

A New and Expanding World

Heart of America Newfoundland Rescue picked up several foster pups this weekend, 6 and 8 months old. These pups have never been outside their outdoor kennel before and the world is a terrifying place! Cars, doors, gates, steps, houses, TV, radio, rooms, surfaces, people moving about, owls hooting, leaves flying, you name it...it's all scary! Only hunger, thirst, and sometimes the thought of being left alone, drives the 6 mo old pup I'm fostering to work past the sheer terror of it all. I've named her Carly, which she seems to respond to very well, but it's out of neediness, not recognition of the word. How sad for this sweet, little girl. We could be having so much fun right now.

What would otherwise be a normally well adjusted, rambunctious pup at this age is a little bundle of trauma. It's sad to think that some people don't understand the vast importance of socializing a puppy extensively in the first three months. All they want is the buck. Carly is the product of a BYB who had trouble getting rid of all of the 19 pups they produced. Nearly half of the two litters were left to grow to this age without any socializing. 'Nuff said and I really don't want to dwell on her past life.

Still, Carly has a lot to overcome; but she is so gentle and endearing and tries as best she can to be brave. She's very clingy, too - a bit of a jumping problem as a result. She, like many pups, needs to be licking your face or to lean on you. It will be worth the work in the long run, but heart-wrenching at this point. So far, she is extremely gentle and not a biter. For a pup who has never been on leash, she does very well and isn't a puller...yet.

Hugo and Piper are being very tolerant of this pup and are not pushy like they are with adult dogs. Hugo is very gentle with her and generally ignores her, but tries to be her friend. Piper has tried to engage some play, but Carly is not ready yet, although she will play with me and loves to chase a toy or gnaw on an old bone (if we're outside where she's more comfy, that is).

She misses her sisters, but has pretty good doggie social skills with other dogs. She just isn't ready to play with strange dogs or encounter any more new situations. It will take some days, I think, maybe weeks. We have a lot of other work to do, meanwhile.

If she can overcome her timidity about absolutely everything under the sun, she will be a great pet and very loving. I'm hoping we will find her another nice, big, friendly doggie to live with who can help give her some confidence.

We have had a few breakthroughs; going through gates and getting better on doors (going out but not going in), so I'm hopeful for her, but please send some prayers that Carly will quickly conquer all her fears, and become the dog she should be.

Aha! She is happily playing with a bone inside now! That's a very good sign! Your prayers must be coming through already!!! LOL

Carly the Brave and Hugo the Thief

Well, I wasn't going to work on this for a few days or so, but here's the story...

I had to run to the store this morning, so crated Carly with a huge Kong stuffed full of PB and Milkbones. It's the first time I've left her completely alone, taking my dogs with me as a special treat for being so patient with her. We needed some together time just to ourselves. I knew we wouldn't be gone more than 10 minutes or so.

I was sure this would distress Carly, but it has to happen eventually. When I came back, she had not touched the Kong. No surprise.

I always try to keep my coming and going very low key, so didn't immediately release her from the crate and she was very good about that, but panting heavily due to her anxiety. She is going to be a champion drooler someday. LOL

When I did open the crate door, I wanted to get her out immediately, so she wouldn't stress pee on the carpet. And I shut the crate door so the other dogs wouldn't get to that Kong. I was going to freeze it for later use.

Carly and I went out the front and down to the backyard, which is fenced. I turned her loose for a bit and came in the basement door, which I left open so she could come in and out on her own. Coming in the house is still scary enough for her.

I heard a noise upstairs. Curiosity getting the best of me, I went up to investigate. There had been a burglary while I was outside!!! Someone had broken IN (literally) and was snared red-handed (or pawed)!!! Hugo was in the crate with the door locked shut and all the sides connected!!!??? And having a wonderful time sucking PB out of the Kong, I might add.

I'm not even going to try to figure out how he did it. He always was a thinking dog and I've pretty much given up trying to sort him out. I may check later to see if he's grown opposable thumbs, though.

I left him to his utter contentment and decided to take a potty break myself. I could hear poor Carly in the basement whimpering, but nature was calling me first.

Summoning all the courage she had, Carly the Brave and Loyal, decided that she couldn't stand to be away from us and climbed all 14 dark and terrifyingly treacherous basement steps by herself!!! TA DA!

And later she did it a second time all by herself! I'm really very proud as I know how hard that must have been for her. I think going down those steps will be a problem, but I'm sure it will come in time. For now, this is a huge step (pun sort of intended) for her!

Incidentally, these are the very same basement steps that terrified me as a 4 year old! Of course, they were open steps when I first saw them and my folks had to take me by both hands and hoist me screaming and kicking all the way up. I never did like going down in the basement when I was older and used to spook coming up the stairs. Hahahahaha.

Well, this afternoon, Carly took one look at me when we came in the basement door and went up the steps before us! I'm sure she looked at me to make sure I was watching and I was. Good Girl! I was also exceptionally happy that she felt confident enough to go away from me up into the big spooky house. It was as though she wanted me to follow her.

