



Success Stories 2003



Hershey



I was adopted on October 27th and have a wonderful new home in the city by the lake! It is very beautiful. I love the squirrels but my new Mom is trying to break me of this so I don't hurt myself or a roller-blader on the lakefront.

I have lots of new friends in the city that I see every time we take a walk. We take long walks every day. I love to wrestle with my new Mom and retrieve balls.

THANKS FOR MY NEW HOME L.E.A.R.N.!

*Fondly, -
Hershey Ann Barry, and Shawn Barry*



Chloe



We are coming up on our one year anniversary of our adoption of Chloe. She's a beautiful black lab and we love her a great deal. She's a funny little dog, always eating, playing and getting into mischief with her older brother Bailey. She enjoys runs at the forest preserve and chasing her brother through the house.

She's a big girl; she weighed in at 82lbs the last time we were at the vet and is very healthy and happy. She was 7 weeks when we adopted her and it's hard to believe she was that small. Thank you for bringing a wonderful dog into our lives, she's great. We enclosed a picture of the two hamming it up for the camera.

Dave and Shannon Lesko





Cooper

Hi All.



We adopted our own foster dog Cooper back in September. He is doing wonderfully. As you can see from his picture, he even lets us dress him up in his red holiday sweater which he wore in the LEARN parade! He has been such a great addition to our four-legged family and has claimed our futon as his retirement spot.

Bella (the dog on the chair) loves him as they are great company for each other. He loves to run and chase the tennis ball at my friend's farm and go for walks around the neighborhood. He's been going to work with me (doggy day care) where he has met many new and interesting friends. It's amazing how excellent he does at day care considering he is a senior dog who probably didn't have much socialization as a youngster. (He was used for breeding and dumped at animal control when his breeding days were over.)

As you can see, he's a beautiful red color on the outside and a beautiful dog on the inside as well. We love him. Thanks again to LEARN and to everyone who helped him along the way.

Dan and Robin Kassees





Samson



Hi everyone! It is me Samson (the yellow one). I have been in my new home for 4 months now and have adjusted very well. I have trained my new parents to spoil me and allow me to lounge on the couches. For some reason none of the other dogs were ever allowed to???? I am now working on letting them sleep on their bed at night. I will let you know if I succeed.

You see my sister, Olive, in the picture with me. She has been really nice to me and plays with me every day. She does not have quite enough energy for me but she is working on it. She still is trying to shed some pounds. My favorite thing is to grab a toy and run all over the yard with it while she is chasing me. I am much faster than her. I also have another older sister named Sophie. She is the smallest one of us, but she is definitely the boss. I get a little nervous when she comes after me, but that does not stop me from trying to get her to play with me. I have not succeeded yet, my mom said it is something about her being 15 years old.

I just want to thank LEARN for fixing my leg. It is healing really well, Mom took me to the doctor and he said I am as good as new! He said the Doctors that LEARN took me to did a great job on patching me up. Now I can leap all over things. I do try to be careful not to injure it again, because I did not like the recovery period. I had to be kept away from the other dogs and was not allowed to run. That made me very cranky.

Now that I am all healthy again, my mom mentioned something about going to school. I am not sure what that entails, but if I get to be around other dogs, than sign me up. She seems to think I need to refine my manners. I don't get it, what is wrong with me jumping on people when I see them. I am just trying to be friendly.

Time to get back to playing, but wanted to say Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, for finding me such a great home. I really feel loved. I don't know where I would be right now if it wasn't for my wonderful Foster Families and Jan who recommended me to my new family. Thank you LEARN!

Love,
Samson





Rocky



Rocky has only been here 5 days but as you can see by the photos...he's not bored and he seems to have adjusted well so far to the change. He's been getting along fine with our 13 year old male Lab who tends to get a bit cranky once in a while which Rocky understands and then leaves him alone until he's in a better mood. Rocky has been very friendly to everyone that he's met so far. I don't think he has a mean bone in his body. He's just a big lover boy and we're happy to have him as our 2nd "kid". Everyone tells us he's one handsome labrador.

I want to thank Jan for all her help in hooking us up with Rocky and thank you to the foster parents for taking such great care of him.

