises!

With consistency, a mix of rewards, and plenty of patience, your dog will soon be sprinting back to you with enthusiasm and joy.



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."



Meet our February Feature Dog **JASMINE**

The featured dog this month is Jasmine. There's a twist though. We're looking for a Forever in Foster (long-term foster) home for tiny Jasmine.



Jasmine is a spunky 15-year-old, 5-pound Maltese toy poodle mix who was surrendered to a shelter. After recent dental work, she only has 6 teeth remaining. Her eyes are cloudy, but she can see well enough to get around the house and “lead the parade” on a walk. We are not sure about her hearing, but she responds to your foot tapping on the floor or to her name if you are close by. Jasmine is quite needy and always wants to be with her person if you are sitting or moving around the house. Currently she is living with two other small dogs but needs to be the only pup in her Forever in Foster home if possible – she prefers to have her human all to herself. She is not aggressive with the other dogs

but can be vocal in letting them know you belong to her.

She loves to go for walks and can manage quite a distance considering her age. She needs a monthly shot of Librela (which the rescue will cover the cost of) for the arthritis in her back legs. She will bark to go outside but, if you miss her signals, she might have an accident in the house or use her pee pad. Jasmine will only go accompanied in the backyard. On nice weather days she will follow you around the yard after she takes care of business but on cold days she runs quickly back into the house.



With only 6 teeth left she is currently on a soft food diet for the most part but loves a bit of kibble as a treat. She sleeps on the bed and cuddles on the couch or chair with you. She has just recently shown an interest in chasing a ball and will sometimes bring it back to you.

Jasmine is looking for someone who will let her be the center of their attention and give her a soft place to land for her remaining years.

**If you think you are the right fit for Jasmine, please
click [here](#) to fill out our fostering application.**

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.



Rudolf

Labrador Retriever / Shepherd /
Mixed
Short Coat
Medium, Young, Male



Teddy

Maltese / Mixed
Medium Coat
Small, Senior, Male



Jessie & Junie

Pomeranians
Long Coats
Small, Adult, Females



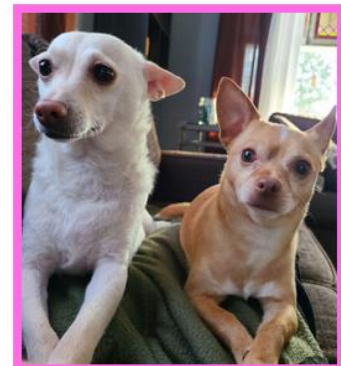
Lydia

Hound / Mixed
Short Coat
Medium, Adult, Female



Gigi

Poodle (Miniature)
Short Coat
Small, Senior, Female



**Oppenheimer &
Popcorn**

Chihuahua's
Short Coats
Small, Senior, Males



Sweet Pea
Spaniel / Shih Tzu / Mixed
Medium Coat
Small, Senior, Male



Holly
Shih Tzu
Medium Coat
Small, Adult, Female



Penny
Shepherd / Collie / Mixed
Medium Coat
Medium, Baby, Female



Frankie
French Bulldog
Short Coat
Medium, Adult, Male



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



Ashe a.k.a. Ashley
Shih Tzu
Medium Coat
Small, Adult, Female

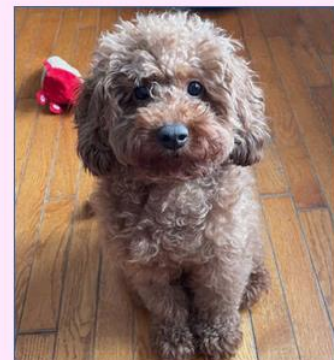
Happy Tails
a.k.a. Recent Adoptions



Beth



Carlos



Clover



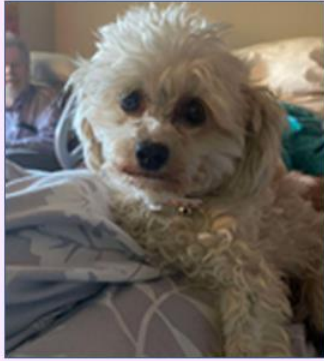
Fifi



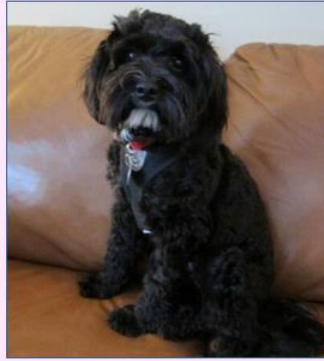
Genevieve



Rudi



Snowy



Twilight



Zach



Adoption Update

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,



Happy New Year!

