

The official Speaking of Dogs Monthly Newsletter

MARCH 2025

Ask the Trainer

“What I Wish I Had Known...”

Hindsight is 20/20, and life with dogs is no exception! While sometimes that means regrets, it also means there's opportunity to learn and grow.

I was 19 when I got my first dog of my own. I was dog walking for a rural shelter and, with very little forethought (to be honest, none at all!), I adopted a leggy scent hound named Arlo. Unlike rescues of today, the shelter had no screening in place to find out whether he was a good fit for me and my lifestyle, nor whether I was a good fit for the dog. So much could go wrong! Luckily for me, Arlo was a lovely and forgiving dog and, on reflection, there's so much I didn't know that I didn't know.

If I could do it all over, here's what I would change:

Start Training Classes Right Away – Whether You Think You Need Them or Not!



Rescues today often have mandatory training requirements on higher needs dogs, or at least a list of recommended trainers. I wish I had been pushed to get into classes right away! Like many dog owners, especially those with a background with animals, I thought I knew what I was doing. Little did I know that “self-taught” isn't a real thing! Even the most experienced professional trainers continue to seek out new skill-building opportunities, something I wish I had done as soon as I adopted Arlo.

Seek Out Positive Training

Had I been better prepared and researched, I would have known that hounds have a hard-earned reputation for being difficult to train off leash. After a few too many jaunts through the neighbourhood where I was racing after him, I was talking to staff at a local pet store, and she referred me to a trainer who she was being mentored by. This trainer used very harsh methods and tools and, not having researched alternatives, I believed what he told me was necessary to train my new dog off leash. Had I done some research and sought out positive training early, I could have avoided damaging my relationship with my sensitive new hound!

Just Because Someone is Outspoken Doesn't Make Them Knowledgeable

The pet store clerk was very outspoken about the benefits of their chosen training method and used scare tactics to push me away from a kinder approach to training. I encountered similar views at the dog

park, where the biggest personality appeared to be the most knowledgeable “amateur dog expert” in the park. But a big personality and persuasive words have nothing to do with how much a person truly knows about a topic!

Today we see not only “big personalities” that monopolize the training talk in the dog park, but also “big personalities” in the form of “social media influencers” who make videos to increase their following and increase the monetization of their page. The best way to do that is to release dramatic videos and inflammatory rants. Harsh training methods fit in perfectly to a format that thrives on drama and dysregulation. Social media didn’t exist like it does now (hello, MySpace!), or I’m sure my 19-year-old self would have fallen for that, too!

Nature is as Important as Nurture

Another damaging fallacy is the “Nature versus Nurture debate.” It has never been a question of “either/or,” but actually of “both/and.” Nature, the in-born qualities of a dog, is equally as important as nurture, how a puppy is raised and trained. The implication of this is that, when you buy a puppy, you are not buying a “blank slate” or an infinitely malleable creature. Socialization is crucial, but it is also not the only or most important factor at play in creating the dog your puppy grows into.

Learn About the Type or Breed You’re Sweet On



Jumping off from the “nature vs nurture” debate, let’s look at dog breeds and types. Sometimes we can fall for a type of dog because they are just adorable – but is that really the best reasoning for which to buy an animal you’ll be living with for the next decade or so?!

Dogs have been bred for different activities, and what they were bred for can make them more or less suitable for different households. While there is, of course, variation within a breed or type, it is still an important consideration when looking at bringing an otherwise unknown dog into your home.

When I adopted Arlo, it didn’t even cross my mind what the implications could be of getting a dog that is famous for their huge voice. I was extremely lucky that Arlo was one of those exceptions to the rule, he was the quietest hound I’ve met. If he’d had a typical hound voice, I can’t imagine what the next decade of renting housing with him could have looked like. More than once, a landlord shied away when they found out I’d be moving in with a hound!

I was so lucky that I ended up with a forgiving dog for my first dog and, in hindsight, see how much I relied on his goodwill to make up for the mistakes that I didn’t even know I was making. I also realize that so many of my clients are exactly where I was then! I love nothing more than when a client reflects on how their beliefs shift and change as they become increasingly open to learning new ways of living and interacting with their dog. Despite how familiar dogs are, and how deeply embedded they are in our culture, there is still so much to learn!



Written by

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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 March Feature Dog: **RUDOLPH**

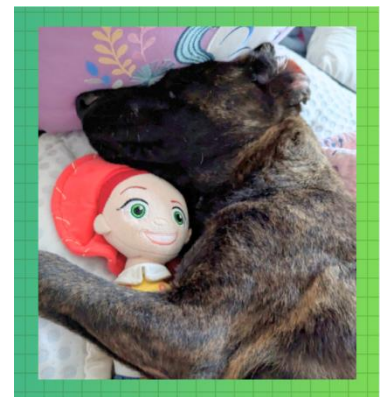


Meet Rudolph, a sweet 7-month-old puppy with a heartwarming story. Despite his rough start in life, Rudolph has shown incredible resilience and charm. He was found in Northern Ontario and taken in by a partner rescue, which saved his life. Everyone is amazed at how he managed to survive on his own for so long.