Sincerely,

*Tom & Jamie McCauley &
Charlie & his new big brother: Rocky McCauley*



Brady (formerly Lucky)

We adopted Brady (formerly Lucky) 1 1/2 years ago and we're definitely the luckiest Lab owners ever! Brady is wonderful, such a happy dog living in the city. We take him on many long walks and runs along North Avenue Beach, he loves to chase the seagulls and even caught one last week! His combination of Lab/Dalmatian makes for a very, very fast dog who loves to show off his speed.

My parents have a summer house in Lake Geneva, every weekend Brady has acres and acres of forest to explore, chase deer and hunt for squirrels. He's a champ at jumping off the end of the pier to catch tennis balls and an excellent swimmer. He's the most gentle, loving, friendly dog; a wonderful addition to our family and we don't know what we'd do without him. Thank you, LEARN! He's a happy dog!

Love,

Jennifer & Cass Baker



Ruby

Hello L.E.A.R.N.!

Hi, it's me Ruby. Remember, I was the old gal that you rescued this winter. My new home is a far cry from living under my old master's trailer home. I'm feeling pretty happy these days.

I have a new best friend, her name is Dolby. She is a little younger and always bringing me a ball or toy to play with. Sometimes I will play with her, but I am really happy just resting on my big padded bed (thanks to Penny) and watching my new family fuss over me.

I really enjoy my new family. Grandpa's house is fun to go to. He has a really big yard and his dog Savannah loves to play with Dolby and me. Sometimes we go to our Aunt Dee's house and play with little Marley; she's a really short Maltese but lots of fun. Everyone in our new family loves me and everyone gives me kisses and treats!

I don't think my new Dad or Mom really knew what to expect when I came to live with them. I really surprised them. They tell me all the time how good I am and tell me I'm the Special Girl in the family. They really love us both, but I always get more treats than Dolby. It's because I'm special.

I have a bed right next to my Dad's side of the bed, but sometimes I get to sleep on the bed. My Mom's always chasing me around with the hairbrush; the shedding is driving her nuts. She says it's because of the bad winter I had, and hopes the shedding will be better. She'll get over it!!

I just wanted to let you all know that I am doing fine; I have my new family trained really well! Please let anyone out there that might be looking to adopt an older dog, that we're really great. We are already housebroken and trained, and we really do have lots to give to a new family. We can teach new families some new tricks too!

Thank you L.E.A.R.N., for all you have done for me. If it wasn't for you, I might not be here at all. You gave me a chance! I will always be grateful.

Love and wet kisses,

Ruby





Spring

Hello all again,

This is part two to our success story. Now we are three dogs, Sasha, Luke (the Big Guy), and me Spring (I'm good looking one in the middle).

Trying to find a partner for me was tough. I don't like just any dog, especially females, and I do better with male dogs. L.E.A.R.N. set up a meeting with Luke.



At our first meeting, it was just the two of us, and there was some initial growling and barking as we tried to figure out who was to be the boss. Luke tried to play, but I didn't know how. I showed Luke dominance, and he rather accepted it. Water was brought out in two separate dishes and we shared them. Good news was, "We didn't tear each other apart," so Luke moved in as part of the family.



The boss is still Sasha, and she scares Luke. He is a real tough guy until Sasha growls or barks and then Luke runs for the high ground or cover. We have been together almost a month and are pretty settled. We still have some incidents, but I have learned how to play. Mom and Dad are very happy we have learned to play together, but they don't like it when we get too rambunctious. We play fetch with the tennis ball every day. Dad waits until we drop the balls and then he throws them. He throws one for me in one direction and one for Luke in the other direction. We race to get back to dad first.

Luke wants to get his two cents in. First of all, I'm always the first to drop the ball for Dad. I'm glad I have a forever home because they take real good care of me. I'm still learning, and I know not to get too close to Sasha. I let Spring do all the barking, and she barks a lot. When I do bark, it's looooud and scares everyone. I can count the number of times I've barked on the nails of one paw. Ricky is taking responsibility for me, and I sleep in his room. Dad has started obedience training, and it is all coming back to me. I'm the smartest dog by far, and the most stubborn, but they love me.

