

## JACKSON IS IN HIS FOREVER HOME

May 25, 2007

In late January of 2007 a call came in from my good friend Alice from Aussie rescue. There was an older male Aussie at the Humane Society who was very sweet but deaf. He had been there for a while because they thought that surely someone was looking for this nice dog. But nobody was so they thought they would probably have to euthanize him. He was already labeled "not suitable for adoption". One look at his photo and he seemed pretty suitable to me so I decided to make him number four in my pack. He was not neutered so that was taken care of at the Humane Society. Jackson is a blue merle with one blue eye and one brown eye.

I proceeded to look up all the information about deaf dogs and felt pretty confident that between me and the other three dogs we could handle a dog that could not hear. When I took him to the veterinarian it seemed pretty obvious that he could not hear anything. He also had a very bad arthritic hip, probably the result of an encounter with a car and also spondylosis of the spine. However, he seemed pretty mobile, though a bit stiff. He also had badly infected ears and to make a long story short about those ears, once the infections were cleared up he could hear after all, with just some hearing loss in the one ear. It was later determined that the right ear had a badly scarred ear drum and Jackson could not hear anything out of that ear. He had no problem with responding to his name almost right away. Perhaps in his previous life his name had been something similar to Jackson. We found that he needed thyroid meds because low thyroid was causing the skin lesions that he came with. All that has now cleared up and he has a good coat and skin.

Jackson joined our pack with Copper and Dalton being OK with him pretty much right away. Kendra did not like him at all and would lie by the dog door so that he would not come in. He is a pretty submissive dog and would not take a chance of coming in when he saw Kendra there. It also seems that he must have been an outside dog because he actually preferred being outside on the patio or in the grass coming in to eat and get petted periodically. He likes to sit on my lap. I wish he would sleep in the bedroom with the rest of us but he rarely does, preferring one of the dog beds in the family room.

I discovered that he likes to play ball but prefers only one blue rubber ball. He walks well on leash and is a dynamo at the dog park. As soon as we get there he goes into herding mode barking and herding the dogs, often picking out one dog to "bug". Sometimes he actually gets a group of dogs together and then expertly circles them not letting any of the out of the group until I come up with the leash. It is still amazing to me that this dog with a bad hip and spine is so agile running around like a four year old. I do have to periodically make him rest and he is generally pretty worn out when we are ready to go. He uses the doggy steps to get up into the car.

Jackson is a really sweetheart of an Aussie. He is very affectionate and now that Kendra likes him a bit better he spends more time in the house. He plays with Dalton though he has to do it lying down. His back end is not so strong and Dalton leaps on him with such force that he collapses. But Dalton is not particular. He thinks playing with him lying down is just fine.

Jackson continues to have recurrent ear infections in the one ear and has a sensitive stomach requiring special food. But other than that for a dog of 10-12 years he seems to be doing really well and we love him. It was another one of my lucky days when I got the call that he was at the Humane Society waiting for us to take him home and make him part of our family...

October 16, 2009

Today Jackson left us and we are very sad but the decision to have him euthanized was the only one that could be made at this time. He started having liver problems at the end of August. At first it was thought he had hepatitis and he was being treated for that. According to his blood work it was getting better, but he was not eating well and I was cooking for him, adding various things to his kibble. He began eating less and less and eventually I was hand feeding him.

In the meantime he had started acupuncture treatment early in August for his arthritis which was helping a lot. The vet began putting in more needles for his liver also but by then he was already getting sicker. However, he loved the acupuncture treatments.

Another ultrasound showed cancer in his liver and he was given only a few weeks to live. He declined very rapidly, even though two days before the euthanasia he still enjoyed an evening at the dog park. From Wednesday to Friday the decline was so rapid that I am sure he was ready to go and I am at peace with my decision to let him go. I could see that he felt absolutely rotten but he was a very brave and stoic boy and even on his last day greeted one of his favorite people with a tail wag and a kiss. He was with us for way to short a time but his last two years and three months were good ones. I always wished that he could talk to tell us where he had come from and what his previous life was like. But he would never say.

Jackson's favorite blue rubber ball went with him to wherever he is now and if there is a Rainbow Bridge, I hope he is having fun chasing it.

