



The Retriever

Labrador Education And Rescue Network's Newsletter

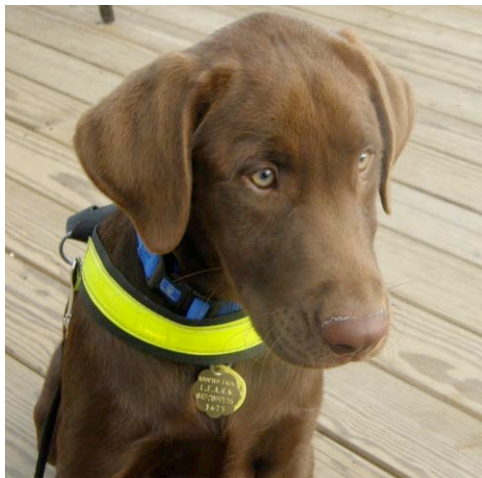
Volume 9, Number 1, February, 2008

Annual
Luncheon and
Silent Auction!
March 9th
See p. 3 inside

LEARN's mission is to assist in the rescue of unwanted Labrador Retrievers by placing them in homes through fostering, adoption and referral. In addition, we strive to provide public education regarding Labrador Retrievers and to promote responsible ownership and the humane treatment of all dogs

Keller

A Christmas letter to LEARN by Volunteer Bethany LaPointe



Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn whatever state I am in, therein to be content. -Helen Keller

Over the past two years I have been a foster mother for L.E.A.R.N. It has been my privilege to share my life and love with some of the most wonderful dogs, and I've been so blessed to see them all find wonderful, loving families. I'd like to share with you a bit about my current foster dog, Keller.

I had just given up my last foster, sweet little Celie, when I read his info and saw his photo in an email sent to me by L.E.A.R.N. Keller was a 4-month-old chocolate Lab, who had been completely blind since birth. Maybe it was because I just let go of a pup the same age as him that I was now missing terribly, but I decided I really wanted to meet him. So, after some

inquiring, I was given the chance by L.E.A.R.N. to foster Keller until we found him a forever home.

For the first week after bringing him home, I was overwhelmed. He couldn't stop moving. He would spin in fast, counter-clockwise circles constantly, and would spin even faster when he got excited. He ran headfirst into everything, and wasn't in the least bit cautious. He was still a rowdy pup, with no idea that anything was wrong with him.

What must it be like to have the rest of your body say that you are able to move, play, and run, but there's something missing? His brain says run and play, but it doesn't realize there is a malfunction.

I didn't know how to handle him, or where to start with his training. I was at a loss, but I knew that the second Keller moved into my life, he trusted me. He put his complete faith in me to take care of him, in the same way God asks us to put our complete faith in Him.

Realizing that Keller trusts me completely, I have risen to the challenge, and given him the best care it is in my power to give. I have never given so much of my heart to a foster dog before. I've always kept a part of my heart locked away from the fosters, because I know that in the end, they have to leave to be with their forever family. I am only temporary. My mother always reminds me that the point of being a foster mom is to be a temporary safe-haven for the ones who have yet to find their intended place in this world, and not to keep every dog that comes along. Doing so would result in becoming a foster failure. The Lord brings certain dogs into my life only to be a rest stop on their journey. I am given the chance to love, shelter and provide for them until they can be with their true family.

It took Keller about two weeks to really settle in to his new surroundings. He started remembering the paths to things like the water dish, the toy box, and his favorite sleeping chair. He has been living with me for about two months now, and he's made so much progress. He really is a remarkable little guy. It amazes me to look at him and realize that he is as happy as can be. Even though he has been given such a huge cross to bear for the entire span of his life, he is content.

What Keller has taught me:

In this life, you have to let people help you. You can't always do it alone. You just have to trust people.

Taking action is not always the best thing to do. Sometimes it's best to just sit and contemplate.

God never gives you more than you can handle.

With enough determination, you can accomplish anything.

Be content with what you've been given, and thank God everyday for his many blessings.

Have faith.

God bless you and yours this Christmas season and throughout the coming year. Sincerely,

Bethany LaPointe, Annie, Sophie, and Keller

LEARN Tips... compiled from questions adopters have asked and the experience of LEARN volunteers.