Rudolph is expected to be 60 pounds or less when fully grown. He has a beautiful brindle coat. He is housebroken, quiet, and crate trained, making him a well-behaved companion. He has his moments of intense play then long stretches of sleepy calm, which is great for his foster mom. He has an unusual gait, but his skeletal scans show no abnormalities, so it doesn't affect his playful nature.

Currently living with two large dogs, Rudolph gets along well with his furry friends and enjoys their company. He is also good with the kids in the home, although he tends to be more nervous around the adult male. Despite this, his gentle and loving personality shines through.

Rudolph's journey is a testament to his strength and personality, making him a wonderful addition to any family. He continues to impress everyone with his sweet and resilient spirit.



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

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



Maggie
Golden Retriever / Australian
Shepherd / Mixed
Medium Coat
Large, Senior, Female



Teddy
Maltese / Mixed
Medium Coat
Small, Senior, Male



Jessie & Junie
Pomeranians
Long Coats
Small, Adult, Females



Lydia
Hound / Mixed
Short Coat
Medium, Adult, Female



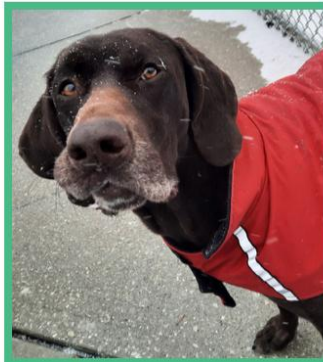
Gigi
Poodle (Miniature)
Short Coat
Small, Senior, Female



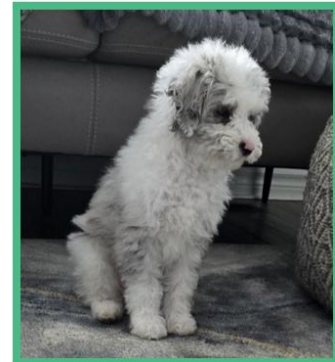
Oppenheimer & Popcorn
Chihuahua's
Short Coats
Small, Senior, Males



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



Dougie
German Shorthaired Pointer
Short Coat
Large, Young, Male



Oliver
Poodle (Miniature) / Mixed
Medium Coat
Medium, Baby, Male



Gucci
Terrier / Mixed
Medium Coat
Small, Senior, Male



Diego
Shih Tzu
Medium Coat
Small, Adult, Male



Winnie
Havanese
Medium Coat
Small, Adult, Female



Romeo
Chihuahua / Mixed
Short Coat
Small, Senior, Male



Bear
Hound / Doberman Pinscher / Mixed
Large, Baby, Male

Save the date!

Step Up For The Pups



We will be holding our annual walk-a-thon on **Saturday May 10th**.

More details will be provided on our web site in a couple of weeks and in the April newsletter.

