
Pick of the Litter: Handy (05-131)

Spotlight on a special Golden in need of a special someone

By Emily Pasterick, Contributing Writer

Both before and after I met Handy, I was equipped with a significant amount of beautifully-written descriptions by his wonderful foster parents, Harry and Sarah, as well as with professional analysis compiled six months ago by his behavioral evaluator. All were helpful in putting words around a Golden with both beauty and “baggage”; however, I also wanted to read between the lines.

As his write-ups indicate, Handy was found as a stray, and is approximately 3 years old – happy and healthy. He bounded inside from the yard when I first arrived, proving both, and warily wiggled around the kitchen while he tried to figure out who I was, if I was a safe and friendly visitor, and therefore some-

one worth welcoming an extension of affectionate greeting (his “foster sister,” Bronte, had no hesitations in offering a hearty hello!) I decided to bring myself down to Handy’s level, and sat down on the kitchen floor attempting a more non-threatening posture. Handy appreciated this, and promptly sat in front of me for some face-to-face sizing up – to the surprise and delight of foster parent, Sarah. While blissfully showering a stranger with kisses might be beyond what Handy will ever be capable of expressing, allowing a stranger to touch noses not five minutes after arrival was evidence of just how much Handy had learned to absorb

an important concept in the preparation for his forever home since becoming a GRREAT dog: trust.

It is strongly suspected that Handy was abused in his former life, judging by the way he tends to pull back from an unfamiliar, extended hand, and prefers to keep a safe distance from those he does not recognize (which is why his ability to quickly allow an



affectionate exchange with me was so noteworthy.) For whatever reasons, this apprehension has manifested itself more alarmingly in his interactions with other dogs, during which he can demonstrate a fear-driven aggression if not carefully monitored. After some adjustment growing pains, he has learned to co-exist remarkably well with foster sister Bronte (indeed, the two laid comfortably together, with Bronte’s paw absent-mindedly batting Handy’s face.) Additionally, a professional evaluation in December 2005, offered promise for Handy’s ability to integrate himself with a forever home given this healthy adjustment, and Handy’s close bond with Harry and Sarah.

Safety, security, and unconditional love bring out the “real” Handy, which is a gorgeous Golden with a lovely, silky coat, who enjoys performing a “sit-stay-down” for a couple treats, going on long, quiet walks, gnawing on a bone, snoozing on a cool fireplace hearth, and giving his people hugs around the waist! His composed and dignified disposition, coupled with the unfortunate baggage from his previous neglect,

indicate that Handy would thrive best with a family that has no other dogs, and only children who would be able to understand and control a potentially precarious situation – a family who enjoys the constant companionship of a loyal Golden, whose home is their sanctuary, just missing the loyal and indescribable joy that only a loving Golden Retriever can offer.

Is Handy waiting for you?

Harry and Sarah have done an extraordinary job in not only providing the first comfortable, loving home Handy has ever known in which to rehabilitate, but also in carefully documenting Handy’s personality, tendencies, and ideal adoptive family qualifications. You can find these write-ups both on GRREAT’s website at http://www.grreat.org/doglist_special.htm, and at Handy’s very own website at <http://home.teleport.com/~goldens>. You can also goldens@teleport.com.