She is coming around much faster than I thought, but there are still lots of silly things that upset her. A kitchen drawer opening makes her jump, for example. The dishwasher was horrifying to her. For some reason, she doesn't like the kitchen at all. Oddly, the basement steps lead up to a landing that connects to the kitchen.

I think in a week, she will be a completely changed dog, though she will probably have to go through the whole process again when she gets to her new home.

I was asked why I didn't just let Carly lick the plates while I loaded them in the dishwasher. Tried...plates are scary, too, you know. Even covered with food. As are sneezes, coats, swivel stools, trash bags (non-moving ones), silverware, telephones (not ringing), walls, ceilings (one look up and she bolted??? I think she saw the recessed light fixture?). Interestingly enough, drinking glasses make a fine toy, and PBJ sandwiches are ok, but hotdogs suck. Milkbones are good, while recliner foot rests will "getcha"; water is better from a toilet bowl (sheesh, it's now confirmed. My Bad.), but moving branches outside the living room window are threatening. This is only for starters!!!...There isn't room enough to list all the individual horrors she's encountered in the last two days.

But she is improving and that's all I can ask of her for now. We started some simple sits today and she is struggling with that, because it involves a hand over her head. Yet she has learned that snapping on a leash is good, and being petted is really nice, so hands can be OK too. She's tough to figure out.

I wonder who the real basket case will be. LOL. Me or her. And she's only seen my house so far. Wait until the whole world is opened up to her!!! Poor baby girl. I've put off spaying her for a week or so, so she has more time to adjust.

Carly Meets the Devil

It was cold last night and a warm, soaking bath seemed like a wonderful idea. But of course, Carly has never seen someone in a bathtub. Like the kitchen, the main bathroom is a bit unnerving, so she would peek around the corner occasionally, see me and then retreat. No enticing, on my part, would make her brave the realms of the Kingdom of Blue Tile.

When I got out, I slipped into my nice, big, comfy, terry bathrobe and (in Carly's eyes) instantly morphed into the spawn of Satan. That bathrobe was enough to cause a meltdown. Looks like I will need to hang out in my robe for a few hours tonight, so she sees that a change of clothes isn't nearly as bad as she thinks. Now, if I only had big fuzzy slippers to match...

If It Has Wheels, It's Can't be Good

Our outings, through the front door, always bring some new experience. And nothing escapes Carly's notice. Monday was trash day and we spent much time walking up and down the street so that Carly could see all those things that had appeared overnight. Each new driveway held a variety of smells in a different container. If she summoned up the courage to investigate, she got lots of praise. But there were some things, on this windy day, that were too much to overcome. Trash cans that move on their own in a gust, lawn refuse that topples over and flapping trash bags.

We'll try again next week. For now, I am glad to see that she is willing to test the waters up to a point.

Tuesday produced a new horror. Bicycles!!! My neighbor, who has met Carly and adores her, has acquired a bright, yellow bicycle and rides it on our quiet streets regularly.

As Carly and I headed down the sidewalk, I spied the bike coming slowly towards us and pointed it out to my shy, little foster girl. OMG! What the #%&@ is that!

The neighbor, knowing our problems, slowly came to a halt about 20 or 30 feet away. Carly came as close as she could (about 10 feet away), but it was too much for her. I let her move back to a more comfortable distance, not wanting to push her past her threshold, yet.

The neighbor dismounted and removed what was, I'm sure, a very scary bike helmet so that Carly could see that it was just her friend in disguise. The neighbor walked up to Carly. Carly instantly recognized that it was a regular human and trotted up for pets. But there was no getting close to the bicycle. We've agreed to give it a try later. Just another thing for my list of obstacles to overcome, along with that other wheeled vehicle of horror, THE CAR. YIKES!!!

Carly Teaches the Teacher

With all my time spent supervising Carly, it's been a good opportunity to observe the body language of a fearful dog and watch the wheels turning in her brain. Her stance, muscle tension, ear placement, eye movements, panting when stressed is a good learning experience for me. It helps me to recognize her emotions and I get to observe her work through things by herself. It's all about Carly right now.

Today, Wednesday, she licked a big fear. Going down the steps. Since putting treats on the steps didn't work when trying to get her to go up them, I abandoned that idea and just had my dogs go up and down with me several times. Hugo and I are too old for doing a lot of StairMaster exercises, but I suppose it's good for us anyway. I hope I get a firm behind from this. But if not, the real payoff will be when Carly overcomes her fears.

Last trip down and we, my dogs and I, magically disappeared around the corner and waited. I could hear Carly whimpering and peeked around to see her one step down. She instantly backed up. RATS! Disappearing again, I waited to see if I could hear her make another attempt and suddenly, she came all the way down by herself, albeit VERY SLOWLY! What a clever girl!!!!

Now there's no stopping her. She is practicing going up and down without me or the other dogs being there. I can see she is very pleased with herself and her confidence has increased tremendously with this one feat of bravado.

Next challenge, the dog door. That should be a no brainer when you have the kind of assistants that I do. Hugo and Piper are my heroes.

