



The Little Guild of St. Francis

Newsletter

Fall 2006

Incredible Odds

Diane Monroe

Life comes at us in waves. The cycle of life starts in the spring with kinder temperatures and the beginning of the year's food sources. In the animal world, breeding picks up, young are born and the strongest survive waiting for their turn at the life cycle. When we consider what they must learn and accomplish in the short period from spring to winter, we're amazed at what they have to do against incredible odds.



At The Little Guild, we know that in the spring and summer we'll be bombarded with a wave of cats and kittens. We see mother cats barely larger than their kittens handling their job like pros. When it's time for them to be weaned from mom, they're nurtured by our staff to learn how to accept human care to prepare them for life as a pet/family member.

Jumping ahead now with the dog scenario, these animals may require more work as far as the preparation as "Family Member." Every dog that comes into The Little Guild gets a temperament test. Many tests actually. The initial test is given at the pound where we get all of our dogs and where we make our preliminary observations. Think of it as doggy SATs - is the dog capable of earning a place at the shelter? We watch the dog's body posturing, eye contact and general attitude. Given that the dog is already in unfamiliar surroundings, the stress level is usually high so that also is taken into consideration. Upon passing that test, the dog is brought to The Little Guild (again, more stress at another new place and new people) where Fido can be observed and where more testing can take place. The tests are temperament tests not obedience tests. Obedience comes into play after we know who Fido is by his (or her) personality.

The temperament tests are for us to learn if the dog is high energy or low energy, food aggressive, toy aggressive, (aggressive aggressive never made it out of the pound through the initial test), how does Fido react to strangers -does he bark with his tail wagging or with his hair up on his back, is Fido looking for human contact or is he more interested in his surroundings? There's a lot more to it but you get the picture.

Continued on next page

Continued from page 1

OFFICERS

Mr. Khurshed Bhumgara
President
Sharon

Mrs. Archie Jamgotchian
Executive Vice President
West Hartford

Mr. Denis Curtiss
Vice President
Cornwall Bridge

Ms. Marcia Schultz
Treasurer
Warren

Ms. Diane Monroe
Secretary
Sharon

Mr. James Lussier
Executive Director
Pleasant Valley

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. R. Christopher
Walton
New Hartford

Mrs. LaVerne
Baldwin Taconic

Ms. Barbara
Curtiss
Cornwall Bridge

Dr. Jill Hetson
Kent

Mrs. Elizabeth
Locke West
Cornwall

Ms. Bunny Southack
Sharon

Mr. John Fehlmann
Greenwich

Some dogs are eager to learn and can't get enough "school." Others, like their human counterparts, could care less and will do the minimum. That's acceptable. Our job is to find this out. The dog's job is to let us know who they are and the adopters job is to think about if they want to adopt Einstein, Lance Armstrong, Barney Fife or Mr. Couch Potato.

We take our job of matching dog or cat to person very seriously. That high energy dog is a handful. It's not going to do him any good to go to someone who will walk him once a week. On the other hand, Mr. Couch Potato is going to hate that 3 mile daily run. Our animals are our mirrors, and sometimes we're forced to see things that we've overlooked and, unfortunately, at an animal's expense. Sometimes we all mess up, but fortunately our animals are always welcomed back to the Guild for yet another chance.

It's not easy what goes on here. But our staff is the best and we pride ourselves on our success rate and through sheer love of these animals, we always make it work through incredible odds.

A Note from the Director



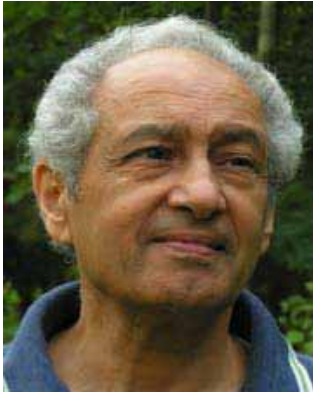
Now for a word about cats. The Little Guild takes in stray or abandoned (homeless) cats and dogs. We currently have a 16 week waiting list of cats scheduled to come into the shelter. When a cat is adopted we call in one of the cats from our waiting list. This method works well for everyone when everyone plays by the rules. However when someone leaves 9 cats at our door during the night, as just happened, everyone is inconvenienced and cats are put in danger.

All new cats must be housed in our quarantine room until we are sure they are bringing no diseases into the shelter. When the population of the quarantine room becomes too large, the danger to all the cats in the room is greatly increased. We have had over 30 cats dumped on our doorstep over the last two months. These unscheduled cats make everyone on our waiting list wait that much longer and also endanger the health of all the cats in our quarantine room. To all of you who watch over homeless cats until we can get to them, thank you. You are doing wonderful work. To those who dump cats in the middle of the night, shame on you!