We just wanted everyone at L.E.A.R.N. to know that were all happy and doing fine.

SPRING, LUKE, and SASHA.



Spring



Hello all,

Well I've moved into my new home, settled in, made myself at home, and I am part of the family! The gangs all here, that's Angel (the cat on the top of the sofa), Sasha (the little dog curled up), and me the black blob. My new family wants to change my name from Spring to "Tummy Rub" or "Me first". When Sasha is getting attention, I bark a little, ok I bark a lot. I just want to be loved first and the only one getting attention, I am just a little jealous. Sasha is the boss, and I am trying to be careful and not step on her. When I get too close, she lets me know. We all get along real well, and I just love to play with Angel. Probably more than she wants to play with me.

Mom has her own name for me "Shadow". She says I follow her everywhere, and she's right. I just don't want to miss anything. I do have to be the center of attention. I have learned many new things, and mom said she was very proud of me, but I still need to learn not to jump up on grandma's lap. Like my name, I tend to spring straight up on the couch, bed, or anyone's lap that's available.

Well I've got to go because mom is going to go check on the laundry and I have to follow. I don't want to miss anything!

I just wanted everyone at L.E.A.R.N. to know that I'm happy and doing fine.

SPRING

P.S. Mom and Dad want to say thanks to L.E.A.R.N. again for bringing us together. See "[Part Two](#)" of this success story below...





Sully



We adopted Sully back in May of 2002. He sure has found a place into our hearts. The joy he has brought us is beyond words. Sully came to us as a really well behaved, thin, crate trained boy who chewed on nothing and always let us know when he had to go out. His only drawback was his inability go off leash. He was a runner. This did not bode well because I really wanted to hunt pheasants in the field with him. So we worked really hard on the leash training and slowly progressed to off leash. With the help of an e-collar, patience and time, Sully now is an off-leash buddy all the time. He stays close and in his yard. We soon found out he has no fear of loud noises. I can vacuum his coat with the shop vac. Blow-dry him. I have to tell him to move when we cut the grass because he likes to lay where I have yet to cut. Thunderstorms, fireworks, and most important, a shotgun, do not scare him one bit. We did have an addition to our family in January. We were blessed with Emily Ann. We were a little worried how Sully would react to our new arrival. He again showed us how great a dog he is. No problems. I think they will be pretty good buddies when she gets older. He loves the water. Sully can't stay out of the sprinkler and loves to go swimming in Lake Michigan. And we did get to flush a few pheasants last fall but his master has to learn how to hit the bird so Sully can show him how he retrieves. Thanks for allowing us the opportunity to have such a wonderful friend and keep up the good work.



Mark, Tracy, Emily and Sully



Dozer



Hi! I'm Dozer and I just wanted to let you know that senior dogs make great companions too! After languishing in a shelter for several weeks, and then a long stay in a LEARN foster home, I've found just the right person for me. When a friend of LEARN called and said one of her boarders was looking for a nice mellow older dog for a buddy after his dog had died, I stepped right up and said sounds like the place for me. Now I get to ride around town with my dad and eat venison - I think I've died and gone to heaven!

These days I'm King Dozer in my own house - just the way it should be for all dogs. I wish everyone would consider adopting a "not so perfect" dog - it's amazing what a little patience and a lot of LOVE can get you - a handsome senior boy like me!



Leo



We adopted Leo, formerly "Hercules" in January 2003, and though we have not had him for very long we cannot imagine life without him. When we first got him was very underweight and he has now filled out to almost 90 lbs.

