



*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 rescued Labrador Retrievers for an organization called 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*