1. Ice on the sidewalk/driveway? Salt can be very irritating and even toxic to a dog's pads. Avoid using salt to melt your ice. Instead use one of the many ice-melting products on the market that are pet friendly. Also, avoid walking your dog on roadways that have been salted or consider using dog boots. Be sure to clean your dog's pads after he or she has been out walking where any ice-melting product has been used.

2. Is your dog high energy? Do you have a hard time providing enough exercise to tire out him/her? Doggy backpacks can provide dogs with a mission while walking and at the same time provide their owner with an easier way to tire them out. Before using one make sure your dog has a healthy back and good hips.

3. Is your dog uncomfortable going to the Vet? Try taking along really good treats and giving them to your dog while you're in the waiting room. You might want to incorporate an easy game at the same time, rewarding them for "sit" "shake," "look," or "leave it," which will also help relax your dog. Also, have your Vet give your dog some really good treats when greeting them, during a procedure and after the procedure.

4. Want to make your dog more visible on these dark nights? Try using a reflective collar/harness or a lighted collar cover.

(LEARN now carries Reflective Collars and Harnesses; and battery-operated lighted Collar Covers and Tag Lights. Please visit the merchandise section of our website for more information.)

5. Having a difficult time exercising your dog with icy walks and/or subzero wind chills? Play indoor games, like hide and seek or targeting and/or use the opportunity to have some short training sessions with your dog. Hiding small treats around a room while the dog stays outside the room makes for great fun. These activities help exercise your dog's body and mind, tiring them out physically and mentally.

6. Agitated during the night? One senior dog started panting, shaking and behaving during the night last summer. This would happen shortly after everyone in the family had gone to bed. After much troubleshooting, it was discovered that he needed a night light. As senior dogs lose their night vision, they may become more restless during the night. Try using a nightlight. If that doesn't work, please consult your Vet.

Critical Reminder to Adopters! Please update your address and phone number with LEARN. If your dog is lost, our network of volunteers across IL and WI and with other organizations we work with can help reunite you and your dog. A LEARN tag stays with all alums for life and that tag number and/or microchip, combined with current adopter info, has enabled several Labs to be reunited safely with their families

LEARN's 8th Annual Luncheon & Silent Auction

You're Invited!

Sunday, March 9th—Reply Today!

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, March 9th and join us for LEARN's Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction. The luncheon and auction are key fundraisers for LEARN, and those who attend always have a fun, memorable time. We'll celebrate our 8th year and 900+ Adoption Anniversary with of course, a Lab Theme. As well as a delicious meal, we'll have an ongoing silent auction with many items for bid before, during and after lunch.

All proceeds help Labs in need, from puppies to seniors. The more people who come to share the fun, the more Labs LEARN can help. LEARN is pleased to hold the luncheon and silent auction once again at *The Country Squire* in Grayslake, Illinois, so it's sure to be delicious!

Please reserve your space by March 1st. And, just like last year, please bring a picture of your pet with your name on the back so you can join in on our "dog" prize! We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Sunday, March 9th

Time: 12:00 P.M. Cash Bar. 1:00 P.M. Lunch

\$30.00 per person

Place: *The Country Squire*, Routes 120 & 45, Grayslake, Illinois

(847) 223-0121

Note: You'll find us through the banquet room doors at the west end of *The Country Squire*.

(please cut and return this portion)

Menu:

Entrée – Choice of one:

___ Roast Sirloin of Beef ___ Broiled Lake Superior Whitefish ___ Chicken Marsala

Entrée served with Garlic Whipped Potatoes and California Blend Vegetables, Soup & Salad

Cheesecake with Strawberry Topping

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Number Attending _____ @ \$30.00 per person

I will be unable to attend, but can help with my donation of \$ _____

Please return with your check or money order on or before March 1, 2007, payable to:

LEARN, P.O. Box 164, Island Lake, Illinois 60042

Please reply early! Questions? Please call Lois at 847-949-7021 or email tollhouse@sbcglobal.net

8PAWSUP.COM Selects LEARN for Charitable Giving



An Interview with Shannon

Tell me about 8PawsUp.

8PawsUp.com is a pet-lover owned website that offers Labrador Retriever dog breed information and sells original Lab dog breed, mutt, rescue, and dog lover designs on quality apparel and gift items through the Internet. It is our goal to deliver elaborate dog breed articles while providing fun and creative

products that celebrate each unique Labrador Retriever dog breed lover's interests and personalities.

