

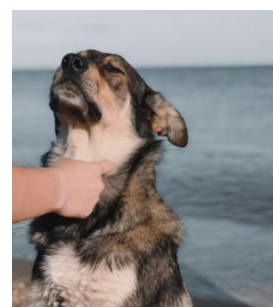
December 2025

Ask the Trainer

Welcoming A New Family Member!

Everyone is so excited to give lots of love and attention to their new rescue dog or young puppy! But it's important to give them some space to settle in at their own pace. Let them ask for attention rather than thinking that they automatically want it. Too much close interaction in their brand-new environment can be overwhelming and fear inducing, despite the best intentions.

A good rule of thumb for happy interactions for everyone is to pet and stroke just three times and then pause. If they nudge your hand or step in more closely indicating interest, then you can resume. Still, do try to not get too excited when petting – especially with puppies who may still be in their mouthy stage and want to grab at you in excitement. Do your best to avoid petting right on the top of the head as many dogs find this difficult and will duck away. Stroking down the back, on their neck or chest are ways to give calm attention without triggering too much excitement or withdrawal from you.



Moving to their new home can be stressful overall, so it's important to give your new dog space and not ask too much of them in those first few days to weeks. Puppies may be leaving litter-mates and a familiar family setting, and this can make being a 'singleton' hard. Observe your dog for a week to several weeks – which varies by dog – and avoid actively training or expecting too much.

We often don't have a full history of the rescues we're giving a new start to. They may have been in a loving home with a family or person they were fully bonded with, but who can no longer care for them. This can mean a sad and mournful transition where they need time to "choose" us. Some rescue dogs have left a highly negative environment, and we might expect them to be happy in a good home, but they might have learned to fear situations, people or sounds. That will take time to overcome. Patience is key – it takes time to rebuild trust and confidence – it can't be rushed.

Some keys to success in transitions include providing safe spaces for your new dog that they can retreat to in order to settle. When they've gone to settle, it's important that no one,



especially children, disturbs them. A crate, pen or bed in a corner are good options, letting their “people” know that they don’t want to be interacted with at that time.

Managing their freedom in the home is important to avoid developing unwanted behaviours. Nervous or puppy energy can trigger digging, chewing or other unwanted behaviours. Baby gates are ideal to help keep them in an area that can be fully dog proofed – no small toys, no shoes or slippers on the ground and cords tucked safely away. Impulse control for a stressed or over excited dog can be

tough for them, so managing the environment is important and will help them be successful in their new home.

Avoiding inside accidents when house training will be far simpler if your dog or pup can’t wander to a far room or have easy access to rugs that can feel like grass, feeling like a safe place to do their business. By having them near family, it is easier to keep an eye on them. Sniffing, going to the exit door and restless movements may indicate the need to go outside. Keeping an eye on these cues will help avoid accidents. Set up a schedule so that they get outside frequently and reward them with praise and random treats outside when they go, so that it’s clear what’s expected. Praising and giving the treat inside makes it seem like it’s better to come in quickly, rather than finish their business! Successful house training comes when the family anticipates and reads the dog’s signals and provides frequent opportunities to be out.

Puppies need to go out quickly after waking up, eating and stimulating play. They’re not as clear on the idea of housetraining, so keeping an eye on them and a schedule will reduce accidents. While most mature dogs generally don’t need to go so often, they may still need to learn the new schedule. Stress might also make them need to go more often. Older dogs may be losing continence and in need of more frequent outings. If marking is a concern with male dogs, a belly band can help prevent them from leaving their scent (which is why they want to do it). A neutered dog is far less likely to ‘mark’, but it’s also a learned behaviour which may take some time to extinguish. Distract them when they’re sniffing at corners of furniture, hanging curtains and new items on the ground and then praise them for leaving them. Sometimes it can be a guest’s shoes or purse that are novel and need to be marked, so keep them off the floor! This is not for life but until they’ve settled in the new routine.



To help reduce excitement, stress or boredom, it’s good to provide chewing and licking outlets. Toys that can be stuffed with treats, chew toys, snuffle and lick mats provide acceptable and necessary stimulation. Lick mats have a calming effect and can be used with Kong stuffing, peanut butter (test in small amounts) or canned food smeared on. Snuffle mats are calming by encouraging deep breathing to find the piece of food.

Rotate toys and other interactive objects to keep them novel and more interesting – when they haven’t played with something for a day or two it’s far more stimulating. Squeaky and crinkly toys are often of great interest to dogs in tug or fetch games, and are good family bonding toys, but when left out for the dog all the time will often result in them being destroyed and possibly swallowed. Keep some toys in reach and others away in a basket and switch them up every couple of days to keep them novel!

The most common concern that I encounter with new dogs and pups in the home is when they are startled when sleeping or physically being moved. Please respect their space as you would other family members, so that they don't feel the need to protect themselves. Say their name as you approach, gently pet down their back and, if you need them to move, ask them to fetch a toy or toss a small treat on the ground. This can go such a long way to building a positive and trusting relationship and is especially important to teach young children who may feel that the new puppy or dog is their play buddy like their favourite stuffed animal.

