

YOU AND YOUR PET

Callie is a special dog with special needs

JUDITH-ANNE KOLU
UCHS volunteer

It truly is a responsibility to write on our animals— how do you represent the dog/cat fairly but attract the right family to come to the Shelter and adopt the pet and hopefully live “happily ever after”?

And then when they are Callie, who has been bounced from ‘pillar to post’ it is extra hard. Callie’s next home must be with a family who possess knowledge of the pros and cons of this breed mix and are willing to welcome this active little dynamo with her special needs into their family.

I visited her on Saturday, such a compact little girl, so happy and exuberant to be out of her pod and dash about showing me her alacrity in athletics. Straight to the toy box, toy in mouth, eager eyes and body language, imploring ‘let’s play’. You cannot see Callie without smiling, even though it is a sad situation; her ever-soaring spirit lifts yours but leaves a lump in your throat. We are concerned that once again confined in a kennel for much of the day, this “exercise nut” may become extremely stressed out and deteriorate.

How is it that this young, female Australian Cattle Dog/Blue Heeler cross is having such a run of bad luck?

Callie is a little girl with a big, big heart whose ideal home is on a farm or large property where she can ‘herd’ real life or in her imagination. Herding breeds ‘nip’, which is a built-in herding trait and children of any description do

Pet of the Month



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not seem suitable for Callie. Maybe this behaviour was allowed in her first family when she was a young pup, or just that Callie has an extra strong herding instinct.

We have successfully adopted out others of her breed but Callie is not so lucky. People just aren’t getting that this is not biting in the true sense of the word but rather an inherent part of the herding breeds.

Callie was originally surrendered because her family (which did include children) had to go into care and we will never forget the day when the family said goodbye. No one can say after observing her that dogs don’t cry; that was the day Callie lost part of her heart. No one who witnessed this goodbye can forget her look as these people, through no fault of their own, left her alone and desolate.

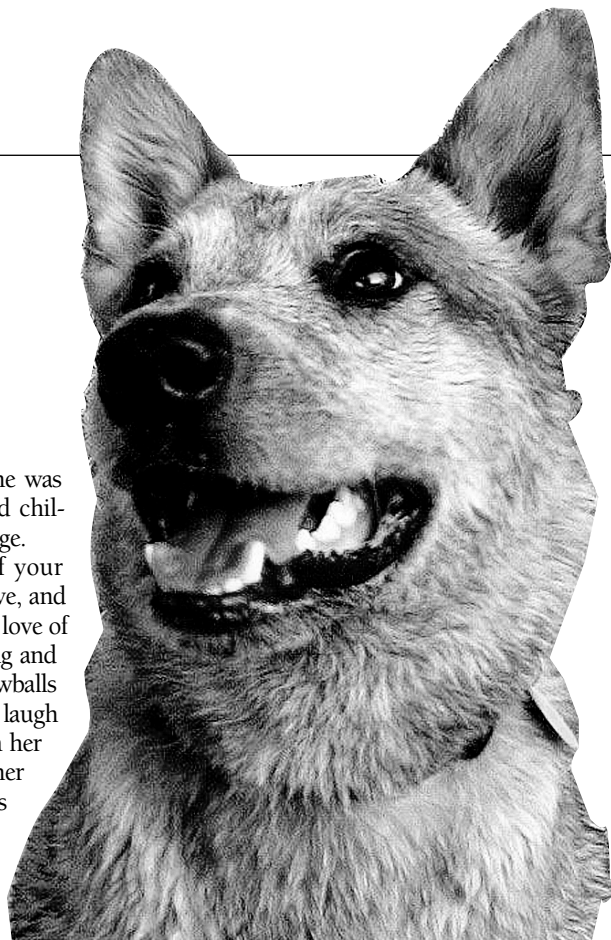
However, Callie being Callie picked herself up and tried to make the best of the situation. A new family was found after several months of residency and she went off tail wagging, and spirits high, but their resident dog attacked Callie and back she came. When the family euthanized the older dog, Callie returned and all seemed to be going well but her herding

instinct apparently kicked in and she was returned. We had strongly stressed children were not to be part of the package.

If Callie becomes a member of your family you will be rewarded with love, and would find joy in and appreciate her love of play especially with water, swimming and paddling in the summer, rolling snowballs for you in the winter, and you will laugh and join her as often as you could in her ball play. You would be amazed at her perfect agility which she often shows by leaping shoulder high to grab the leash when being walked. While this is fun for Callie, you might not think so and should gently correct her with kindness. Callie loves to leap on the cairns (memorial stones) on the Shelter property and rolls over to have her belly rubs— her intelligent nature ensures she picks a perfect spot for her caregiver to reach her easily!

You will laugh at her enthusiasm with her soccer ball, which in addition to being used for water play and snowballs can become an object to worry and pounce on until the ball gives up. Water pails are another delight— and can be adapted for even more play. You would realize that really Callie needs a job!

You should listen to the Shelter staff’s advice and research herding breeds before attempting to adopt Callie. You would also realize that even if your family has little contact with children, when children are around, you must take extra care to have her on leash, and make sure that



CALLIE

children are not teasing her or playing around her to make her want to ‘herd’.

We feel confident that Callie will find a home. She is a special spirit, who would actually blossom in a home with another of her kind (how she loved to play and herd with Blake who was the same breed but who has since been adopted). If that resident dog was ‘dominant’ so much the better, as it would help guide and mold Callie and help her settle into a new family.

It will be a great day for all of us at UCHS when Callie finds that special family, as we do not want the stress of being returned once too often to overcome her spirited nature. Callie is waiting to make a snowball for you— to meet her call 519-833-2287.

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