How did you start this business?

8PawsUp.com started in 2005 shortly after I brought home my first Labrador Retriever, a chocolate female named Dakota. It was love at first cuddle, and I wanted a shirt to show my love of Chocolate Labs. Chocolate Lab products were hard to come by, so I designed my first graphic—"When God made Labrador Retrievers He was showing off"—with a picture of Dakota and placed it on few products. People started to flood my website asking for more Labrador Retriever designs and products. Within a few of months, 8PawsUp.com offered 1 dog breed, 3 Lab colors, 50+ designs, and over 5,000 unique dog gift items. We then began to sell merchandise to customers in all 50 states online. International sales online include: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Taiwan, Turkey, and more!

How do you decide what products and information qualify to be included on your site?

The Retriever, Vol. 9, No. 1, February, 2008

Shannon Steffen, founder of 8PawsUp.com, has decided to make LEARN her sole charitable giving partner. This means Shannon will give a percent of her sales to help our Labs. This is great news for all, and volunteer Christine Lisiak deserves a huge thanks for teaching Shannon about LEARN. Please visit www.8PawsUp.com for your Lab and gift needs. Thank you, Shannon!



Shannon with "Lab Brats" Dakota and Cheyenne

We include only those products that speak to a true Labrador Retriever's heart. If I wouldn't wear or display them myself, then they are not included in our collection. The designs and products need to not only hold true to heart but we also include those that illustrate the fun nature of Lab lovers; including designs that are more on the cartoon and artistic side.

The information included on the site is based on frequent questions I hear/read from other Lab and dog owners. 8PawsUp.com has not only an extensive list of Labrador Retriever rescues across the nation but also articles to help new and old Lab owners alike with questions on the breed, health, training, and just life in general. To let other Lab owners know they are not alone in becoming the best Lab parents they can be, we even have our own Lab Brats Blog where I share with people the daily life of our own Labs: Dakota (3yr) and Cheyenne (2yr).

Finally, how did you learn about LEARN? What distinguishes LEARN?

I have known about LEARN through my own research on the Labrador Retriever breed before

Dakota came into my life. After starting 8PawsUp.com and creating the "Lab Rescues" list, LEARN kept coming up on my radar. Finally, I met some LEARN volunteers at the Milwaukee area Pet Expo. It was then that I decided to make LEARN part of my rotational charitable giving. However, when I had decided to make one Lab rescue my sole

charitable giving partner, LEARN stood out because of one of your volunteers: Christine Lisiak. Christine went out of her way to make it easy for 8PawsUp.com to give to LEARN, and numerous times she helped remind me of LEARN's commitment to Labrador Retrievers.

Congrats to Labbies who found their new families!

Prior to November 2007

Kyp--James Levinson

Bauer--Wayne Smith

Ginger--Laura Roth

Monte--Linda Flansburgh & Joe
Pulvermacher

Lyle--Andrea & Chad Tompoles

Celie--Grant & Wendy Schmidt

Winnie/ Hannah--Michael & Mitz
Chappell

Sonny--Kim & Mark Case

Luna--Anne Saeman

Charlie--Sterling and Emily
McLeester

Devo--Ronald Parton

Woody--Leanna Owen

Mitzi--Chris & Carole Hoppe

Kichi--Kevin & Julie Raymond

November 2007

Wyatt--Pam Bollerud

Misty --Frank & Carolynn Wagner

Zeke--Cheryl & David Sindberg

Taffy--Cook Co. Bomb Detection

Danny--Tracy Disch

Duke--Damon & Emily Steinke

Tutzi--Amy & Jeff Kerber

Hobbs--Carl Staal and Amy
Staehler

Ranger--Stephen & Meaghan
McKinnon

Jesse --Adam & Jamie Osmanski

December 2007

Coal--James Sullivan

Bear--Alison Gamble

Lucy--Michael & Christine Bench

Otis--Jeff & Amy Shulz

Eddie--James & Racquel Fink

Luke--Billy & Cynthia Sites

Angel--Bill & Peggy Hakes

Preka--Mike & Stacy Love

Emmyt--Andy & Teresa Shutz

Ninja--Mike & Dawn Wiginton

Stewie--Darlene & Keith Hayden

Your Dollars At Work Adoption Fees don't begin to cover all the expenses necessary to get some foster dogs back on their feet. In addition to all fosters' routine Vet care, here's who your donations have helped:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Tuk - leg surgery | 4. Otis - dental work | 7. Lennon - hip surgery |
| 2. Ranger - ACL(new anterior cruciate ligament) | 5. Lady - HW treatment | 8. Mitchell - 2 ACL's |
| 3. Ninja - ACL | 6. Dakota - severe ear infection | 9. Henry - ER Vet for renal failure |

