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The Cocker Home Companion

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

Vol 37 Winter 2013

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

Ariel' Story

Cherishing Gifts of Home, Health, and Happiness

By Polly Marmaduke

In people, really long nails are, well, weird. For dogs like Ariel, untrimmed nails can pose a threat to health. At a minimum, breaking a nail can be painful and lead to infection. According to the ASPCA, long nails can disrupt a dog's normal gait and lead to skeletal damage. For these and other reasons, nail trimming is an important part of a dog's regular grooming routine.

When Ariel was found, her talon-like nails were only one indication of the neglect this chocolate brown cocker had endured. What we know of Ariel's story, and what has been deduced from clues revealed by the pathetic condition of her body, is appalling. Ariel, though, has tapped a deep reservoir of resilience that is helping her, with the support of many caring people, move beyond a nightmare past. Her story is uplifting at any time of year but especially now because it reminds us, amid the glitz and glitter of the holiday season, to cherish life's most meaningful gifts: a safe home, health, and happiness.

Ariel was dumped at the back door of a veterinarian's clinic, a circumstance that is all too familiar to organizations like CSRNE who step in when pets are deserted. When the clinic's staff opened the door, they discovered a plastic garbage bag. Inside was Ariel, confined to a crate, in total darkness, without fresh air to breathe. No one knows how long she quietly waited for help, suffering from the oppressive heat of a summer day.

Thankfully, Ariel was found in time and taken to a city shelter. CSRNE was contacted, took custody of Ariel, and deployed its resources to care for her. Only then, with her safety guaranteed and medical treatment assured, could Ariel take her first tentative steps toward a better life.

Ariel - At right, just rescued and headed to the vet.

Below, just adopted and headed home

Her unkempt nails are only one indication of the neglect Ariel experienced. Rock-hard clumps of matted fur hung from both ears. Much of the fur on her torso was gone, the result of "mange", a skin infection caused by tiny mites. Since her nails did not indicate the kind of normal wear and tear that comes from walking on a hard surface, it is believed that Ariel lived in total confinement, imprisoned in a crate or other small space for

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extended periods of time. Evidence indicates that she had delivered multiple litters. Ariel was probably prevented from exercising, exploring the world beyond her cage, and enjoying life. Her only purpose was to serve her captors by producing puppies. Remarkably, she emerged seemingly free of the emotional scars and behavior issues that can plague some traumatized pets. She is sweet, engaging, and affectionate.

The process of "rehabilitating" a rescued dog can be costly. CSRNE relies on the generosity of others, through financial contributions, donated goods, and volunteer services, to fulfill its mission of helping dogs regain their health and prepare for placement in "forever homes" where they will be safe, cared for, and live as valued companions.

Ariel (left) with new mom, Barb Francese, and new sister, Lily

This rejuvenation journey begins with a nose to tail makeover that can transform a dog's appearance, reduce discomfort, and facilitate a veterinarian's physical examination: the coat is cleaned, fur is groomed, nails are trimmed. Next, a dog's medical condition is assessed and a picture develops. In Ariel's case, she was given medication to clear up her painful ear and skin infections and underwent surgery to be spayed, to remove a growth in one eye and to excise a benign mammary tumor.

Ariel's luck surely changed when CSRNE came to her rescue. She has been adopted and is beginning a new life with a loving family. Thanks to CSRNE and its patrons, Ariel now has a safe home and restored health. Her adoptive family will help her find happiness and introduce her to a world she's never known. When Ariel wags her scraggly little tail, it's easy to believe that she is expressing gratitude for receiving the best gift of all, a second chance at a happy life.

Ariel (right) with new dad, Jim Francese, and Jaxie

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CSRNE Celebrates 16th Annual Joey Fund Auction

1997 - 2013

by Colleen Crowley

October 26 was a beautiful day at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough, MA as we celebrated our 16th annual Joey Fund Auction!

This year's auction brought together many long time CSRNE friends, as well as many new faces, which was exciting to see! In addition to having Teddy, our Joey Fund Poster Dog and his devoted foster mom Joan Carson, we had several of our other adorable four legged friends with us, including Shannon, the 2008 Joey Fund Poster Dog, and her adopter Donna Gondek. It was great to see how well Shannon and Teddy are both doing.

This year's auction committee worked hard to gather exciting and unique items for both the live and silent portions of the auction, including autographed sports memorabilia, gift baskets, sculptures, unique wines, overnight getaways and autographed artwork from famous artists such as the marine artist, Wyland, and the photographer, William Wegman. A few of the most popular items were a New England Patriots sweatshirt autographed by Coach Bill Belichick, a weekend in Newport, and a Coach tote bag.

