

Doctor Sophia Jane

Sophia Jane joined our practice and touched our hearts on November 17, 2008. Sophie is a testament to the power of unconditional love. She had been abused and neglected by her caregivers. Although we don't know the full details, Sophie was cruelly neglected. She was confined to a small pen that was inches deep in excrement. When she was finally rescued from that hell hole, she was covered with maggot infested sores and her hair was matted in dread locks. A wonderful organization, aptly named Saving Grace (www.savinggracenc.org), saved Sophie from a fate worse than death. Once she was taken to the Saving Grace shelter, she was lovingly nursed back to health. Her dread locks were shorn, she was given a healthy diet and a place to roam, and her open sores were debreded and allowed to heal. Her psychological wounds were also assuaged with a generous application of love and acceptance.

At the same time that all of this was going on, Cheri and I were revisiting our plan to adopt a dog 'someday'. In the past, whenever this discussion would come up, we would individually or collectively enumerate a variety of reasons why it wasn't the right time to adopt a dog. We reached a different conclusion, though, when we heard a lecture by Marianne Williamson. I forget the context, but I remember our reaction to her proclamation that 'someday' isn't a date on the calendar. Cheri and I looked at each other and said she's right!

There is no such thing as a coincidence. Once we opened our hearts to the idea of adopting a dog, the universe did the rest. Within a matter of days, one of our patients told us about Saving Grace. At Saving Grace dogs are given access to lots of fresh air and space to run and play together with other dogs. The dogs are carefully evaluated. Once a dog is determined adoptable by Saving Grace standards, it receives any and all medical treatment necessary. This includes, but is not limited to: spay/neuter, vaccinations, heartworm test and treatment (if necessary),

worming, and flea and tick prevention. All dogs get a microchip which can be traced back to the adopter and to Saving Grace. While at Saving Grace, dogs are crate trained and begin a housebreaking routine. They also learn basic manners such as walking nicely on a leash, how to sit and not to jump on people.

We had decided that we wanted to adopt a female standard poodle. When we scrolled through the list of dogs on their website that were available for adoption, we saw a picture of Sophie. She appeared to be just what the doctor had ordered. Molly, who is the founder of Saving Grace, told us that Sophie was a two year old Labradoodle. She said that a number of families had evaluated Sophie since her arrival several months ago, but they had decided against adopting her because she was too shy. We knew otherwise – the universe was saving Sophie for us.

When we met Sophie, she wagged her way over to greet us, gently nuzzled our outstretched hands, and gave us a soft lick or two. We were hooked. We escorted her to our car and took her with us to her forever home.

We bring Sophie with us to the office everyday. Our staff and patients love her. She rests her head on outstretched paws from the doorway in Cheri's office and 'guards' the office. When patients ask about her, we tell them, with a twinkle in our eyes, that if they have a diagnostic dilemma, Sophie can help us sniff out the problem. She then dispenses a doggone good prescription – wag more and bark less;-). Woof. Dog is love.