In his two years of life, Leo apparently had a rough life and could find owners who would care him appropriately and he was abandoned. We are so grateful for LEARN and for his foster mom, LeAnne, who introduced us to this great dog. Leo is strong beyond his size was a "wild" dog who needed focus and attention. LeAnne took him in and put him through his paces to harness and control that energy. We are very grateful that people like LeAnne do this out of their own time and energies to help these wonderful dogs. After obedience classes (to train us) and time we are understanding that we still have a lot of work to do. He is a delightful guy and is very loving. He is a great pal. Thanks LEARN

Eric, Julie and Leo



Satch



Dear LEARN:

We just wanted you to know how very much we love our Satch! My husband, John, calls him the "perfect dog" because he's so good and so loving. He finished 16 weeks of Obedience and got his "AKC Good Citizen Award". This picture of him shaking hands with John, was taken shortly after we brought him home from those wonderful people, Mindy & Todd Hidde, who saved and fostered him (THANK YOU!). I had lived in our neighborhood for 4 years before we adopted Satch, and knew very few people; he has dramatically changed my life - I've met so many people (and doggie friends for Satch) and made such wonderful friends, because of him! Everyone uses one word to describe him - "beautiful", and he is, inside and out. Our kitties have accepted him and he adores them. Thanks to everyone at LEARN. A dog really does change lives - so much for the better!

John & Sylvia Sorgel





Tucker



To refresh your memory, Tucker was a fifteen-month old puppy who was a day away from being put to sleep at a Minnesota Humane Society outlet when you rescued him. He was uptight, under fed and was returned to the H.S. when the other dog in that family did not accept him.

We met him on 9/10 of last year and picked him up on 9/13. It will be hard to forget those dates because of what happened on 9/11. We took him to a trainer who trains K-9 dogs for the police and sheriff departments. In three lessons Tucker became a well behaved and obedient dog. He's still a bundle of energy and gets very excited when visitors arrive but it's much better than

it was on Day One.

We put him on a Nutro diet which regulated bodily functions nicely and got him up to his current weight of 92lb, up from 78. As the picture shows he is just about right at that weight. We used a kennel with him for the first few days we were at school/work. But we found out that Tucker was very respectful of our things when we were gone. In a house full of pictures, knick-knacks, cookie jars and stuffed animals, he touches ONLY the pickle crock where his toys are kept.

He was more neglected than abused in his former life. He had "kennel pads" on his elbows and does not like to spend a great deal of time outdoors unless his people are with him. We will not put him through a kennel experience when we need to be away overnight. He either comes with us or we have friends come and stay with him. Yes, he's a spoiled puppy, but he's part of the family and we love him very much. His training is very basic. We have a few commands for him and we haven't junked up his mind with party tricks or tried to regulate the games he plays. He loves to play Tug The Rope, Catch The Squeaky Toy and Fetch The Tennis Ball While Carl Runs And Hides. Mostly, we just try to follow his lead and let the games evolve. After his bath it's his big brother's job to chase him around the house (backyard, in nice weather) and yell "jackrabbit!" as Tucker scootches his rear end around the perimeter like a big bunny.

Tucker seems to love his home, his family (including our extended family on visits,) and all the friends he meets along the way. There's so much to brag about with this dog but I'm not quite ready to write a book on the subject. This has been long enough. Thank you so much for matching us up with such an extraordinary pet! We think if one of us can manage to get an at-home job (hopefully in the next year,) we would like to try being a foster home for L.E.A.R.N.

Carl & Sue Gitchel, Garrett and Tucker





Ranger



Dear L.E.A.R.N.

Our family adopted "Ranger" on August 24th. Eileen and Penny were instrumental in finding us this special guy who suffers from severe hip dysplasia. At a young age of 10 months old he had already been thru one hip surgery and is scheduled for his second the end of November. He is one huge bundle of love! We call him the "Range Man" as you feel his presence when he enters the room. He is tall and gangly and his ears flop when he runs towards you. His favorite spot to lay is under the computer desk or in the laundry room against the warm dryer. He is fortunate enough to have come into a home with a two and a half year old older brother "Hunter" (black lab) who thinks Ranger is the light of his life." Hunter was very sad after our older yellow lab "Tuckerman" died this past May. From the day Ranger entered our home Hunter has welcomed him. Needless to say we purchased a new dog bed and toys for Ranger, but the two chose to always share. Now we have four dog beds more than any family needs, but they always seem to be occupied at one time or another. I think our biggest milestone was Trick-or-Treat, our Tuckerman's favorite night of the year to wear his Halloween collar and station himself out front to greet all the children. This year we placed Ranger and Hunter's Halloween collars on moved to the front porch, lit all our pumpkins. Our 14 year old daughter thought if we put our large dog bed out by our outdoor fireplace the dogs would enjoy laying beside the fire and next to her chair as she handed out treats. The two sweet boys just wagged their tails as the trick-or-treaters came up our walk. We knew then Ranger had found his forever home. He was so mellow he actually kept Hunter calm, as Hunter has always been the more energetic guy. So many children asked to pet Ranger because of his friendly calm nature; he remained in the laying down position allowing the children to come down to him. We are so thankful to have him in our lives. We have thought maybe when he is a little older we may train him to visit children in hospitals as he just seems to invite their small touch. Again I thank Penny, Eileen and Mary Beck for all their time, love and commitment to these wonderful labs.