Would you like to "retrieve" *The Retriever* via email? If so, please email newsletter@Labadoption.org with "Mailing List" in the Subject line. To subscribe to our printed edition, please mail your name and address with a \$5 check to: LEARN, P.O Box 292, Cross Plains, WI 53528. Subscriptions are for a calendar year and are non-refundable. We regret that we cannot pro-rate subscriptions. For back issues, please visit www.Labadoption.org.

Our Labs Need Your Help!

Many dogs desperately need our help, including expensive medical care that drains our finances. Donations (tax-deductible) are greatly appreciated. LEARN and their Labs thank you!

I want to support the efforts of LEARN as they rescue homeless Labs and Lab mixes and place them in permanent adoptive homes.

Name: _____ Address _____

For donations of \$50+, you may receive our printed newsletter. If you'd like to stretch your donation further by receiving our Newsletter by email, please include your email address here: _____

Please find my check for: \$25.00 \$50.00 \$100.00 Other Amount \$ _____

Please mail to LEARN, PO Box 164, Island Lake, IL 60042 or donate at www.Labadoption.org via PayPal.

From Doug Koktavy's Upcoming Book

... on overcoming fear and guilt when canine kids get sick. © Doug Koktavy.

Visit www.DougandtheBBrothers.com for more information. Thank you, Doug, for your permission to print this excerpt, "On Fear." Many volunteers have enjoyed it already. Watch Doug's website for the latest on his book!

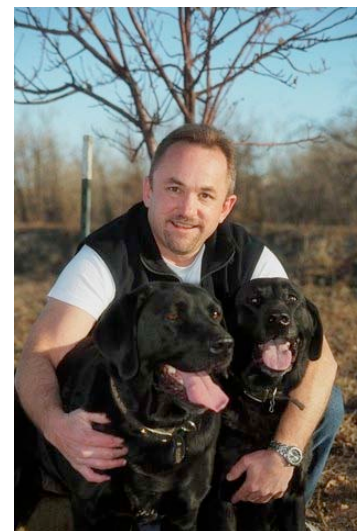
"ON FEAR"

Part 1: Presence I was a complete basket case when my beloved Black Labrador, Beezer, was diagnosed with early stage kidney disease. The disease ultimately took his life on May 1, 2005 at age nine. Looking back, so much of that journey during his illness was consumed by FEAR. My fear for my dog, my fear for the journey, my fear for my own life after Beezer passed. It was a

numbing to the bone kind of fear attendant to massive uninvited life changes. I progressively grew more depressed and unable to complete even simple day-to-day tasks. I spent my time in search of better doctors and better treatments, but most of all, I spent virtually every waking hour in paralyzing fear.

Beezer became my teacher during this time. He and I came to explore the nature of fear and soon developed strategies to cope with this emotion. Beezer never got better, but we learned how to enjoy each day together. I refined these lessons when his brother, Boomer, contracted bone cancer just over a year later. Looking back, my Journey with my trusty Labs was a grand success. Our relationship was never better than the time during their illnesses. Beezer and Boomer taught me how to not be afraid.

I realized that my two biggest problems were deeply ingrained with my concept of time past, present and future. I would second guess and relive past decisions under the various headings of "Why didn't I try this before," "If only _____," and, my personal favorite, "It's my fault because _____." These episodes were simply my ego talking to me. My ego was infecting me with guilt over something that happened before. I decided that to feel guilty is nothing more than to live in the past. Moreover, to live in fear is to live in the future. In the beginning, the dogs would watch in silent amazement as I rushed about obsessing over things that hadn't even happened. "How much time do we have?" "What if this happens in a week?" The



problem with this thinking was that my fixation over the future caused me to ignore today. The key, I decided, was to avoid living in both the past and the future. I called this *presence*.

Presence is simply living in the moment. This proved to be a bit easier said than done.