A Girl Needs a Good Brassiere

After losing 50 lbs, I decided I was way past due for that special luxury in life...a new bra. And I found a couple of really nice ones. My favorite of the two is a Bali. It does

everything it's supposed to; lifts and separates, looks smooth under a T-shirt; all a girl could want, and so nice and white! No more dingy, stretched out elastic, no bent hooks or cups that are way too roomy. I've been so proud of my new look that I admit to spending some time in front of the mirror. Yes, I'm shameless.

As I sat reading my email this morning, I heard a ruckus in the living room. Carly had been out to pee and poop, and it sounded like she was having quite a romp with Piper or the toys she has scattered throughout the house. I finished dashing off an email reply and went in to enjoy the scene...

Sigh...I will be re-ordering a new Bali bra today. Humans never learn, do they...

At least Carly had a great time playing "Dress Up". She's becoming a typical preteen.

Carly: The Movie

Starring...TA DA...Carly!!



Her audition tape... "This is my best side...no THIS is my best side...no..."
<http://s141.photobucket.com/albums/r65/janeak/Odds%20n%20Ends/?action=view¤t=MOV00026.flv>

Her first movie..."Carly Hears a Truck"...

<http://s141.photobucket.com/albums/r...t=MOV00038.flv>

Wouldn't ya know that as soon as I found a camera to borrow the wet weather would hit.

Isn't she happy looking in her last video! Well, up until the salt truck roared by. That's her typical reaction to everything. But at least she turned to confront the danger (in her big brother's presence, anyway). In the first vid, you can see she was put off by the camera pointing at her.

She is a nice size pup, but the photo is a bit deceiving. Her 8 month old sister was fairly good size, too. Has most of her adult coat with just some dead puppy fur on her pantaloons and sides. When it warms up again and is dry, she'll get a good grooming (and a better photo). I hate those stringy ears.

Oh yeah, the furry carpet...we haven't introduced Mr. Vacuum yet. I dread that coming. Mr. Coffee this morning was bad enough. He gurgled and belched at Carly while she was having breakfast and I had to move her dish into her crate in another room; she was that scared.

But sometimes, she's very brave...Last night, in the light cast from the lamp above the garage, she saw a huge black dog on the far side of the creek bank, standing at attention. Every time Carly moved, so did the black dog. She barked a couple of times to warn it off and it just barked back.

Should I tell her it was her own shadow...NAH. Why spoil the fun!

OH NO! My License Was Revoked!

Being a puppy allows you a certain amount of leeway as far as being disrespectful to elders, but not for long. Both Piper and Hugo have been out of character with this puppy, letting her get by with things that I know they would not, were she an adult. But being good foster parents, they have limits.

In one day, Carly received two speeding tickets, one from each of them. Piper was enjoying sucking on a tiny twig, which Carly thought she could quickly snatch. Wrong! A brief "NO" from Piper sent Carly squealing in hasty retreat. Within seconds, the two were apologizing all over the place and settling their differences.

Later in the day, she tried to barge in when I was giving Hugo a treat. Again, Carly got a quick "STOP" from Hugo, eliciting another apology from Carly. And then they were friends.

Carly clearly understood that she had just had her puppy license revoked permanently. She's growing up...

Carly Has a SECRET!!!

Shhhh. Don't tell. I don't want to get jinxed, but...

Yippee! Someone wants ME! They asked for ME!!

And my foster mom says it's the best home EVER and my new mom and dad are coming to see me on Friday and I hope they take me home with them and I have to get all beautiful first and OH NO!, I guess I will have to learn about the bathtub now. Sheesh, I was trying to avoid that.

I will have a new brother and sister, too! Wendell and Tiny. I'm so excited, I may just go pee on the carpet!!! Oops, my foster mom says that's not the way to get people to like you. Oh well, I'll just wiggle a lot and look cute for them.

I AM LOVED!!!

Shhhh, It's a **SECRET!!!**

Homeward Bound – A New Chapter Begins

She knew something was up. Carly was suspicious of all the hustling and bustling this week. There was the smell of cleaning fluids, the sight of paper towels being ripped off the roll, and most of all, the sound of the newest threat...MR. VACUUM!

I was surprised that she took it all fairly well, but honestly, she didn't have much choice. Her new mom and dad were coming and I dreaded the thought of them entering the House of Squalor without making some feeble attempt at cleaning.

Anyway, Carly bore up under an onslaught of unfamiliar sights and sounds and smells, so I was very proud of her.

When they arrived and Carly got one look at her new and very handsome young brother, she was beside herself with joy! They immediately took off and raced around the yard until I thought they would drop. Piper was in hot pursuit with Hugo desperately trying to keep up in order to protect his women from this devilishly handsome young fellow. He acted like the typical father of a teenage girl. I put my dogs inside, so Wendell and Carly could bond some more.

Carly lavished Ted and Melanie with lots of kisses and hugs. She is such an amazing dog with people. No one is a stranger to her and she was very happy to see them. I know she is in good hands and that her life is just beginning as she starts her journey home.

I'll miss your shy ways little girl, but I know what a fine dog you'll be someday.