

### Annie's Story

Annie is a brilliant, sweet, strong Golden Retriever. I adopted her at the age of 7 weeks; she will celebrate her 15th birthday on November 14, 2013.

Annie loves living every day: FOOD, camping, swimming, chasing lizards, all people, rolling on the grass... or dead fish, her Busy Buddy, Kong, and Buster Cube food toys, loading in the car to go anywhere, meeting babies in strollers (who always have Cheerios), visiting people's homes, eating grass ice cream at 3 Dog Bakery (she made their Facebook page!), ravaging stuffed toys and removing squeakers, and sitting on the fireplace hearth 11 months of the year right beneath where her Christmas stocking hangs on the 12th month.

A special story of who Annie is from November 2005. I had tried hard to foster or adopt a dog after Hurricane Katrina, phoning Gulf shelters through September and October. We all saw on the news the situation for pets after the storms. The responses I got were that shelters wanted to keep the pets locally so owners would have a better chance to identify them. Then I had a light-bulb moment: I am trying so hard to rescue a dog after that disaster, there is just as great an emergency for a shelter dog here.

I phoned Golden Retriever Rescue here and went to a foster home to interview for a 13-month old Golden. This male had been dropped off at the city shelter with a bite history. The man said he named the dog "Slacker" and that he had bitten him in the leg. Usually a bite history is an automatic euthanasia at the shelter, but workers called Golden rescue to evaluate him. "Slacker" went into foster care. It was determined that if he had bitten someone it was while he was being abused.

When I interviewed for him, he was skin and bones and laid curled up in his bed like a ball, not even opening his eyes. I asked if I could get Annie out of the car. I took her leash off in the yard and just watched her. She slowly walked over to his bed and stood near him. He opened his eyes, stood, and walked side-by-side with her around the yard as the foster mom and I looked on. "Beau" loved Annie from the moment he met her and we took him home that night. She has been his Rock of Gibraltar these 8 years, a steady constant in situations where he wants to bolt, teaching him manners going up to new people (even men), and showing him how to feel love and joy in life.

And now Annie has been diagnosed with a very treatable cancer. We have already taken huge steps with surgery and chemo, moving it towards long term remission. With the so-appreciated gift from Paws 4 A Cure and its supporters, Annie will take one more step to continue her life with Beau and me for a long time.