Happy Tails

a.k.a. Recent Adoptions



Ari



Ashe



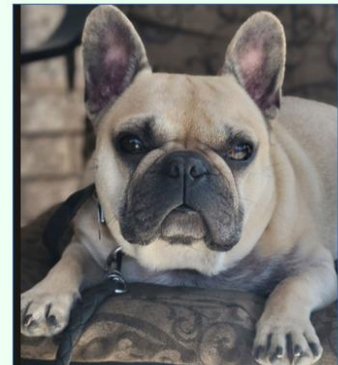
Boston



Bitsy



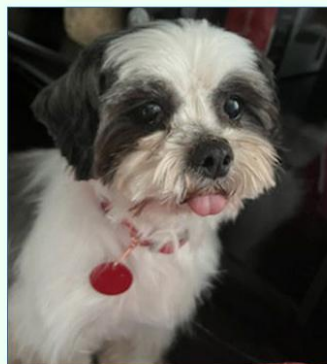
Buddy



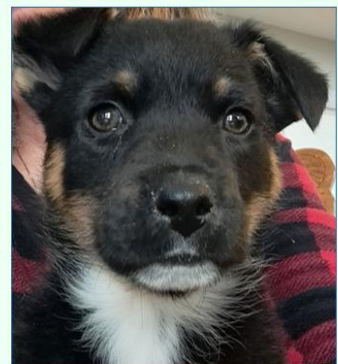
Frankie



Frosty



Holly



Penny



Sweet Pea

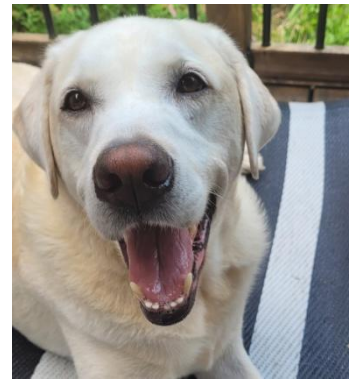
Adoption Update

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,



Bailie is a 100 lb yellow labrador retriever who is powered by love! I met Bailie in the summer of 2023 when he was 9 years old and hadn't been to a vet in 4 years. I became his third home and promised him I'd be his last. With the help of SoD, we arranged a much-needed vet appointment, which included a dental cleaning, vaccinations, and the testing and removal of some benign skin lumps. That visit also revealed that Bailie had advanced, unmanaged arthritis that was beginning to impact his mobility, along with some easily manageable allergies and grooming issues. The vet prescribed the right food and pain medications, and since then, Bailie hasn't looked back. The pain-free version of him is an exuberant, friendly, and (of course) always hungry lab.

In addition to managing his arthritis with medication, Bailie has become a big fan of physiotherapy and swimming. His treatments, including water treadmill sessions, have made a huge difference in his quality of life. The low-impact exercise strengthens his muscles without putting strain on his joints, helping him maintain mobility and reduce stiffness. Thanks to this regimen, he's still able to enjoy 3 km walks a few days a week. Beyond the physical benefits, he absolutely loves the car rides to his appointments, and, of course, all the treats and attention he gets while he's there. In good weather Bailie is enjoying swimming in the Nottawasaga River.



Now nearly 11, Bailie has been a loving and joyful addition to our family. Whoever loved him first clearly invested time in his training—he's truly been a dream dog. That said, at his age, I believe he's earned the right to get away with almost anything, so I don't hold him accountable for much! Bailie continues to feel better and stronger. In fact, over the holidays, I learned just how good he's feeling—he can now counter-surf like a pro! I'm forever grateful to SoD for helping me find my bestie and adventure bud.

Thanks,

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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](#)

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



SUE BLOOM

Dog rescue has been an important part of my life for the past 16 years – the last 9 with Speaking of Dogs Rescue during which time I have fostered over 200 dogs.

Watching dogs transform after receiving the medical care, love, grooming and or training that they need, is life changing for that foster. This sets them up to be successful in their next stage of life, their adoption.

As a groomer, I ensure that dogs under my care get a full groom making them both look and feel good. I also volunteer my grooming services to all SODR fosters.

I have fostered a range of dogs – pregnant moms, litters, puppy mill mamas, injured dogs, sick dogs, dogs that needed emergency surgery and dogs that have remained in SODR care (FIF) because the transition to a forever home may not be the best choice for that dog.

I have picked up dogs from owners and shelters. I do home visits and spend time with potential adopters during a “meet and greet” in their home, prior to the adoption being finalized. I sometimes dog sit for other foster parents.

I’ve met many wonderful adopters along the way. Adopters who make the next step in my foster’s life as seamless as they can.

I’ve learned that dogs will never ever intentionally upset you. They are amazing, loving, kind, unsuspecting creatures. We don’t always know their past, and sometimes that’s a good thing. I get to start a new venture with them and ensure they are placed in a home that continues the stellar care that they received in rescue. I feel very lucky to be a part of this team effort.

THANK YOU SUE

Wiggles & Wags

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



A big thank you to Carey Sanderson for her beautiful handmade quilt donation. Thanks as well to volunteer Gerry B who managed the raffle. Thanks to all of our supporters who bought tickets, the quilt raffle raised just over \$1,200!



In Memoriam



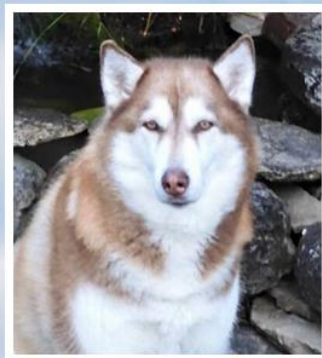
Fig

Adopted October 2017
Loved by Cheryl Lamb & John
Montemurro



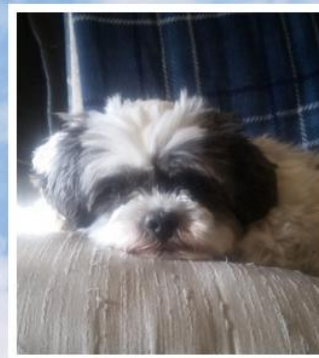
Princess

Adopted December 2022
Loved by Rebecca Cann & Janis
Barlow



Shilo

Adopted February 2013
Loved by Don Woods & Alida Dubray



Maggie Muffin

Adopted August 2020
Loved by Lindsay Bauckham

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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