Published by The Little Guild of
Saint Francis
for the Welfare of Animals, Inc.
West Cornwall, Ct. 06796
(860) 672-6346
www.littleguild.org
Editor: Jim Lussier
Writer: Diane Monroe
Printing: Moore & More Printing

The President's Letter

Many people have asked me what makes The Little Guild different from other animal shelters. My answer is always the same, "In two words, Temperament Testing." (See pictures on page 5.)



All our dogs are temperament tested to make sure (as sure as we can be) that they are adoptable. The adopters are also scrutinized and interviewed to ascertain that they are suitable adopters for the particular animal in which they are interested. In fact, no one can take a dog home until 24 hours after the adoption papers are signed so that they have time to change their minds. After all, the dog has come to us because it was abandoned or mistreated or just plain "dumped" and we do not want that to happen again.

We do not train dogs nor do we rehabilitate dogs. We do not adhere to any one school of thought about dogs nor do we look to any one dog expert such as Cesar Milan, Betty Thomas, Jean Donaldson or Dr. Ian Dunbar as the ultimate authority. Each dog and each breed is different.

Many good shelters do temperament testing and many use professional dog behaviorists for this purpose. In our case our staff, who have received training, does the testing in-house. Our success can be measured by the fact that our return rate on dogs has declined by over 300% in the last two years as a result of our testing. Sometimes, however, a dog is returned not because of temperament but because the adopters just did not realize that they really could not have a dog because of their life styles. We carry out a preliminary test at the pound before the dog even gets to the shelter and if it passes this initial test, which is very short (does the dog know that we are there, is the dog aggressive, too reticent, medically unfit for adoption, etc.), then the dog is brought to the kennels at The Little Guild.

After about a week to allow it to settle down and get used to its new surroundings, the dog is given another more thorough test. We follow the Sue Sternberg test as outlined in her book "Great Dog Adoptions" and test for several factors, which, after an initial safety scan, include Sociability, Dominance, Hugging, Playing, Food and Possession Aggression, Reaction to Strangers and to Children and Reaction to Other Animals, such as cats and other dogs.

A dog's temperament is made up of many factors, its breed, its background and how it has been treated and as importantly how it will fit into its new home with its new owners. We are very cognizant of the fact that adopters have nothing but the best intentions but they often check their rational thought process at the door when they come to The Little Guild and let their emotions take over. We are there to guard against this and point out to the new owner (as subtly as we can) the suitability or the unsuitability of the dog for their life-style, their home and their temperament.

A great deal goes into making the perfect match and we, at The Little Guild, feel that we do it as well, if not better, than anyone else.

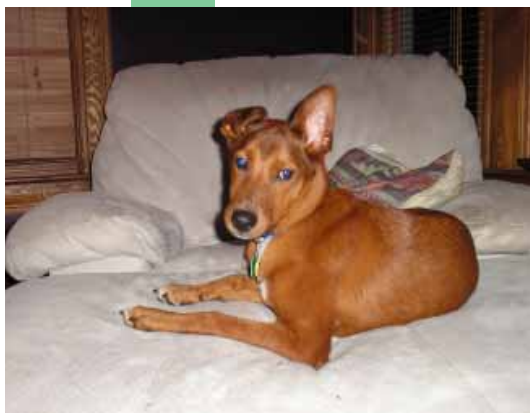
People and Pet Mail

*“Dear Faith and Everyone,
Buddy (formerly Freemont) is a wonderful companion. Where ever I go in the house, he is right there near me. He is very lovable and loves to be brushed every day. I wouldn’t part with him for the world.”
Effie E. Newman – Gaylordsville, CT*



*“To Everyone at the Little Guild,
Radar, now Oliver, is a wonderful dog! He fits in so well that it is hard to believe he’s been here less than one month. He gets along with our other two dogs, Harley and Gordie. He loves his daily trips to the beach. Oliver is very happy with his new life and we are very happy to have him.” Joan & Randy Gill – South Amboy, NJ*

*“Hi Everybody,
Just thought I would send you a note to tell you I am doing very well. Zejke feeds me everyday and changes my cat box. I have the whole house to myself and when I am not sleeping I hunt mousies. I escaped one day when a door was left open, but Zejke got me back in right away. He’s OK for a human. Here is a picture of me he took. I know, I should lose a little weight.” Written by Ash (the cat) himself! Cornwall, CT*



*“Hi Liz and the Little Guild,
Xander (formerly Sam-I-Am), is a great animal. We had two days of being scared in the corner, then POW!!! He came out in full puppy form. He is playful and so very loving. We are shocked at how quickly he has made himself a part of our home. Thank you so much for a wonderful puppy. His transition has been much easier than we had imagined. He is very happy.” John Bartenstein & Brandon Foster – Springfield, MA*

Some Temperament Testing Photos



Learning to play together.