Jane Morgan, Auction Co-Chair

Elaine Alden, Auction Co-Chair

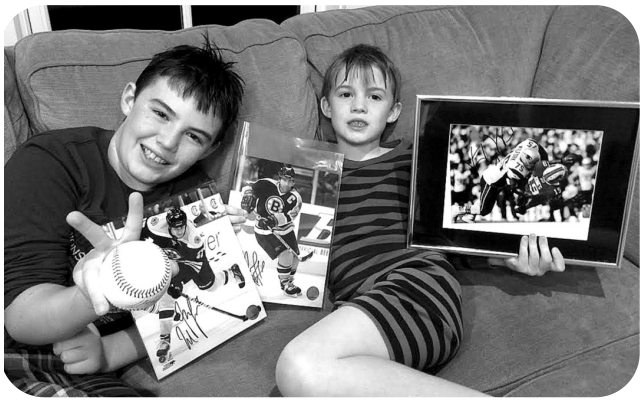
The Cutest Pet Contest was well underway online and closed at the auction with Rusty, adopted by Stanton and Sarah Healy, winning the cover of the catalog! **Visit our web site at www.csrne.org to order your 2014 Cutest Pet Calendar** – they make great holiday gifts and will continue to help us raise money for our rescue efforts.

Also happening at the auction this year was a bake sale, Bloomingtails for shopping, and several fun raffles.

As always, we were delighted to have Randy Price, Boston's Channel 5 Morning News Anchor, as our honorary chairperson! Randy's generosity over the years has been much appreciated. In addition to donating a personal tour of the Channel 5 studio, attendees were also able to bid on attending a special dinner with Randy at Jane Morgan's house in Worcester in the spring of 2014. One of the most exciting events during the auction was when Randy filmed all of the auction attendees giving a shout-out to all of their family and friends which was then aired on Channel 5's Wake Up Call during the Eye Opener newscast.

Thanks again to all of you who attended the auction or made a donation as a Friend of the Auction. All the proceeds from the auction go to the very important Joey Fund, which pays for the expensive veterinary care needed by so many of the cockers we rescue.

We look forward to seeing you and all of your friends at next year's auction on November 1, 2014 at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough, MA. Mark your calendars early for this event and spread the word! We'd love to see every attendee bring a new guest next year!



Daniel (l) and Nicholas Vona with their auction haul

Up for Bid: Adirondack Chair, designed and handmade by Ronald Dakai Woodworkers

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Frankie Goes to School

Learning Obedience and Building Trust

"I believe I can fly..."

By Polly Marmaduke

How does a dog like Frankie end up in a shelter? First, some background statistics. Nearly two million dogs enter U.S. shelters every year. It is estimated that 43% of these animals are brought in by an animal control officer and another 30% are surrendered by their owners. According to a recent study by the National Council on Pet Population and Policy (NCPPP), the majority of surrendered dogs (about 48%), were between 5 months and 3 years of age; 37% of surrendered dogs had been owned a relatively short time, from 7 months to 1 year. Owners frequently cite "behavior issues" to explain why they resorted to giving up their pet.

The first few weeks in a puppy's life are what animal behaviorist Dr. Nicholas Dodman calls a "sensitive period of learning" when a puppy learns how to interact with the world around him. Without proper socialization – spending time with dogs and people according to a planned and structured process – a dog can develop fears that become behavior problems later on. In his book "Puppy's First Steps", Dodman explains that a puppy learns, at the tender age of three to six weeks, to recognize the signals of dominance and deference through its interactions with other dogs, specifically its mother and littermates.

Positive experiences with a variety of people, particularly between the ages of six and twelve weeks, also teach a puppy to not be afraid of unfamiliar humans. A study by the Center for Animals and Public Policy at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine "found that puppies who had dysfunctional backgrounds with inadequate socialization were 580 times more likely to end up with fear aggression toward strangers."

Sadly, somebody gave up on Frankie very early on. Frankie is small for a cocker, perhaps the runt of his litter, and is most likely the product of a puppy mill. He was only about two years old when CSRNE came to his aid in July 2012. By then, he had been shuffled between three different homes before he was finally handed off to a city shelter. Imagine what it must have been like for Frankie trying, and failing, to bond with owner after owner. Judging by his behavior – he was nervous when strangers approached him, often cowered at the back of his cage, and kept his eyes fixed on a person's hands – the shelter's Animal Control Officer suspected past abuse. Rightly so, Frankie learned that people were unpredictable, scary, and not to be trusted. He coped with fear by becoming aggressive. Recognizing that this "problem dog" would be hard to place, the shelter contacted CSRNE for assistance.

CSRNE placed Frankie with a dog-savvy foster family who is devoted to caring for rescued pets. At first Frankie did well. He became very attached to his foster mom and two Great Danes in residence; Frankie was less fond of other Cocker Spaniels living in the home, except for his close friend, "Rusty". As he began to settle in and feel secure, his demons surfaced and Frankie began to display classic "fear/dominance" behavior toward people and dogs. It was obvious that he needed the help of a skilled animal behaviorist and trainer if there was any hope of overcoming the little boy's deep fear and en-

Frankie - on the scent!