Athena is great! She is too smart for me so we have done training (lots of it), and we continue to do tricks and behavioural training to keep her mind working. The only behavioural issue is reactivity to other dogs on a leash. But we go to the off-leash park and she is great. In our town, the camp ground becomes fully off leash in the winter so we've been going there. The cat has finally stopped running from her. We even went to a friend's place who has cats and she was great with them. She loves small dogs. I figure she thinks my cat is a small dog so when we meet a small dog and they don't run away she is very happy

and so gentle with them.

She is well loved a.k.a. spoiled and she brings me a lot of joy.

Take care,

LISA & ATHENA



Parvo Puppy Update: A Story of Rescue, Resilience and Collaboration

Almost two weeks ago, 10 puppies from a single litter were surrendered to three different rescues after being saved from a puppy mill—2 went to TEAM Dog Rescue, 3 went to K9 Safe Space, and 5 went to Gone Rogue (Rescue). Both of TEAM'S pups were diagnosed with parvo almost immediately upon intake and were admitted into emergency hospitals for treatment and were discharged about a week later. All three of K9 Safe Space pups were also diagnosed with parvo, two remain in hospital at present, undergoing treatment. Tragically, several puppies with Gone Rogue (Rescue) also fell ill. Two of the five puppies in their care died last week. With the remaining puppies in critical condition, an emergency intake was launched to get them immediate medical intervention before it was too late.



In a remarkable show of unity, TEAM Dog Rescue, Adopt a Dog/Save a Life and Speaking of Dogs Rescue joined forces to ensure these puppies had a fighting chance. On Friday night, they were admitted to an emergency hospital in Toronto.

Many of you no doubt watched the 5th Estate documentary highlighting the skyrocketing costs at corporate-owned vet hospital. We were initially quoted costs that had nearly doubled from what we had previously seen just a few short years ago. After some discussions, the hospital worked with us to make treatment more manageable, understanding that this was a joint effort between three registered charities. They took exemplary care of our puppies and we received A+ communication and direction.

The good news? All three puppies survived! They were released one by one—Sunday, Monday, and finally, Wednesday. Two are now with TEAM Dog Rescue and the little male is now with us at Speaking of Dogs Rescue. None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of multiple rescues and the incredible generosity of our fellow organizations, including a generous donation from Haven of the Heart. Between the four of our rescue organizations, we shared costly ICU hospitalization, treatment and round the clock care fees because we refused to let these puppies die without a chance. This is what rescue is about—compassion, collaboration, kindness and never giving up. Thank you to everyone who has supported each of our rescues.



If you'd like to help any of our respective organizations continue saving lives, please consider donating. Every dollar makes a difference and every foster application can save a life. Speaking of Dogs Rescue giving site is: www.speakingofdogs.com/donate or EFT address is: speakingofdogs@gmail.com with thanks for consideration and for following our posts and our dog rescue efforts.

Wiggles & Wags

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

Holly's



Hope

WAGS and WIGGLES of thanks to Holly's Hope!

BIG NEWS from our friend SHARON D. at Holly's Hope! Their Christmas photo fundraiser was a HUGE HIT raising \$1,407.25 for Speaking of Dogs Rescue!

Visit their FB page at <https://www.facebook.com/HOLLYSHOPEforanimalsinneed/> and browse the 3 albums posted Dec 7th, Dec 14th and 15th.

Sharon said "It is the most fun we have all year at HH, and it is a pleasure to have Speaking of Dogs be our recipient."

In Memoriam



Ace

Adopted September 2021
Loved by Carol Keates



Faye

Adopted February 2022
Loved by Michelle Colasuonno



Preston

Adopted June 2016
Loved by the Boase family



Chica

Adopted February 2020
Loved by Nicole Archer & Darryl
Pierce



Giles

Adopted September 2022
Loved by Susan Bock

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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