Written by
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www.caninebehaviour.ca



Calling All Hockey Fans!

Thanks to a generous donor we have been given 2 Leafs tickets to raffle off

Two Tickets
Toronto Maple Leafs vs Florida Panthers @ Scotiabank Arena
Tuesday January 6, 2026 at 7:30pm

Raffle runs from December 1 to 14, 2025
(winner announced on December 15)

Tickets are one for \$10 and three for \$25

Email speakingofdogs@gmail.com for tickets,
stating how many you would like



Online payments only. Please do not pay until you get your lucky numbers.
Raffle tickets are digital. You will receive your lucky numbers by email.



DECEMBER 2

Donate to Speaking of Dogs Rescue
this Giving Tuesday



Donate 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

Meet our Featured Dog of December – Penny

“The Dog Whisperer”



Meet Penny, a sweet, special girl. Calm, happy and quiet, Penny loves to cuddle and show affection to everyone who crosses her path. Her foster parents affectionately call her the dog whisperer because she has a calming presence that seems to put other dogs at ease. And her funny head tilts and paw waving when she wants something keep her foster parents laughing every day. It's no wonder Penny has quickly captured the hearts of her foster family, friends and neighbours.

Approximately 4.5 years old, Penny was listed at the shelter as an Australian Shepherd mix. Her unique look suggests multiple other breeds due to her medium height, floppy ears, stocky build and mixture of brindle and merle coat patterns. And she's got the cutest polka dot socks!

Penny loves walking and is looking for a forever family who has the time and mobility to walk her daily. She's currently a bit overweight, but with proper diet and regular exercise, she'll be back to an ideal weight in no time. Penny is house-trained and has some basic training.

She'd be a great fit for families of any size or age group, with or without existing pets.



If you're looking for a cuddly, loving best friend, Penny is the dog for you! With this gentle soul by your side, your days are sure to be filled with love, laughter and happily ever after.

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



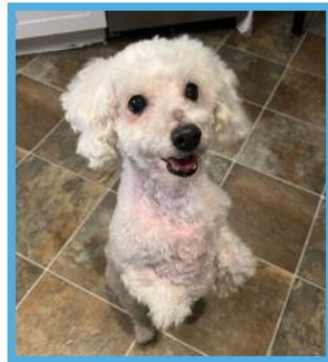
Bree
Yorkshire Terrier (Yorkie)
Small, Adult, Female



Beth
Bichon Frise Mix
Small, Adult, Female



Charlie
Rottweiler Mix
Large, Baby, Male



Frosty
Bichon Frise Mix
Small, Senior, Female



Jessie & Junie
Pomeranians
Small, Adult, Females



Karti
Retriever Mix
Large, Adult, Male



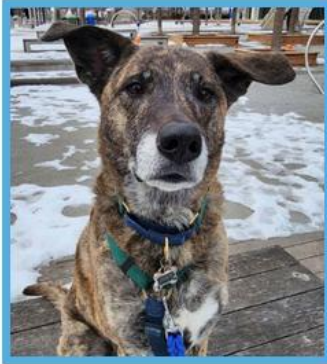
Kona
German Shepherd Dog Mix
Medium, Adult, Female



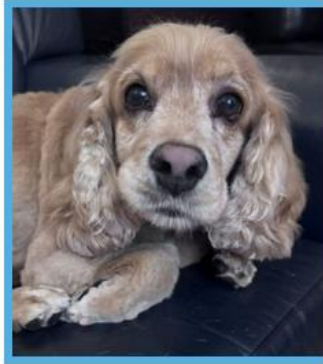
Mia
Havanese mix
Small, Adult, Female



Miso
Samoyed Mix
Large, Adult, Male



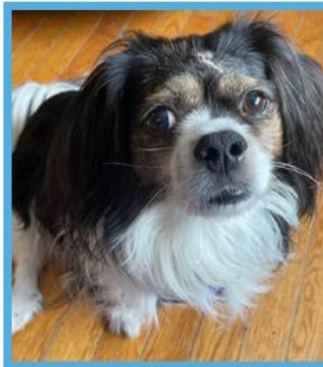
Piper
 Labrador Retriever / Greyhound Mix
 Large, Adult, Female



Seymour
 Cocker Spaniel
 Medium, Senior, Male



Summer
 Bichon Frise Mix
 Small, Adult, Female



Troy
 Spaniel/Shih Tzu Mix
 Small, Adult, Male

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Derek LaPierre

I have been a foster and volunteer for 8 years, the majority of which have been with Speaking Of Dogs. It's rewarding to be part of an organization that puts the dogs first. One of the great things about SODR is the Forever In Foster program which makes sure all dogs will find an appropriate place for them, a place where they will be loved and cared for in their most needy times.

