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QUALITIES OF LIFE

Charming pit bull saves the day (and Daisy the Yorkie)

By William Hageman

Tribune staff reporter
Published February 19, 2006

They are the oddest couple: Traveler, a muscular 2-year-old pit bull, and Daisy, a year-old Yorkie who looks as though she could be knocked over by a sneeze.

Their bond: Traveler saved Daisy's life with a blood donation.

Daisy, who belongs to Abigail Lebron of Palos Hills, was dying from autoimmune hemolytic anemia.

"It's its own body attacking its own blood cells," explained Dr. Derrick Landini of the Animal Ark Veterinary Clinic in Chicago. "The cause of why the dog got it is really unknown."

All Lebron knew was that Daisy was sick.

"She was lethargic, not eating or drinking," she said. "I took her to another hospital, and they told us she needed a blood transfusion, but they couldn't do it."

Then she found Animal Ark and Landini. And Traveler, who lives at the clinic.

The Jan. 17 procedure was rather simple. Traveler was lightly sedated, the IV was set up and Daisy received about 3 ounces of blood.

Daisy went home that night and now is good as new. Traveler was up and about a half-hour after the procedure. Of course, a blood transfusion is nothing compared with what he has been through. Traveler was in danger of dying from a host of ailments after being rescued from post-Katrina Mississippi by the Munster (Ind.) Humane Society. Charmed by the dog's personal-ity but unable to treat him, the Munster people reached out to

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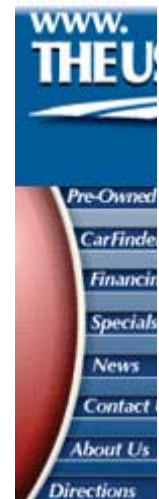
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Chicago Canine Rescue, which takes in animals that other facilities can't treat or handle long term.

CCR brought Traveler to Animal Ark, where he was nursed back to robust health. But what to do with the happy-go-lucky dog?

"We didn't have a home for him, and Dr. Landini said he could stay here," said CCR executive director Lisa Tingley.

So Traveler became part of the clinic, running through the building, playing with any dog he'd see, sleeping in a king-size bed and going to lunch with staff members.

"We had someone who was interested in [adopting] him," said Tingley, whose organization has about 70 dogs available at any time. "But that's when Dr. Landini and the whole staff, they were like, 'What if he leaves . . . ?' "

So Landini adopted Traveler.

"We kept him for a simple reason," Landini said. "He's such a great dog. He gets along with every dog, with every person. We've fostered a lot of strays here, but he has been the best."

Daisy would agree.

For more information on Chicago Canine Rescue, go to www.chicagocaninerescue.com.

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