The Cocker Home Companion

Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England, Inc. (CSRNE, Inc.)

Vol 32 Winter 2011

Since 1987, CSRNE has saved, improved and extended the lives of abandoned and neglected American Cocker Spaniels

Freddie's Angels

A Holiday Miracle

In his younger years, Freddie was nicknamed "Fast Freddie" by Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England (CSRNE) because he just loved to be outside sniffing, chasing chipmunks and running fast circles around all the other dogs - and he was fast!

After being adopted, Freddie was returned to CSRNE because he could be "unpleasant" to other dogs, very territorial and he had developed a chronic urinary problem. After surgery to remove several bladder stones, he was put on a prescription diet in order to stay healthy. This combination of issues made it difficult to find him the special home he needed so Freddie remained in CSRNE's Long-Term/Permanent Care Program.

Freddie
Photo by Frank Jansen Photography

In September, Freddie's caregiver reported he had lost control of his hind end. After a battery of tests came back with normal results, the CSRNE vet decided to try anti-inflammatory medication in hopes of restoring some function to his hind quarters. The medications, however, upset his stomach and had to be discontinued.

During his stay at the vet's, Freddie charmed everyone with his positive can-do personality. Quickly adapting to his handicap, he impressed the vet with his strong will to move, pulling his weakened rear legs with his powerful front legs.

Freddie loved going outside and happily "running" all over the play yard – he just didn't know he was a handicapped dog.

Our vet recommended that we find a special foster home where he could get assisted exercise, physical therapy and maybe even acupuncture. We also thought he might be a good candidate for a doggy cart – anything to help him move more comfortably.

And here's where Freddie's remarkable story really begins – finding him that very special foster home proved to be more challenging, frustrating and rewarding than we could ever have imagined – what we didn't count on were all the cocker angels ready to help this amazing little cocker.

Making dozens of phone calls and sending many emails, CSRNE had no luck in finding Freddie a new home. It seemed caring for a handicapped cocker was just too much responsibility for most people.

We were starting to panic – Freddie couldn't stay at the vet's facility any longer and we had no place for him to go.

In a desperate late night phone call, Freddie's first angel appeared. Susan Grunin, who lives on the Cape near where Freddie was staying, volunteered to go get him the next day and take him to her house until we could find a more permanent arrangement.

Continued on page 2

Freddie on the Cape... *from page 1*

As fate would have it, Susan knew another cocker angel, Polly Marmaduke, who agreed to foster Freddie until CSRNE could put together a long range plan for him.

Freddie just loved life at Polly's. "The weather was sunny and warm allowing him to indulge his love of the outdoors, watching the seagulls, trying to keep up with the other two cockers and simply reveling in the fresh, salty air – and freedom,"recalled Polly.

Both Susan and Polly were impressed with Freddie's determination to move independently despite having no power in his hind end. "Try to save him the effort by carrying him and he'll squirm in your arms, eager to be set down so he can do it on his own," they said.

Enjoying the salty air of Cape Cod...

...and a beautiful sunset view

In the meantime, CSRNE heard from a caring woman in Florida who had other handicapped cockers and was willing to give Freddie a home. With the placement being given a thumbs up, a kind CSRNE benefactor purchased a ticket to Florida on PetAirways. With PetAirways' closest airport in New York, another foster home was needed to care for Freddie while he awaited his scheduled flight.

A Third Angel Appears

And here is where Freddie met his third cocker angel – the angel who turned hope into reality.

CSRNE had partnered in the past with Marlo Tamilio and her organization, Saving Paws Rescue, Inc. in Port Chester, NY. Marlo agreed to foster Freddie for a week until his flight to Florida. She was immediately smitten by this valiant, courageous cocker and she was determined to give him a chance to walk on all four paws.

Continued on page 3

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Leaving Cape Cod for New York

Freddie's Angels in New York... *from page 2*

Marlo had a golden retriever who had also "gone down" in the hind end and she knew exactly the right veterinary neurologist to evaluate Freddie's potential – Dr. Jason Berg at the Animal Specialty Center (ASC) in Yonkers, NY.

In a series of emails Marlo tells the rest of Freddie's story:

10/29/2011

"Freddie is doing great, doesn't seem to mind the snow and I am learning so much about him. The booties I bought work great, his feet aren't getting all scraped up and dirty anymore but it is a hassle to put them on and off. Freddie loves to be outside.

I am anxious to hear what the doctor thinks/says tomorrow though. I will update you as soon as we are done."

Freddy surveys his New York backyard

Before surgery

10/30/2011

"So we are on our way back from Dr. Berg. He said that Freddie does have some function in his hind end.