While helping several of these dogs in need, I was looking for other ways to help out. When there was a request for help with calling applicants, I raised my hand. It's been a lot of fun speaking with applicants and helping them get a fuller story across. It's rewarding to hear the applicants thank all of our volunteers for the time we put into helping dogs in need. I'm grateful to be part of a fantastic team and to play a role in finding the right placement for each dog. It's an honour to be trusted with such an important job.

THANK YOU DEREK

Happy Tails

(Recent Adoptions)



DeeDee



Didi



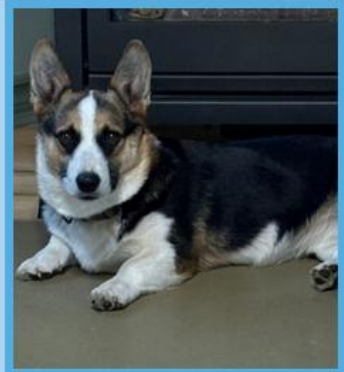
Holly



Lana



Pippy



Sasha



Thunder

Adoption Update

Dear Speaking of Dogs Rescue,



Everything has worked out AMAZING with Josie! She's such a marvellous dog and fits in so well with our family. Our other dog Albert (a Speaking of Dogs alumni) has anxiety and so we were looking for a particular temperament to compliment him and help him feel safe. Josie's foster family did an incredible job writing her description accurately, so we knew right away she'd be the perfect fit. Josie and Bert have been best friends since day one and bring each other a lot of comfort and happiness.

Since Josie has a very social personality, I signed her up for a program at my work where staff can bring their dogs to work. Josie and I spent the summer attending training sessions and working on the obedience skills needed to pass the test. She's a total natural and impressed everyone with how happy and relaxed she stayed in all circumstances. We passed the test and now she comes to work with me every Wednesday at the hospital. I've had so much feedback from my colleagues that Josie really brightens their day. And I can tell Josie absolutely loves it too. Plus, she's shattering misconceptions that some people have about rescue dogs. Here are a few pictures of Josie happy at work.



Sincerely,

Emily Laver

amazon wish lists

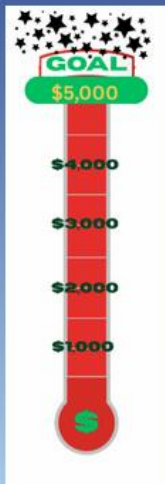
Want to help our dogs?

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

[Click here to view list](#)

Wiggles and Wags

Blackie's Fund Match Challenge!



Thanks to you we exceeded our goal for The Blackie's Fund Match Challenge! Thank you to everyone for giving generously to Blackie's Fund. It has helped so many dogs AND humans over the last several years.

A Special Note of Thanks

Thank you to Lisa Charlton for designing and creating our lovely Christmas cards and beautiful Christmas ornaments. As usual, your support means the world to us.



HOLIDAY PHOTOS WITH SANTA

**Saturday, December 6/
Sundays, December 7 & 14**

12:00 – 4:00 pm

Pet Valu, 339 College St (Kensington Market)

*** No appointment required *
\$18 Photo card + digital**

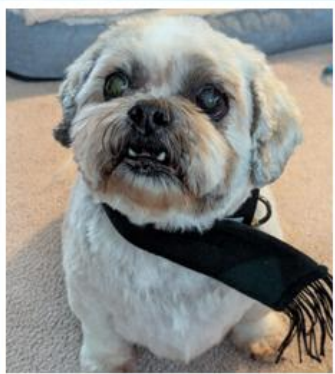
**Proceeds support Speaking of Dogs Rescue
and Holly's Hope**

In Memoriam



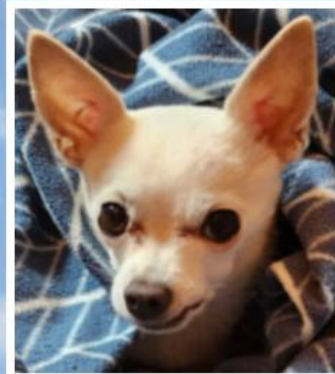
Buffy

Forever in Foster
Loved by Nora and Simon Barber



Charlie

Adopted December 2021
Loved by Louise and the McIntyre
family



Dash

Forever in Foster
Loved by Katherine Gay



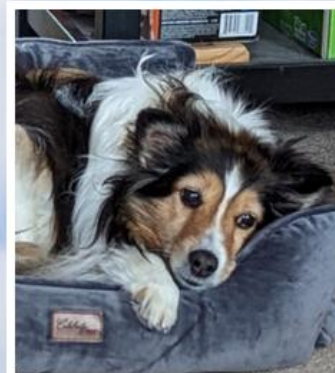
Izzy (Mal)

Adopted December 2020
Loved by Leah Lorentz and family



Leo

Forever in Foster
Loved by Sonja Brittain and family



Sadie

Adopted February 2020
Loved by Nancy Foran and Jason Kew



Sweetie (Sweet Pea)

Adopted February 2025
Loved by Mari-Anne and Carl
McCleary

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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