



### **Recommendation for Cyndi's Permanent Home**

**By Lisa Walker, CBATI, Cyndi's Dog Trainer and Foster Home - May, 2018**

*(Please read carefully before filling out the Adoption Questionnaire and Restraint Agreement or calling CSRNE)*

Cyndi is a very special, little Cocker Spaniel who had a challenging start in life. In spite of the odds stacked against her, Cyndi has flourished with structure and choice. In order for Cyndi to feel safe and relaxed, she needs to be kept in an exercise pen in the main part of the house where there is lots of activity so she can be part of life without getting overwhelmed. In her pen she needs a comfy bed, a water bucket attached to the side, and safe toys and things to chew like Nylabones and Pet Stages Dogwood Sticks (**NO** "high value" chewies such as bully sticks, rawhide, antlers, etc. ever due to her history of guarding items she thinks are extra good).

Cyndi will not resource guard toys and allowed chew items given to her by a human while she is in her pen, although, of course, no one should bother her while she's chewing. She will growl if she has a high value item (see above). She cannot have these items because we don't want her to practice or build a history of guarding.

Cyndi should be kept in her exercise pen most of the time for the first few weeks in a new environment, and then as she adjusts, she may gradually have more freedom. If she gets "hyper" she should go back into her pen as it's a sign she is running out of coping skills, which is her primary challenge. Cyndi's "coping skills bank" is not as full as a normal dog's. When she runs out, she gets stressed. Her person needs to make sure that she always has the ability to cope by controlling and managing her environment. For example, after a grooming appointment, she will sleep for the rest of the day (hours) and should not have free access to the house. Her pen is her happy, safe place - she loves it. She should be placed in her pen when she is not supervised, overnight, when visitors arrive, when she needs a break, and for a nap, etc. - likely for the rest of her life. This routine makes her a very easy dog to love and live with since she thrives on structure and will fly into her pen for a treat (she gets one every time she goes in).

Cyndi should never be physically manipulated or punished. If she has something in her mouth that she shouldn't have, trade it for a piece of food. If she were to go into a place she's not allowed, she should not be physically removed, instead call her, offering a treat, and toss it away from what she shouldn't be near. She should never be collar grabbed, etc. She is very sensitive and lowering your tone, at normal volume, is enough to communicate she shouldn't do something. She loves praise and wants desperately to do the right thing. It's very important that she lives with someone who understands her history (see Newsletter article) and realizes that she's only 1 year old and still has a lot to learn about what life is all about.

Cyndi walks on a leash, sits at the door before going outside, rides well in the car and gets along with most dogs when there are no toys, balls, chewies, etc. Her person should limit her

stimulation, so she's **not** a candidate for a dog park, public event, etc. She enjoys leash walks, and walks with someone else who has a well behaved, leashed dog is more appropriate. Cyndi tends to do best with dogs who are larger than she is. Outdoors she might resource guard a stick or leaf from another dog, so a home where she is the only pet would be best.

I recommend that she goes to a single person, although a couple is possible, as long as they understand that she has the potential to resource guard a person (although she never has to date). She may never, ever be around small children. She may be around strangers when she's had a chance to observe them for awhile, and then and only if she's able to decide when to come and go. If she decides she's comfortable enough to approach, they may interact with her as long as she has complete freedom and choice to leave at any time. Whenever Cyndi approaches anyone, including her person, for affection she must be able to leave at will whenever she wants. We never hug her, hold her in our lap, etc. She sits with us by choice and leaves when she wants to. She loves to snuggle and sit on laps, and gives lots of kisses.

Cyndi is petite, pretty, and although a little insecure, loves her people to the moon and back. She takes medication for anxiety, and it has been recommended she remain on it for at least 6 months (likely longer) and under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian. She will need a veterinarian who understands canine behavior, or an owner who is willing to take her back to the Veterinary Behaviorist in NH who met with her when she was a puppy living in a less than ideal situation.

Lisa (Professional Dog Trainer and Cyndi's Foster in Freeport, Maine) is happy to talk with interested, potential adopters who meet the criteria below. She has fallen head over heels in love with Cyndi, and wants to make sure her next home is perfect for her. She can't say enough good things about Cyndi when Cyndi is in an environment that sets her up for success. If you have questions please call CSRNE at 603-547-3363.

### **Summary of requirements for Cyndi's new home.**

- Must use a 48" ex-pen as Cyndi's primary "safe and relaxed space"
- Must be the only pet
- Owner should understand her history and commit to the accommodations she needs
- Single person is ideal, couple possible as long as they realize she may resource guard a person (she hasn't so far)
- Never, ever be around children
- Be around strangers only after she's had a chance to observe them, and then interacts on her own terms
- Stay on Fluoxetine (Prozac) for at least 6 months and under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian.
- Be willing to meet and talk with Lisa, Cyndi's Trainer and Foster
- Have large, securely fenced yard
- Owner is home a lot
- Owner has a structured daily routine