Sincerely, *Carla, Steve and Kaila Funk*



Merlin



Hi! I just wanted to send you a quick note to brag that I earned my CGC (Canine Good Citizen) last week. Not bad for a puppy that someone thought was disposable.

Merlin





Jake



Dear LEARN,

My husband and I adopted Jake from you back in July and wanted to give you an update. We were looking for an older dog because we already had 2 cats and 2 birds and were concerned that a young dog would be too hyper and possibly chase them. Jake is a 7 year old, yellow lab and weighed in at 110 pounds when we got him. We quickly learned the benefits of adopting an older dog. Jake is completely housebroken, never chews anything that is

not his and doesn't get on the furniture. He sleeps very contently in his dog bed on the floor right next to ours. We did put him on a diet and he is now down to a lean 98 pounds. A concern we had with getting an older dog was if he would be loyal to us or long for his previous owners. Over the past 3 months we have developed an incredible bond with him. He truly loves us and when we are around other people he pretty much greets them then looks back for my husband and I. His previous owners loved him dearly but had to move into an assisted living home and wouldn't allow them to have a dog over 20 pounds. We have been in touch with them and brought Jake to visit them a few weeks ago in their new apartment. It was a great experience for all of us. As for our cats, it took about 2 months for them to get used to Jake but now they are pals. One of our cats likes to sit on the table and biff him on the back as he walks by. Although Jake is a bit older, he still LOVES to go to the dog park and wrestles with us. He is full of energy, especially since he lost the excess weight. Thank you so much for bringing Jake into our lives, we don't know what we did before we had him. We would also encourage anyone who would not consider adopting an older dog to rethink their decision. We couldn't be happier!

Sincerely,

Ron, Christine and Jake



Wrigley (formerly Reggie)





Update on Wrigley (previously known as Reggie)

We've had Wrigley for 7 months now, and we cannot begin to explain the joy he has brought to our lives.

When we brought him home he had a severely broken leg. But 3 casts, many x-rays and multiple assisted trips up and down the stairs later; you would never have known that this lovable guy ever was hurt. He absolutely loves his new fenced in back yard and lying in front of the fire is one of his one of his favorite pastimes. Our lives are so wonderful now that Wrigs is a part of it. A special thank you to Pat for thinking of us and knowing that he was the perfect dog for us-HE IS!

Sincerely,

Ryan and Amy Claus



Gypsy



We adopted Gypsy in January of 2002. She had just given birth to a litter and was kept outside and used for breeding. She was a bit on the shy side and really didn't know how to act with people. We were told she didn't play much. Boy, were we in for a surprise!

Gypsy would play full time if someone is available for playing. She and Lily are inseparable - both playing, wrestling, and getting into trouble together. One (Lily) is the mouthpiece, and the other (Gypsy) is the muscle. Gypsy even barked for the first time last week letting me know she had to go out. At first, Gypsy would wag her tail so hard when I got home for work it would bleed all over. Now, while she is still excited, she knows I am coming home every day and doesn't get quite as excited.

Counter surfing is still a problem when Gypsy is out of her crate. This includes at night when she sleeps with me. We are still working on that. Both our dogs are such sweethearts and the loves of our lives.

Terry Gordon





Derby and Bert



Hi all, Derby here (that's me on the right lying down so nice). Since we're both LEARN dogs, my brother Bert(ram) (he's the big oaf hamming it up for the camera) and I thought it was about time to let all you nice folks at LEARN know how our new home is. He asked me to write this because he's not the sharpest tool in the shed (at least that's what our new dad says about him) and he doesn't know how to write yet.

