

Suffield Veterinary Hospital November 2016 Patient of the Month

Meet Oreo, a 10-year-old Saint Bernard owned by Brian Volz and Chuck Roumas of Suffield. Oreo is proof positive that caring vets and rescue dog owners can provide healthy longevity to the victims of horrific animal cruelty. It also shows the resilience of a dog to find the will to live and trust and love people again.

In November 2009, Vermont police arrested Oreo's first owner. They found Oreo chained to a trailer for over 3 years lying on a pile of scrap metal. She was near death from malnutrition and tetanus, contracted via open wounds in her neck from a deeply embedded collar. Police took her to the shelter, and volunteer vets from Middlebury, VT treated her for months for tetanus, heartworm and many orthopedic ailments from lack of movement. By March 2010, Oreo was well enough to be placed for adoption, but was catatonic in her appearance. Her prospective owners asked if she was alive because she sat like a statue without expression. Brian and Chuck hoped to see what wonders were locked within this beautiful dog.



After two months with a new home life of perpetual belly rubs, a special diet, an orthopedic mattress, walks in the snowy woods of the Green Mountains, and continuous health monitoring, the real Oreo began to emerge. She blossomed like a flower with a smile on her drooling face and a glow in her eyes. Over six years later (the last three here in Suffield), Oreo is pain-free and happy. She gets all of her monthly preventatives for lyme disease and heartworm. Dr. Huntington and her team do senior blood profile checks, have prescribed liquid anti-inflammatories for her bones, have surgically cleaned her teeth, and they monitor her weight to maximize her quality of life. Her owners rub poultry-flavored toothpaste on her teeth with a bristled finger brush thrice weekly, and have custom-fit her a "Help Em Up" harness for her walks to alleviate weight on the back legs. This once 80-pound skeleton is now at a healthy weight.

Today in Suffield, Oreo enjoys rides to drive-thrus at banks and drugstores (the employees always give her treats). She sleeps soundly (but snores like a motorboat) and struts down the sidewalk like the proud Saint Bernard she was meant to be. She carries around a stuffed toy turkey which makes real wild turkey calls, and plays hide-and-seek throughout the house. When guests arrive, she lays at their feet, prompting them for a belly rub like a hairy smiling marshmallow. As you can see from this lovely picture taken by Lil Blue Farm Photography of Munson, MA, Oreo has come full circle.

Her owners' and her vets' diligent care and monitoring have been rewarded by her gratitude and truly giving spirit. For showing us that there can be happy endings after even the worst of traumas, we are pleased to name beautiful Oreo our Suffield Veterinary Hospital November 2016 Patient 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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