

Dear Family,

I am writing to update you on my progress in service dog training. This month, I primarily focused on learning... How to KEEP EYE CONTACT WITH WHOMEVER HAS MY LEASH SO I CAN BE READY TO SPRING INTO ACTION WHEN GIVEN A CUE. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN THEY MIGHT NEED ME SO I CONSTANTLY HAVE TO STAY ALERT!

Some other things that I am learning include... How to NOTICE HANDLER'S ATTENTION IS ON SOMETHING OR SOMEONE BESIDES ME. THEN I'M SUPPOSED TO LIE DOWN AND STAY OUT OF THE WAY UNTIL I'M NEEDED. I WAIT UNTIL I HEAR "RELEASE"! I THEN JUMP UP, READY TO HELP. SOMETIMES I LIE DOWN IN THE WAY, WHEN THAT HAPPEN MY HANDLER TELLS ME "TOUCH". I LOOK FOR HIS HAND AND GO TO TOUCH HIS PALM WITH MY NOSE. THEN I KNOW I'M IN THE RIGHT SPOT TO LIE DOWN.

I am good at... GOING INTO MY LITTLE HOME WHEN I HEAR "CRATE". I THEN STAY IN THERE UNTIL I HEAR "RELEASE". IN THE MORNING, WHEN I COME OUT OF MY LITTLE HOUSE, ALL I HAVE ON IS MY COLLAR. MY HANDLER WILL HELP ME GET DRESSED BY HOLDING OUT MY ~~COLLAR~~ HALTER AND SAYING "DRESS". I'LL THEN PUT MY HEAD ALL THE WAY INTO MY HALTER AND HE'LL SNAP IT SHUT FOR ME. I WOULD DO IT ALL MYSELF BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY THUMBS! THE SAME FOR MY VEST. I ALSO KNOW WHEN HE WANTS US TO WALK IN ANOTHER DIRECTION. HE'LL TELL ME "THIS WAY", AND I'LL FOLLOW. SOMETIMES HE'LL PUT A LITTLE TENSION ON MY LEASH AND GUIDE ME.

I am still struggling with... THE darn pigeons!! IF I COULD GET TO THOSE LITTLE 80 AND 80'S I'D HAVE ME A GOOD MEAL, I'LL TELL YA!!! BUT MY HANDLER TELLS ME TO "LEAVE IT!" I WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND LISTEN TO HIM BUT THOSE FEATHERY THINGS LOOK SO DANG TASTY!! AND LATELY MY "EYE CONTACT" HASN'T BEEN UP TO PAR. BUT, LET ME TELL YOU, BETWEEN YOU AND ME AND THE LIGHT POLE... HE COULD USE A SHAVE, HAIR CUT, AND DIFFERENT CLOTHES! MAYBE HE WOULDN'T BE SO HARD ON THE EYES! I'M JUST SAYIN'!

I have the most fun when... MY HANDLER TAKES MY VEST AND HALTER OFF AND TELLS ME TO "GO PLAY"! I TEAR INTO MY TOYS! SOMETIMES HE'LL PUT A SPECIAL TREAT INSIDE OF MY RUBBER BONE AND I'LL SPEND HOURS GETTING IT OUT. ALSO, WHEN HE'S TEACHING ME SOMETHING AND I FIGURE IT OUT? I GET A LOT OF "GOOD GIRLS" AND AN EXTRA TREAT! DON'T TELL ANYBODY AND SNEAK ME A FEW EXTRA KIBBLES, TOO! THE OTHER TRAINEE'S HERE WILL GET JEALOUS!! THEY THINK THAT BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY GIRL HERE I GET SPECIAL TREATMENT. GUESS WHAT? I DO!! I LOVE RUBBING IT IN THEIR MUZZLES!

My favorite toy is... WELL, IT USED TO BE MY HANDLER'S SLIPPERS! BUT THAT PARTY POOPER TOOK THEM AWAY. SO NOW I'M STUCK WITH THIS BUCKY RED BONE! IT'S MY FAVORITE THOUGH BECAUSE OF THE TREATS I SOMETIMES FIND IN IT. BUT, ONE OF THESE DAYS, I'LL GET MY PAWS ON THOSE SLIPPERS AGAIN! OR MAYBE HIS TENNIS SHOES.... HMMMM....

Wags & Kisses,

Nivida



Guide Dogs
of America



Tender Loving
Canines