

Suffield Veterinary Hospital February 2017 Patients of the Month

Meet Bear and Bailey, two charming Australian shepherds owned by Ryan Paris and Lauren Gaul of Suffield. As shown in this lovely picture taken by Lil' Blue Farm Photography of Monson, Bailey (on the right) and Bear are both the picture of health now, but that wasn't always the case. Here's the story as described by Ryan:



We got Bear and Bailey a few months after purchasing our first house. I guess you could say our motto is "Go big or go home!" We were frequently on websites looking for dogs. At the time we weren't sure what breed we wanted, but we had always been interested in Australian shepherds. One day we got a call from a woman in Florida saying she had a litter of Australian shepherd puppies and there were two tri-colors left, a boy and a girl, waiting for their forever home. It seemed like fate! We immediately asked her to save them for us.

The day before our puppies were to come home with us, we found out that Bailey had a heart murmur. We knew very little about heart murmurs in dogs, and although we were hesitant, we had already fallen in love and couldn't possibly have thought about not taking her.

A few weeks after the puppies arrived we brought them for an initial checkup. That's when we found out that Bailey's heart murmur was far more than just a heart murmur. Dr. Huntington told us we needed to see a cardiologist, so we saw Dr. Morris at Mass Vet Cardiology in Agawam. Bailey was diagnosed with a PDA (Patent Ductus Arteriosus), which is very serious and life threatening. We were then referred to veterinary cardiac surgeon Dr. Wey with Upstate Veterinary Specialists in Albany.

We were told that Bailey needed surgery immediately. After the surgery we were very hopeful. About a month later, however, we again got bad news. The surgery hadn't worked. Her best chance was to have another surgery, so in she went. After Bailey's second surgery things looked much more promising, and we couldn't have been happier.

Today, Bailey is wild and rambunctious. You would never guess she had two heart surgeries before she was a year old. She is quite the jumper, as she has mastered jumping baby gates throughout our house. We're hoping our 4 foot fence is not next on her list! Bear, on the other hand, has mastered opening unlocked baby gates. Bear is definitely the more mellow of the two. He would be content sitting around eating treats and watching TV all day long. Bailey would never let that happen though! They are two peas in a pod, and we couldn't imagine having one without the other.

Many years ago, dogs like Bailey would have died a difficult death, or been put to sleep prior to their first or second birthday. It is a wonder of medical science that Bailey is now able to live a long, normal life. For highlighting how far we've come, and what wonderful, happy results can occur, look no further than our February 2017 Patients of the Month.

Suffield Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke

❖ Dr. Griffin O'Connor ❖ Dr. Daniel Rothbart

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