Long story short, he says that if we do nothing, we should wait at least 8 weeks before getting a cart to see how much better Freddie gets on his own. He is a fan of carts but only as a last resort and feels it would only hinder him right now.

Ideally, an MRI is highly suggested and then surgery which at best would put him walking with a little wobble. I just want to give Freddie the chance to walk again on his own, on all fours."

Marlo sent out a plea over the Internet for funds for the MRI and possible surgery, and over the next week $4,100 was raised for Freddie's MRI and surgery. Marlo then scheduled the appointment with Dr. Berg.

11/7/2011

"Ok, he is here and is next in line for his MRI. My stomach is in knots and I feel like I just dropped off one of my children, oh how I wish I could stay with him all day, but I will go back around 6-6:30 to visit and feed him."

The MRI results showed that Freddie had a huge disc rupture. After the vet spoke to Marlo, Freddie went directly into surgery for the ruptured disc.

Waiting in New York

The day after Freddie's surgery Marlo emailed: *"Freddie was taken for a walk using a sling to help him; he is moving more but it will be a long, slow process. He was feeling very feisty, he even ripped out his IV, but then he nuzzled with his head in my lap. I gave him a bully stick and no way was he going to give that up. I had to laugh at him – to see all the spark in this little fellow who had had a serious operation just the day before."*

Continued on page 4

Freddie's Four Paws are Better Than Two... *from page 3*

The day after surgery

11/9/2011

"I heard from the doctor Freddie is doing great, eating, drinking, peeing and pooping on his own. Walking around great but is getting help with a sling right now. He is going to stay another day and we will probably pick him up tomorrow."

11/10/2011

"Freddie walked out of the ASC on his own four paws. He looks even better and stronger today. His legs are straighter and stronger. He's in very good spirits. He unfortunately is on crate rest for the next two weeks with short breaks outside to relieve himself, no walks or extended time on his legs. He looks really good!!!!"

11/11/2011

"He is such a trooper! Last night, first night home after surgery, he was sound asleep in his crate, so instead of waking him to move him upstairs with me, I just went up to bed, thinking he wouldn't know the difference or know that I was gone. I no sooner got up into bed, put my head down and he started barking, as if to say 'You better be coming to get me.' I went back down, brought him up and he went right to sleep."

Leaving ASC on his own four paws

11/14/2011 One week after surgery

"Freddie is doing amazing. His attitude is beyond great, it's almost like he has been renewed. He's become such a cuddle bug."

11/20/2011 13 days after surgery Freddie saw Dr. Berg for a recheck. He got an A+ report!!!

"The stitches are out and the doctor is just amazed at how well he is doing. Freddie walked right in and said hi to everyone that would let him. Dr. Berg came into the room and literally gasped because Freddie was doing laps on all fours. He said Freddie is the perfect example of what could be, neurologically, emotionally, etc. When the visit was over, we said good bye to the doctor and when he walked away I heard him talking to himself saying, 'Just amazing how well that boy is walking. Amazing.' It's all good!!!"

Marlo's efforts and positive thinking played a significant role in getting Freddie from a disabled cocker who scootched along on his hind end to the little guy who is now able to walk (and run!) on all fours. This, coupled with CSRNE's determination to give Freddie a chance to see if anything else could be done for him, along with Susan Grunin's immediate response and willingness to find him an interim foster home, as well as Polly Marmaduke's generous offer to foster him for several weeks all resulted in Freddie's miracle - a lot of angels working together.

Continued on page 5

Recuperating at Marlo's in his pet cot

Freddie's Angels... *from page 4*

But in the end this is Freddie's story – one very determined little cocker who, as Polly said, "makes his presence felt with his remarkable 'can-do' attitude and endearing personality."

Freddie - Now "Fast Freddie" Again

11/25/11:

"On Friday, one of our foster dogs was adopted and I was in the driveway saying goodbye to her and her new family. I came inside to find Freddie's crate empty. I figured my husband had him out to do his business but what I hadn't figured was that he gave Freddie the run of the whole yard, which we have never done before for obvious reasons. (He said he felt bad because Freddie has been in the crate for so long.)

He called me out to look and Freddie was RUNNING, yes RUNNING, as I was watching and crying. He was so happy, he kept running up to me and nudging my leg then running again. He hops a little sometimes but I don't care, he was up on all fours and RUNNING.

It was almost like he was surprised also and was thrilled to be able to do it. He kept looking at us, like he was asking where the yard came from.

He slept for hours afterwards. We will start to give more of the yard slowly. His hind area is beginning to fill out now and his upper half is starting to blend with the lower half. He looks, walks and acts like a new pup."

Thank You to All of Freddie's Angels

Freddie's miracle happened because so many kind, caring people were willing to make a donation to help pay for the expensive, highly specialized neurosurgery that he needed. Freddie had a whole flock of angels rooting for him!