Well, as you can see we have it pretty good here and would like to thank everyone at LEARN for letting us adopt our new mom and dad and come live here with them. When they're nice we even let them have the bed.

They walk us every night and after our walks we get these really cool treats called Frosty Paws. I think Bert just likes the walks because he knows he gets a Frosty Paw after, but I just like the walks.

They also have these really cool little things called cats. I just wish we could find them more often but mom and dad must keep them hidden for some reason. They only bring them out when they think we're sleeping. Whenever we can, we find them and give them big kisses. I'm sure they like that a lot.

We have let our new parents teach us some new tricks and occasionally take their requests when they ask us to stop doing something, although Bert still tries to counter surf whenever he thinks nobody's looking. I like to tattle on him and by running to our parents with my tail wagging and then running and showing them what he is doing. I never do anything like that. I give paw and now know "play dead" too. Bert can give paw, but he would rather just get the biscuit. He's too big to play dead. When dad tried to teach him how, he couldn't even get Bert to roll on his side without help.

We really love our new home and have decided to keep our new parents. I only wish our new dad could take a better picture to show off how pretty we are. He can't seem to figure out how to take a good picture of black dogs. He'll keep trying and send a new one if he ever gets it right.

Well, I think it's just about time for our walk, so I should go now. Thanks again for helping us find our forever home. It's great. Lots of big lab kisses (from Bert) and little lab kisses (from me),

Derby



Charlie





Hello,

Just thought we would update you on Charlie. We adopted him in July. When he came home the first day, he fit in right away. Since day one, we have all felt like he was supposed to be here all along. He is very happy, and we are very happy to have and love him!

Charlie listens very well, and plays very well with his younger brother. He is a very good dog. We could not be more blessed to have him as a family member.

Thanks L.E.A.R.N.

- Jackie Lambert Eisenberg



Rosie (Astra)



We just wanted to give you an update about Rosie (formerly Astra). We are so thrilled with her, and she has brought so much joy to our family, particularly our almost one-year-old daughter, Brianna. We feel blessed to have her in our lives, and couldn't ask for a dog who is better with small children. She is calm, patient, playful, and wonderfully good-natured and loves to stop and be petted by anyone who crosses her path. She loves to give kisses to everyone she meets. She adores meeting and playing with other dogs, and her best friend lives just across the yard and gives her lots of opportunity to run and play.

She has a very healthy appetite, having eaten the cordless phone headset, wireless headphones, the TV remote, and all the foam from her dog bed, but her mom and dad have now wised up and keep these things out of her reach. The best part is that we don't need a dust buster to clean up all the food Brianna throws on the floor; we just call Rosie over, and before we know it, the floor is clean!

She is the perfect playmate for Brianna, and our daughter just adores her and can even say her name! We are grateful to your group and to her foster family for bringing her into our lives and are happy to see so many others whose beautiful dogs are also bringing joy to their hearts.





Tiny



Dear Friends at LEARN, It has been nearly a year since we adopted Tiny, a special needs dog. She is special, indeed! Tiny is most affectionate and makes friends with anyone who pets her. She has become my shadow, loves to go for car rides and walks. She behaves beautifully on and off her leash. We have taken her to our family cabin in northern Minnesota several times where she has shown us her lab love of water! She is a great traveler.

Belly rubs are a favorite, and she will wiggle around on her back out of sheer enjoyment (or maybe she just likes scratching her back!).

We are working through her medical problems and she has made fast friends with everyone at our veterinary clinic. She is patient with her weekly baths and loves her special food. She remains a sight to behold, looking a little moth-eaten here and there, but in the words of St. Exupery, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."

Tiny has the run of the house while we are at work and greets us with canine enthusiasm at the end of the day. I cannot imagine anyone neglecting her and wanting to give her away, despite her allergies and appearance.

We are so grateful to LEARN for hooking us up with such a sweetheart!

Thanks,

Kathy, Denny, Julie, Tiger and Tiny, the Wonder Dog