Safe hug test.



Treat aggression test.



Food aggression Test.

Put this guy in our food training program!



How long will it take for him to acknowledge the trainer?

Is this a good dog for a house with children?



In Memory of People

Shirley Blake
Nora Caine
Edith Coffil
Barbara Dembishack
Eric
Joseph Frascarelli
Susan L. Gardner

Gary Hamel
Sally Hale Lecour
Joseph Lush
Elba Magdich
Albert Marinelli
Paul Masley

Peter Papp
Dorothy Pesclel
Marilou Scopina
Colette Shadeed
Agnes Williams
Robin D'Amato Zecchin

In Memory of Pets

Abby
Adelaide
Ajax
Bingo
Buddy
Cassie
Catherine Regina
Ceili
Chloe
Duke
Ginger
Guinness
Hershey Kiss & Largo

Holly
Jesse
Joey
Leonard
Lizzy
Louie
Lucky
Lucy
Max
Meg
Mickey
Micky
Molly

Momma
Mooch
Nicholas
Oreo
Penny
Red
Rudy
Sasha
Spooky
Snickers
TJ
Tia
Tux

In Memory Of

Terry A. Rossi, beloved daughter of Alice Odsen
Sir Jacksonville Rebel Rossi, beloved dog of Terry A. Rossi
Sir Elvis Aron Presley Odsen, beloved dog of Alice Odsen

In Loving Memory

Floyd came to the shelter in March of 2003 at 9 years old. He had diabetes and with the help of our vets, he did very well with this illness. Floyd loved everyone and especially liked to sit in laps – any lap would do. He routinely gave out “kitty kisses” to anyone who would accept them, and always wanted to be the center of attention. After a stay of 9 months at the shelter, Floyd was adopted by Mary and Russell Comstock of Torrington, CT in December of 2003. He was given a very loving home. Sadly to say, Floyd passed away on April 21, 2006. We are happy that Mary and Russell were able to give him a happy and caring home. Floyd brought much joy to the shelter and to his adopters. He will be missed by all.



BEQUESTS

Any not-for-profit organization obtains its funds from a limited number of sources. If it is endowed at the outset and can operate out of the income from the endowment then it does not need to raise money on a regular basis. In fact some fully endowed funds refuse unsolicited gifts. Other organizations obtain their operating funds from solicitations for donations, special events, gifts in memory of a person or a special pet, gifts for a limited use, such as for an expensive piece of equipment, etc.

The largest gifts, however, come from bequests.

We are attaching below, a form of language that can be used for a bequest. In each case you should consult with your attorney, accountant or financial advisor in making a bequest but as you can see it is simple language inserted in a will which will allow us to continue to serve our principal clients: our stray and abandoned dogs and cats.

"I bequeath to The Little Guild of Saint Francis for The Welfare of Animals, Inc. a not-for-profit corporation, chartered under the laws of the state of Connecticut, with its principal offices located at 285 Sharon Goshen Turnpike, West Cornwall, CT 06796, the sum of \$ _____ (or _____% of my residuary estate) for the unrestricted animal sheltering and adoption purposes conducted by it."

Thank you very much!

Our Dream of No More Homeless Pets

Caring for animals is expensive. Without your donations, our shelter and the work we do is at risk. Please indicate your commitment for 2006!

YES, I want to be part of the work of The Little Guild. Here is my 2006 contribution.

\$45 Member

\$100 Caregiver

\$180 Supporter

\$240 Champion Other \$ _____

I'd prefer to send a monthly membership donation of \$ _____ .

Send me a monthly reminder.

Many companies offer a matching gift program that doubles the value of your gift to The Little Guild. Please ask your Human Resources representative for a form, complete it, and send it along with your gift today. Thank You!

Donations are tax-deductible under section 501 (c)(3) of the IRS code. Notification of your donation will be mailed to you.

Please Mail to:

The Little Guild of Saint Francis

P.O. Box 59, West Cornwall, Connecticut 06796

(860) 672-6346 • FAX (860) 672-0213 • www.littleguild.org

The New Mutt

Pssst! We've got a secret! Have you heard about the new craze for Designer Dogs? These are dogs of mixed breeding. Take a purebred, breed it to another purebred of a different type - for example a labrador and a shepherd or poodle, and voila; designer puppies! They used to be called Mutts. The Guild is full of them. The same theory works for cats too. If you know of anyone interested or sparked by curiosity for this new fad, let them in on it and invite them to visit us. We can fit the bill.

Visit our animals for adoption at www.littleguild.org

**The Little Guild of Saint Francis
for the Welfare of Animals, Inc.
West Cornwall, Connecticut 06796**

**Non Profit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No 1
West Cornwall CT**