

A Special Golden Looking for a Special Home

HANDY'S STORY

Over the past several years we have fostered many Golden Retrievers for GRREAT, and they have all been special. None more so than HANDY.

HANDY (05-131) is a 2- to 4-year old happy, healthy, energetic male who came to GRREAT as a stray. The GRREAT volunteer who picked him up from the shelter was struck by his looks, and immediately named him HANDY, diminutive for Handsome. As one can see from his photos, it is a



name he easily lives up to.

HANDY is fully housebroken, but his indoor manners suggest that he was allowed on the furniture and on the bed. He walks well on the leash but does not appear to have had much obedience

training. He is not destructive if given the run of the house when left alone, and does not need to be confined or crated.

HANDY gets along splendidly with humans of all sizes and ages. Unlike the typical Golden, HANDY is wary of lavishing his affections on strangers. We strongly suspect HANDY may have been abused prior to his arrival at GRREAT. However, once he gets to know you, he is sweet, gentle and affectionate. He is still somewhat distrustful and fearful of people he does not know, and sometimes backs off when strangers reach out to pet him. When he first came to our home he pretty much kept to himself. During

the months that HANDY has been with us, he has blossomed into a warm, loving, trusting Golden. He loves to be petted, whines and whimpers when we leave the house and can be counted on to greet us on our return with an energetic, high-spirited welcome home.

So, why does HANDY merit a listing under the rubric "Special Goldens Looking for Special Homes?" Well, unfortunately HANDY has an aggressive tendency towards other dogs. It seems that in his past, HANDY did not have much social interaction with other dogs, and so feels the need to try and assert himself with any new dog he meets.

HANDY displays some alpha-male characteristics, and the initial relationship between him and his very submissive foster sister was



somewhat strained. For the first couple of weeks, he would try and pick a fight with her, for no apparent reason, and with no obvious provocation.

After a few weeks, they got used to each other, and now they get along well. However, he still does not

get along well with dogs that he does not know; so it is difficult allowing him to do the things he loves, like going to the dog-park or pet store or for long walks. In these situations he is generally well behaved but his up-close interactions with other dogs needs to be carefully monitored. Generally we keep him on a very short leash and put him in a SIT-STAY position if we encounter dogs with whom he is unfamiliar.

At GRREAT's behest, HANDY was evaluated by a behaviorist, who recommended that his forever home have no other pets. We would also strongly prefer that his new home have no children, because it is likely they would not be able to control him if he came across an unfamiliar dog, or an off-leash dog, while out walking. The behaviorist also strongly recommended that his new family enroll him in a behavioral training class to prevent or redirect his undesirable attitude towards other dogs.

If all this leads you to believe that HANDY is a rebellious, restless, anti-social, hoodlum, always ready to pick a fight, you could not be more wrong. Over the months, we have noticed marked improvement in HANDY's behavior. While still skeptical of strangers, he now seems more



accepting, and somewhat more trusting, of them particularly while in the company of his human family.

So, does HANDY need a family where he will be a couch potato and avoid all

interaction with other dogs? We think HANDY would not be happy in such a cloistered environment. He is a fairly active medium-energy pup, and although he would quickly become attached to his new family, would be miserable without external stimuli. He would do best in a moderately active household, where he could go for walks and outings. Although he would love it, he would not be a suitable companion on a hiking or camping trip where he may encounter unfamiliar, possibly unrestrained, dogs.

HANDY has a lot to offer his new family if they help him overcome his past and blossom to his full potential. For more photos of HANDY, please visit his web site: <http://home.teleport.com/~goldens>.