

## The Story of Laci

Laci was surrendered by her family to the Boulder, Colo., humane society in 2013. She had been with them since puppyhood, but had started nipping at their 6-year-old child. Sadly, Laci spent most of her life in the backyard being ignored until her family took her to the shelter, where she was for several weeks. She had a severe infection in both ears and was in very poor coat condition. The shelter did a full body clip and began treatment on her ears. Laci had to be sedated to work with them; it was felt that the problem with her ears was part of the reason that she was nippy with the child. Apparently, she had infections through the years and the owners were not diligent at following up with ear care.

PBGVCA member Leone received a call from PBGVCA Rescue's Julie Shannon, telling her about Laci, and asking her to pick her up at the shelter. Leone was going to foster Laci, but she had five dogs of her own at the time and a sick Bouvier, so Leone brought Laci to Liz Whitney DVM. Liz fostered Laci for a time and helped her out so much.

Liz said, "Once we discovered how bad Laci's otitis was, PBGV Rescue allowed me to keep her until we could get that under control, and manage her condition and necessary procedures. The underlying problem was allergic (atopic dermatitis), and she did have some generalized skin irritation and itching of her feet and belly. She was sedated three times for ear exams and cleaning; the first two times, her eardrums were not intact and she had a middle ear infection. The last time, the ears were finally healed. She was treated with a combination of an antifungal, antibiotics and steroids orally, plus some local medication. She was also placed on a prescription kangaroo and oat diet; she did respond well over four-to-six weeks of treatment, and the plan was for her to stay on a hypoallergenic diet long term, and then treat flareups as they surfaced."

Once she was better, PBGV Rescue wanted Laci in their network of foster homes so she went to Sheryl in Nebraska. Laci did well at Sheryl's with all of her dogs, and she was groomed to look more like a PBGV. After about four weeks in Nebraska, she was placed with Rick and Rhonda in Colorado, so she was transferred back! Between Liz, CSU Veterinary Hospital and another vet friend, Bronwin Hansen, Laci was gifted with hundreds if not a couple thousand of dollars of medical care.

Before finding out about Laci, Rick and Rhonda had visited Leone's house where they were introduced to her



PBGVs to solidify their idea of adopting a rescue, and enjoyed meeting all of Leone's dogs. They picked Laci up in Denver on Nov. 5, 2013 from Sheila who transported Laci from the Omaha area where Laci lived with Sheryl.

Rick remembers: "We were made aware ahead of time that Laci had special needs. When she first arrived, Laci walked around whining for a few days, but the whining gradually subsided once she settled in. She arrived with a complete care package due to the caring effort of Liz. Laci bonded to us quickly, eating and behaving well. She immediately took to her toys in the house. She received our undivided attention, as she was our only pet at the time. Laci is a polite little girl. Her backyard backs up to a golf course, where she can sit on the patio step and watch passersby during the day, and see deer in the mornings and evenings."



*Left: Laci at the shelter. Page 60 photos show Laci at her new home in the spring of 2014. Below left: Laci after her "beauty treatment" at the groomer. Laci photos courtesy of Rick and Rhonda*

"When you speak to Laci, she always tilts her head, showing that she is listening intently," Rick said. "She visited her new vet for her checkup (Animal Care Center of Castle Pines, Colo.) and was put on a hydrolyzed protein diet. Laci was somewhat on the thin side when she arrived. We have been vigilant about keeping Laci on her prescription food. She gradually began to gain weight, always under her vet's guidance. About every six weeks she receives her beauty-shop treatment at the groomer. Laci continued to garner all of our attention until June 2014, when we adopted our second PBGV, Bogart. Bo relies on Laci every day for guidance, and Laci reminds him often about who is boss."

Rick continues: "Everything was going along nicely for Laci until October 2014 when we noticed her appetite was decreasing and she was losing weight. The vet took a blood test, which indicated severely elevated liver values, some being 20 times the normal range. Upon seeing the results, Laci's vet referred her immediately to Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Services in Englewood, Colo. She stayed overnight, receiving IVs and round-the-clock care. Our little girl endured two ultrasounds and multiple tests, and was diagnosed with chronic liver disease. We picked her up the next day, bringing Bo with us. Laci never appeared happier than when they brought her out. Laci now relies on four medications and vitamin E twice daily to keep her healthy. Both dogs enjoy salmon jerky and home-dried sweet-potato slices for daily treats."

Rick says, "Laci continues to do well today. She's nine years old now, and has gained back her weight and continues to exhibit spunk and exuberance for life. Recent results of her latest blood tests show that her critically high liver values have decreased by half from what they were in December. She was put on cyclosporine in December because her other meds couldn't reduce the values, and it is working as hoped. We can only look forward to improved test results again this summer at her next round of tests."

Now that the weather is better, Laci and Bo visit the dog park on the weekends. Laci mixes with the other dogs while Bo makes friends with people and goes exploring by himself. And twice weekly, Laci and Bo go for walks with a dog walker. Laci adores attention. She likes to have you talk with her. And, of course, the tummy rubs are a necessity. Most nights she sleeps on the bed with Rick and Rhonda. The hedgehog and the squirrel are Laci's go-to toys. When Rick and Rhonda arrive home during the week, she usually grabs one and begins chewing and thrashing it. That continues as she runs outside with the toy squeaking all the way.

Laci's story is still ongoing, but Rick and Rhonda continue to hope for the best. And they love her to pieces.

Liz had become very attached to Laci during her stay, and visited her in her new home with Rick and Rhonda. "I'm thrilled to see that Laci landed in a wonderful, loving family, and I can now rest easily that she's in a forever home," she said.

Lucky Laci! From being ignored in a backyard to a wonderful home with views of a golf course and a family who adores her. Thanks so much to Rick and Rhonda

, Liz Whitney DVM, Julie Shannon and Leone for their contributions to Laci's story. ■

*If you've added a PBGV to your family through Rescue, please consider telling us your story. You can send text and pictures to Joan Mann at [JMann17307@aol.com](mailto:JMann17307@aol.com) or [jmannsox@gmail.com](mailto:jmannsox@gmail.com).*

**You Can Help.** To make a difference in a PBGV's life, visit the PBGVCA's rescue page: [www.pbgv.org/BreedInfo/rescue/shtml](http://www.pbgv.org/BreedInfo/rescue/shtml) and consider making a donation to the rescue effort. No amount is too small, and every donation is appreciated.



*Laci and Liz Whitney DVM in Steamboat Springs just prior to Laci's Nebraska transfer.*