Part 2: To Fear is to Fuel I began to think about the goal of a fatal disease. What did it want? Was I an accomplice, a victim, a witness? It had to be something. The easy response was "The disease wants to kill Beezer." However, is that really the goal?

I certainly understand that I will die someday from something. I also understood that Beezer would die someday from something. If so, then what does the fatal disease bring to the table that wasn't there yesterday? It cannot be death, because I understand that if you are born, you die. It is our contract from birth.

My answer was that the disease wanted me to give up today (the here and now). It's just that simple. The goal of a fatal disease is to get me to give up today. The disease accomplishes that goal through the infection of fear into me.

Today should be so very special because of the disease. I should cherish today as never before. Did I? Of course not. I was too busy living in fear of the future. A future that didn't exist today. A mirage in my mind. That was the goal of the disease. To plant the mirage and convince me to live in the future.

Now the sneaky part of the disease is that it couldn't rob me of today. It couldn't take today away from me over my objection. It wasn't that powerful. No, the disease had to trick me into giving up today. I would have this wonderful precious asset in my hands, today, and

(*“On Fear, continued”*) simply hand it over on a silver platter to the embezzler of today, the disease. I’d forfeit today to the con man, as if to say, “Here, you take today, I don’t want it. I can’t deal with today.” Imagine that.

I realized my fear of the disease was the fuel that was being used against me.

Devilishly clever, my biggest enemy was not the disease, but ME! I was the power source being used to generate the very negative energy destroying my own being and wasting a special day with my beloved dog.

This paradox was glaring. I had thought the growing presence of disease was causing my mounting fear. In fact, just the opposite was occurring. My daily increasing fear was causing the disease to grow and become more powerful. I decided it was high time to start working for me and the Beez, not against us.

Part 3: The Power of Meaning

Ever been stuck in traffic? Three lanes and nobody moving? I looked around once and was puzzled by what I saw. One person was laying on the horn, mouthing single syllable sentences punctuated by decisive gestures. One car over, another person was quietly singing a song of apparent significance. Both persons had the same incoming message--stopped traffic--but both persons attached a completely different meaning to the message. I wondered if I could apply that to my situation with Beezer?

I decided that incoming messages are neutral. That is, an incoming message means absolutely nothing until the listener attaches a meaning. Up to now, I’d been attaching fear as the meaning to every incoming message concerning Beezer. I decided to create different meanings to these same incoming messages. I already knew the past (guilt) and the future (fear) were dangerous places for me. My strategy would be to create mechanisms and meanings which would keep me present. My safe zone was today. Whatever meaning I attached to the diseases had to allow me to remain present. I would starve the diseases of fuel because they cannot live in the present. I created three strategies.

Strategy #1: Permanent Time-Out

The disease was part of our lives. I couldn’t change that. I couldn’t pretend the illness wasn’t here. I had to deal with it, but I needed a way to relate to the disease on terms I could understand. I decided to

give the disease a character. I found an old “kiddie chair.” I wrote “Kidney Disease Time Out Chair” on a piece of paper and glued it to the chair. I then placed the chair in a prominent place in my house. I then invited the disease to stay, but informed the disease that there were going to be several rules:

1. *The disease could never again speak to me again without my permission. The disease could hold up signs like “Can I scare you today?” but planting words in my head was out.*
2. *The disease could stay in our lives as long as it wanted, but it was restricted to the permanent time-out chair. We were busy enjoying today and would try to make time for the disease later. So just sit tight and we’ll get back to you.*
3. *The disease had to wear pink fuzzy slippers. Nothing on this planet is scary when sitting on a kiddie chair wearing pink fuzzy slippers. They play their games, I play mine.*

I found the strategy helpful. The fact that the chair was out in the open was especially powerful because it reinforced my ability to control fear on a daily basis. Once, when feeling a bit scared, I composed myself and announced in a stern voice: “WHO SAID YOU COULD LEAVE THE TIME-OUT CHAIR?” It worked. I giggled and went back to my dog.

Strategy #2: The Daily Point

Later on, Boomer helped me develop a game to deal with fear. As guys, we relish games where scores are kept and winners and losers determined. We created a game called the Daily Point. Here’s how it worked.

Every day, one single point was up for grabs. Either Boomer and I would get the point, or Team Fear (now with a second kiddie chair) would get the point. One day, one point. There weren’t ties and we never had overtime. We had much fun every day with this game.

