



The Brigadoon Barker

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Andrew—One Family's Miracle

By Sarah Jensen

Brigadoon has been a life saver for our family, both figuratively and literally. When I found Brigadoon, I was searching for a dog that would help my son, Hunter. He has Cerebral Palsy. He needed help with his balance and mobility. That doesn't sound too bad; there are lots of places that train dogs for that right? Well, yes and no. You see when we started the process with Brigadoon, Hunter was only 2.

I contacted every single service dog group in the western US, some in central and eastern US and even a few in Canada. I kept getting the same answer. Not a single one of them would place a dog with a child under 10, in some cases 14. I could not believe it. Hunter is not the only child to have Cerebral Palsy, but no one would help us.

I found Brigadoon and they were my last hope. I felt like we were on a ship back in the 1800's that was trying to weather a class 5 hurricane. The winds were deafening, the skies were black and I was about ready to give up hope, not just for Hunter, but for all of the parents and kids who may need help but couldn't find it.

When Denise Costanten, founder of Brigadoon, told me to come on up and we would see if she could help, it is hard to describe the feelings that I had. My belief in the human race was returning. We met Andrew in March of 2006. At this time, Hunter still was not able to walk yet, and was just beginning to crawl. It was love at first sight, although I don't know who loved him more, me or Hunter! Hunter pulled himself across the floor and gave Andrew a great big hug!

Andrew was only nine months old at the time, so I knew we would have to wait, but I was willing to wait if it meant that soon Hunter would have help and be able to do more things like other kids could do!

By July Hunter was beginning to be able to walk a bit. He still needed his walker, but he was getting there! He was even able to say a few words! Our joy was soon deflated rather quickly though. In December just before we were set to go see Andrew for another visit, Hunter had a massive seizure. Then 3 weeks later he had another one, each of them about 90 minutes long.

I knew that Andrew was being trained already to help with balance and mobility, but now that Hunter had a serious seizure disorder, could he possibly become a response dog as well? No problem! Andrew rose to the challenge! He began his seizure alert training. Denise made it clear that there is no guarantee that Andrew will be able to detect a seizure before it starts, but he will get Hunter help and stand with him to help keep him safe when he has a seizure.

In a few months, bonding with the two boys began: visits to Brigadoon, then Andrew came home. A weekend at first, then a week, finally a month. Soon it became clear that Andrew was no longer just a Brigadoon dog in training. He was Hunter's boy as we called him. With all the success that Hunter was having with Andrew, there was still a surprise up Andrew's sleeve, or paw in this case.

When he came for a month long home visit, he was acting a little funny. He didn't want to stay with Hunter. He kept running

between Hunter and me. I could not figure out what was going on. Any time I went to get up, he would get up and push me back down. A few days later, I was in the emergency room. I had a massive kidney infection. I could not believe it. This was supposed to be Hunter's dog and here he was taking care of the whole family!

I could not have asked for a better ending to this journey. We will be forever in Brigadoon's debt for the security and independence that Andrew has brought for Hunter and our entire family!



Andrew keeps a watchful eye on his boy.



With his boy during a stay in the hospital.

“Irish”

Irish is a 13 month-old tri colored smooth-coated collie. He is one of Brigadoon’s “star” pupils. Irish went from hating to put anything in his mouth to a retrieving fiend. There is nothing this dog won’t try to retrieve. He has just learned to pick up his food bowl and carry to Denise when he is done eating. Right now he is working hard at trying to pick up a credit card from the floor. This is more difficult than it sounds due to his long nose, but he will get there. By Kathleen Ball, Trainer

Peanut Pup Sundae

- 1 Cup Chicken Broth
- 1 Cup Chunky Peanut Butter
- 1/2 Cup Golden Raisins
- 2 Tablespoons Honey
- 2 Cups Ice Cubes

Line 12-cup muffin pan with paper muffin cups. Put chicken broth in blender with ice cubes and blend until slushy. Sit in peanut butter, raisins and honey. Using 1/4-cup measure, fill muffin cups and freeze.

Remove muffin cups and freeze in zip-lock bags. Serve directly from freezer. Makes 1 dozen.



Denise with “Brigadoon” aka Briggs

Quiet, Calm, yet Assertive

I’m a re-active type person, being calm and assertive does not come naturally. I practice every day to be calm and assertive with our dogs and try very hard not to be RE-ACTIVE.

Working with dogs that do not speak the same language as me, I have had to learn how they think and behave in their natural surroundings. This was the only way I knew how to effectively communicate with them. Dogs are experts at reading their environment. You can actually teach a dog without speaking a word, just by using your body language.

Dogs synchronize to your behavior. In other words, if you are quiet and calm they will respond more effectively to your request. If the dog has high energy and you are high energy, guess what? Nothing will get accomplished. Take the same scenario, and you DON’T have high energy, you soften your voice and wait a few seconds, the dog will feel your energy and stop to take notice. When this happens **Reward** the dog in a calm manner. Now

you can ask for the behavior you want - sit or whatever. Everyone is happy!

Note: It may take more than a few seconds, depending on the dog...just be patient! By Denise Costanten

Our Wish List

Gift Cards are a great way to help, i.e. Whatcom Farmers Co-op, Walkers Healthy Pet;, Pet Stop, Cost Cutter Foods, Petco, Petsmart, or Costco. Other stuff needed...

First class Postage Stamps

Blankets and Towels

Paper Towels

Copy Paper for our printers

Jennie O Jumbo Turkey Franks

HP Inkjet Print Cartridges (#s 95 & 92)

Poodle Grooming (i.e. Critter Clips)

\$150,000.00 toward new Kennel Building 😊

Make the Most of Your Walk

A dog needs to walk a minimum of twice a day, for at least thirty to forty-five minutes each time, so that both the dog’s mind and body are given a workout. It is an extremely important ritual for a dog. The owner must act as the dog’s leader during a walk. This means the dog walks next to the owner or behind him—not pulling ahead. If a dog is “walking” a human, and the human is not in control the dog perceives itself as pack leader at that moment.

Dogs should never set the agenda of where they’re going or what they’re going to do; good dog owners aren’t dragged behind by their dogs. The owners provide leadership—someone to follow, who’ll eventually lead the dogs to food and water and place to rest.

Brigadoon Birthdays

Stryker, a smooth collie, celebrated his 2nd birthday on June 14th.

Phoenix, a German Shepherd celebrated her first birthday on June 24th.

Oldest Dog

The oldest dog that has been reliably documented was an Australian cattle-dog named Bluey. He was put to sleep at the age of 29 years and 5 months!

“If there is a heaven, it’s certain our animals are to be there. Their lives become so interwoven with our own, it would take more than an archangel to disentangle them”

Pam Brown, b.1928

Brigadoon Tour

Mark your calendars for the next tour. It will be **August 2**, from 10am-11am. Bring a friend!

Come visit our facility, meet the dogs, and learn more about what we do.

You will **not** be asked for a donation.

RSVP 733-5388

Contributors to Brigadoon

May and June 2008

There are no words to express our gratitude for your support of our program. Thank you!

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BP Fabric of America Fund

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