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Frankie - safe in Mike's arms

trenched habits. CSRNE knew just who to call: Mike Robertson at the Ebony Kennel's White Mountain College for Pets in Plymouth, New Hampshire. Thankfully, Mike agreed to take on Frankie's case.

Mike is a professional animal trainer and behavior consultant. He holds degrees in both Feline and Canine Behavior Science and Technology and has been certified by numerous respected organizations including the International Association of Canine Professionals. Mike was an introverted kid who became fascinated with animal behavior at an early age and lives by the credo, "How may I serve?" Frankie was in good hands.

Frankie seems to have sized up the situation at Ebony Kennel pretty quickly and coped with his new environment by being submissive and appeasing. In Mike's opinion, Frankie's problematic behavior is most likely rooted in fear and insecurity. But in this calm, structured environment Frankie did not revert to his past coping mechanism of acting aggressive and controlling. With no display of disruptive behavior in a month's time, Mike believed that the cycle had been broken. Here, under the care of a firm but fair leader, Frankie could relax and begin anew.

According to Mike, "boundaries hold insecure dogs together." Frankie began basic obedience training and proved himself to be an eager student, ready to tackle new mental and physical challenges like scent training and agility work. He is distractible, though, so Mike keeps Frankie's training sessions short. He loves to burn off energy by running around the yard, chasing balls, and playing with Mike's Border Collie. Once inside, Frankie readily calms down and likes to nuzzle in the crook of Mike's arm and bestow Mike with kisses.

Frankie has come a long way. Under Mike's care, he has blossomed. Today, Mike describes Frankie as "unique, sensitive, and goofy." Mike believes this sweet dog will do well in a structured home where he is treated with understanding and respect. His adoptive family should be prepared to allow Frankie at least two months to adjust to his new home. In hopes of easing the transition, Mike has offered to extend his services to Frankie's new owners. Frankie is nothing if not resilient. Teaching even a young dog new tricks presents challenges but with proper guidance and patience, Mike is confident that Frankie's "trust will build and he will become the awesome dog that I've found him to be."

Editor's note:

Frankie is a special little cocker and he'll need a special home. Preferably, his new owner will have had a abused, fearful dog in the past and is experienced and realistic about what is involved in helping Frankie adapt to a new person and new environment. He needs a calm, structured home - ideally with a big fenced-in yard where he can burn off energy and then come back inside relaxed and ready to settle (remember, a tired dog is a good dog; an exhausted dog is a great dog)!

Right now, Frankie trusts Mike Robertson completely and is very bonded to him. It's important that his transition into a new home be as positive and stress-free as possible. Mike has offered to answer any questions a prospective adopter may have as well as give advice and guidance after Frankie has been adopted.

Frankie has already had at least three homes and a foster home. He has spent five happy months with Mike and all of us want to see him carefully settled into his "forever home."

If you have any questions please call 603-547-3363 or email joycek100@gmail.com.

Frankie looks forward to a bright future

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YOUR HOLIDAY DONATION GIVES THE GIFT OF HEALTH TO NEGLECTED COCKERS AND PROVIDES LOVING CARE TO THE 18 COCKERS IN OUR PERMANENT CARE PROGRAM

Please consider a donation to help CSRNE continue our work to provide food, veterinary care and sheltering to needy cocker spaniels. Your gift, no matter the size makes a difference in the lives of the cockers we rescue as well as to the lives of the people who foster and adopt them.

Thank you for your continued support. Happy holidays from all of us to all of you.

We receive no funding from national organizations or tax dollars. We rely solely on your donations and our fund raising events. All donations are tax deductable.

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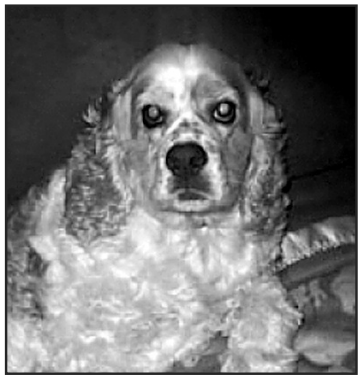
Solomon, Dexter and Ollie
are ready to help Santa Paws

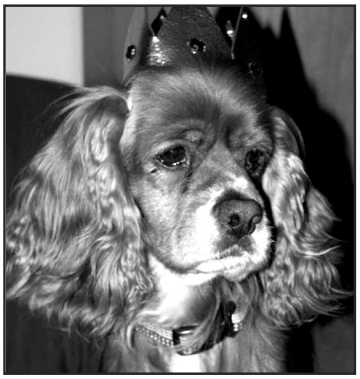
Adopted by Rick Hildebrandt & Betsy Rumbaugh

Visions of Forever Homes Danced in Their Heads...

Available for Adoption



Meggie - 5y.o.
Energetic, loves belly rubs



Princess - 5y.o.
Small, happy, loves kids

Copper - 2y.o.
Will be groomed soon!

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