Each day we’d awake and Boomer and I would discuss how we were going to win today’s point. Nothing else mattered. Even on the bad days, we’d stubbornly refuse to give in to fear for the simple reason that we didn’t want to lose today’s point. We became obsessed with enjoying today and never looking further than how to win “the point.”

Strategy #3: The Daily Appreciation

As Beezer grew more ill, I’d speak with him and give him my permission and blessing if he wanted to transition on his own. I didn’t want him pushing beyond his time because of my selfish need to hang on. We

(“*On Fear, continued*”) started having these talks at night just before bedtime. I also realized that Beezer might prefer to pass on his own, out of my presence. Of course, that could mean I might come home one day and find that my buddy had left. I decided we needed to talk about that as well. I didn’t want any unfinished business or regret after it was too late to say a bit more.

We’d all gather on the bed and have a nightly discussion. Each exchange was different, yet the same. I’d start with telling each dog how much they meant to me and how lucky I was to have them in my life. I always thanked them for being in my life today. Sometimes we’d talk about fun times. Sometimes we’d talk about the difficult times. I’d explain the illness and my inability to change the outcome. I’d ask for input on how to spend what time we had left together. Above all, we always ended on a positive note by expressing our mutual love and deep appreciation for each other. I’d then immediately turn out the lights. I found these discussions of great comfort and continued them with Boomer after Beezer passed and later with my new Lab, Coral. It has become our nightly ritual.

My Hope For You

Of course, each journey is unique to the human and the animal. You should follow your instinct and always do what you think is best. What worked for me is nothing more than what worked for me.

I believe that everything happens for a reason and that reason helps me grow. I’m a much better person for the lessons taught by these two black dogs and am so deeply appreciative of our time on earth together. The B Brothers taught me to overcome fear and guilt. Along the way, I realized the abundance of love I showered on my dogs was the same love I withheld from myself.

In retrospect, I found my journey with my B Brothers was never about the body, it was always about the soul. I believe my Labs were sent to earth to teach me lessons I’d never have learned from any other teacher. In this way, our Journey with kidney disease and bone cancer was the most remarkable success story I’ve ever been involved with. A wonderful paradox that I would have missed entirely if I succumbed to fear.

Please be kind to yourself and enjoy today with your pet. You’ll treasure this most special time for the rest of your life.

© Doug Koltavy Visit Doug & the B Brothers at www.DougantheBBrothers.com.

Enormous Thanks! The following people generously donated money, supplies, or services to help our rescued Labs. Without your help, these Labs wouldn’t be alive today.

Robert. & Kathy Anderson
Backcountry K-9
Belinda Jones Bauknecht
Joseph Bauknecht
Diane Benda
Sally Billing
George Bratschi
Pattie Bredehorst
Patti Brever
Sara Brown
Darlene Daray
Marie Eichinger
Herbert Flentye
Friends of the Dog Park
Marianne Gizzi
Gail Gleeson
Cathy Gorski

Dorothy Grimm
Julie Grosso
Susan Holmberg
Georgene Hrdlicka
JustFancyStuff.com
Pat Justin-Bridgman
Carol Kaminski
Seth Kersten
Nancy Kraft
K.S & L.S Krebs
Shannan Legge
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Marcia Lockwood
Doug & Nancy Maurer
Kenneth Myszka
Mary Nelson
Melissa Noble

Sheila O'Donnell-Sefcik
Henry & Amy Olson
Jeremy & Kathy Peters
James Powell
Brian Rener
Tim Sawka & Paula Bogdan
Dale & Annette Schuh
P. Sheppard
Cynthia Sites
Anne Slawny
Shannon Steffen
Donna Steiner
Steve & Diane Streck
Gerald Wallen
Kevin Weihs
Leslye Winslow
Nancy Zabada

Want to make your dog visible on dark nights? LEARN now carries Reflective Collars and Harnesses and battery-operated lighted Collar Covers and Tag Lights. Please visit www.labadoption.org/merchandise for more info.

LEARN Volunteers Inspire . . . This column introduces LEARN's volunteers and tells what they do to save Labs and why. Our Labs have their own stories, and so do our volunteers who help them.