We've been trying to get a good still photo of Freddie, however, much to our delight, we can't – Freddie's moving too fast.

Freddie had always loved being outside running, jumping, chasing squirrels – for him much of the sheer joy in living was being in constant motion.

It is a joy to all of us to know he will have his old life back. YOU made the difference between life in a doggy cart or life on all fours.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to each and every one of you who contributed to making Freddie "Fast Freddie" once again. He'll never know how many angels he had but we do – a lot of people have something to smile about during this holiday season.

Dr. Jason Berg, Animal Specialty Center co-founder, Neurologist/Neurosurgeon and Internal Medicine Specialist.

Dr. Jason Berg is the co-founder and staff neurologist and internist with Animal Specialty Center. Dr. Berg co-founded ASC to provide an environment where animals and people are treated with respect, kindness and the most advanced veterinary care. The goal is to keep people and pets together.

Dr. Berg's lifelong dream is to meaningfully contribute to helping our furry family members. Hope -- that is what Dr. Berg provides. Neurology is often a frightening subject for owners and veterinarians alike. The good news is that once identified, many neurological conditions are highly treatable with the latest treatment techniques and love. Quickly arriving at a diagnosis, structuring the best therapy, and providing a beloved pet with the chance to heal are all part of the fundamental approach Dr. Berg follows in his treatment protocol.

Freddie Videos on YouTube

http://youtu.be/KuKULhj1Wto
Freddie moving – before surgery (10/17)
http://youtu.be/4AIwdcSfxJ4
Freddie walking – after surgery (11/11)
http://youtu.be/2KmH0m6oMes
Freddie walking on hardwood floor exploring (12/2/11)

What if Cocker Spaniel Rescue Wasn't There?

Every year, millions of dogs enter shelters and unfortunately, over 60% of those dogs are euthanized. We won't ever know the names of the dogs that were lost, but we do know the names of Prissy who came to us heartworm positive, Jenna who spent six months alone, in a dark basement with her six puppies, Cassie, Penny, Freckles, Murphy, Shannon… the list goes on. These are the names of just some of the cockers that CSRNE has recently rescued and placed in forever homes. And let's not forget, Moxie, Honey Bunz, Copper, Ingot, Mocha and the other cockers in CSRNE's long term care program and of course, all the cockers helped through the Joey Fund.

Murphy

CSRNE was founded in 1987 and next year, in 2012 CSRNE will celebrate its 25th year anniversary. Now, more than ever, CSRNE needs your help in paying its expenses. We all know that the economy has been challenging for several years now. And just when the need is greatest for CSRNE, when more and more people are giving up their pets because they simply can't afford to take care of them, it's a difficult time to ask for donations. Everyone is struggling. But this year, during the holidays, when our thoughts often turn to gifts, please consider giving a gift to CSRNE. Think about the benefit you get from CSRNE – perhaps you've adopted a cocker or two (or more!) and think about all the volunteer effort that goes into making CSRNE work. Perhaps think about not buying a cup of coffee on your way to work for a week and donating the money you saved to CSRNE. Or bring your lunch to work for a week and … you get the idea.

I've personally benefited from CSRNE and they have given me the joy that adopting cockers brings. First there was Cally in 1992. She was a shy 3 year old when I adopted her and she brought joy to my life for the full 14 years she was with me. And more recently, in 2010, we adopted Murphy. Murphy had been with CSRNE for 3 years and was a "special needs" cocker due to his mega-esophagus. Murphy would have never, ever lasted long in a local shelter and would have been deemed unadoptable and euthanized. Yet, because of CSRNE, Murphy is sitting on the couch with me as I write this, staring out the window watching the crows sitting in a tree!

What if there is no CSRNE next time I call? Or the next time you call –either to adopt a dog or to save a dog in need? Please help CSRNE reach their fundraising goal so that they can continue to provide the ongoing care for cockers in need. Your holiday donation will help CSRNE sustain its great work. Both Murphy and I hope that you can find it on your heart this season to make a donation to CSRNE to ensure that CSRNE will in fact, be there next time, and for a long time to come.

Happy Holidays
Debra Gesimondo

Please be a guardian angel to the many abandoned and neglected cocker spaniels who rely on us for a miracle.

C0CKER SPANIEL RESCUE OF NEW ENGLAND, INC
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Peterborough, NH

King mixes it up for the Holidays
in his forever home
Adopted by Peter and Rita Rozantes

Visions of Forever Homes Danced in Their Heads...

These are the cockers still waiting and hoping...

George

Joey

Rusty

For more information, please visit CSRNE's website, csrne.org