Meatloaf on top of Cooper; foster Jade supervises



Luna and Elsa

Anne Saeman began fostering in 1993 after visiting a Lab rescue's "adoption day" in the Potomac area. At the time, she lived in Arlington, VA and had one dog, Kirby, a Lab Golden Retriever mix. In 1995 Anne added a puppy "Elsa" to her household, stopped fostering, and later that year moved back home to Madison.

In 2001 she met LEARN at Dog Fest, spoke with the volunteers at the booth, and picked up some literature. The paperwork sat on her counter for several weeks, and then for some reason she filled out the application to be a foster home. Donna Spangler, now LEARN's president, came over to explain the foster home process. A few days later Anne had her first foster, Sara. She has fostered on-and-off since then. "I don't have an exact count, but I have fostered over 40 dogs while working with LEARN, from puppies to older dogs. I also had the opportunity to care for a litter of pups for a week (to give the other foster home a break)."

Anne explains, "People often make the comment to me that they could never be a foster home because they would never be able to say goodbye. While there is always a bit of sadness associated with watching a foster dog leave, it is countered by the feeling of knowing they are going to a new home and family that will love them. There are exceptions to that rule . . . one foster dog totally captured my heart and saying goodbye was one of my toughest moments as a foster home. "Meatloaf" was a lab mix, cuter than cute, with a matching personality. In all the years of fostering, that was the only dog that caused tears to flow when he left for his permanent home. I still have a picture of him on my frig."

When Kirby passed on in 2005, Anne knew she wanted a second dog, but was unsure whether a puppy or an adult would be right. Last summer she joined the ranks of "foster home failures" after adopting "Luna" her foster dog. "I never would have guessed that Luna was the dog I'd adopt, which goes to show that you can't ever predict what dog will become part of your family."

Anne's Reflections on Fostering:

- *I have always loved dogs; it is very fulfilling knowing that what I do can make a difference in a few dog's lives.*
- *It's heartbreaking knowing how many dogs are in need of good homes. Although fostering can be challenging at times, knowing that I can help a few of those dogs makes it all worthwhile.*
- *Fostering provides the opportunity to not only help dogs in need, but also to share your life with lots of different dogs.*
- *Each dog has their own unique personality. It can be a challenge at times to learn to deal with their quirks and habits, but it's always fun to watch their personality come out.*
- *I really enjoy training and helping the dogs adjust to a new situation. Not only am I providing training for them, but these dogs have taught me skills to help me better interact with other dogs.*
- *Recently I received an email from someone who adopted one of my favorite foster dogs. She said he is "the best dog ever" I don't know how we got so lucky, but we are grateful to have him."*

LEARN & Lab Events! Pawgust Fest set for August 16th! Mark your dogs' calendars!

[Spring Luncheon & Silent Auction](#)

Sunday, March 9th, located at...
[The Country Squire](#)
19133 E Belvidere Rd, Grayslake, IL
(847) 223-0121

[16th Annual Chicago Family Pet Expo](#)

March 14th - 16th, located at
[Arlington Park Racecourse](#)
2200 W. Euclid Ave., Arlington Heights,
IL
(847) 385-7500

[Pet Wellness Expo](#)

Saturday, April 12th, 2008
9:00am – 3:00pm, \$1.00 donation
located at... [Burlington High School](#)
400 McCanna Parkway Burlington, WI
www.PetWellnessExpo.com



LABMED Quilt Raffle!

2008 Quilt Raffle -- A Stitch In Time Saves Labradors

LABMED once again has a wonderful raffle quilt and will be selling tickets through April 11th. You don't need to be present to win. Visit our web site at www.labmed.org to view the quilt and purchase tickets. LABMED was founded to provide emergency monies to offset expenses incurred in the medical treatment of abandoned and/or injured Labrador Retrievers in need of rescue. Please help support this great organization through the quilt raffle! (1 ticket for \$5; 12 for \$50; and 25 for \$100)

WANT TO HELP SAVE MORE LABS?

LEARN needs foster homes to save more Labs! In a world of many problems, such as more Labs than Rescues and shelters can save, you can make a tangible difference! Consider opening your home and your heart to a foster dog. Even fostering just once helps. It will mean a lot to the dog whose life you save! Please visit LEARN's website for more info and an application: www.Labadoption.org/linkpages/HowToHelp/Fosters.htm or contact Donna Spangler at nortntrix@aol.com or call (847) 289-PETS (7387) and leave Donna a message. Thanks for considering it. ☺



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