



EDITORIAL

Further down you can see some photos of the two DOP meeting we had in August! DOP Germany and DOP Denmark organized their own afternoon mingle between adopted dogs and their guardians. We are always very fond of these get-togethers as we get to see and spent some time with some of our dogs!

And this month we dedicate the newsletter exclusively to senior dogs. Often forgotten and rarely adopted, senior dogs have a lot of love to give and in exchange they just want some comfort, and the love of a family in their last years of life.



DOP SENIORS

Dogs of Portugal has created an area of intervention exclusive to older pets and we'd like you to become part of this movement by helping us or spreading the word. The average life expectancy of pets has been increasing, leading to more and more older animals not only living in homes, but unfortunately also in shelters and municipal kennels, places that hardly have a proper health care system for their age, due to lack of funds and working force for the amount of resident animals they have...



DOP believes that every animal should be treated with the outmost respect and dignity, especially senior dogs in need of personalized care due to their age.

An older animal doesn't necessarily mean a sick dog, as getting old isn't a disease, but a stage of life. A senior dog can be playful and lively and only in need of a different life dynamic. Nowadays a 65 years old person is called of "senior". But is it really an old person??

Adopting a senior dog doesn't necessarily mean that the dog has physical problems. But it most certainly means a different dog, probably a dog that needs a calmer environment with less exercise. And no chewing on things or destroying the house! But they will love our company and they really need a home.

DOP is trying to help 54 senior dogs... On a weekly basis, we check their hygiene and



health: ears, teeth, mobility, social interaction, walks and socialization. Every kind gesture, every pet we give is a form of therapy. And every month a vet sees and evaluates them. But we also try to get as cheap as possible all the things they might need: vaccines, internal and external deworming, medication, food, beds, dog sweaters and waterproof vests.

Your help is crucial for this cause. Only with it can we keep and even get bigger and better while trying to improve the quality of life of DOP's senior dogs.



WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF...

...special medication for the senior dogs we help!

We always and urgently need heart medication:

- Enalapril Maleate 5mg and 20mg
- Furosemda
- Vetmedin



And we also need joint relief medication:

- Omnicondro
- Consequin



SENIORS FOR ADOPTION

These are a few of the senior dogs we help that are looking for a new family:



FOFINHA



GRC | EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES



Can adult or senior dogs be educated?

We are often asked this question by possible adopters and guardians. It is common to think that only younger dogs can be educated/trained, and it is true that the initial phase of socialization is indeed crucial and will influence all the dog's experience. But a dog can be educated/trained at any stage of their life, regardless of the age. The brain doesn't stop: its needs and necessities remain, although you will have to adapt your choices and requirements to the physical condition and the health of the dog.

If on one hand a young dog has not yet acquired "behavioral addictions" (facilitating their learning), on the other, you will always have to share your attention with the entire surrounding environment; the amount of energy, the curiosity, the desire to discover, explore and investigate will always be distracting to a younger dog. It is easier to get the attention of an adult or senior dog and you will be surprised by the ability to learn they reveal, even taking into account the "behavioral addictions" they might eventually have acquired and that are likely to be corrected.

To educate/train an adult or senior dog is not only possible but also an enjoyable task for you and your dog. Furthermore this will help to keep your pet healthy and happy! The brain stimulation is critical throughout the whole life of your dog, but especially at a more senior stage.

The conditioning required for learning is the same used for educating/training younger dogs. The use of positive reinforcement, obtained by the use of rewards such as treats, toys, petting or anything else your dog values in a positive way, is our preferred option.

Rides, games, plays and even sports can and should continue to be an important part of the routine of the dog, even in senior age, not forgetting, as already mentioned, the need to adapt choices and demands due to the physical condition and state of health of the dog. That is, for instance, compensating the need for shorter walks by choosing more appealing routes for dogs so they can exercise all senses. Likewise, fun time and games must go on to have a more mental than physical component. There is even agility training for senior dogs where exercises, obstacles and speed are adjusted to the dog's physical condition.

In short, learning is a lifelong activity and it is never too late to start!

GRC (Canine Rehabilitation Group)



LAST MONTH ADOPTIONS

In August 2014 a total of 24 animals were adopted!

Boogie, Cacau, Dani, Flora, Lucas, Mango, Maria Madalena (now Pookie), Mel (now Melou), Mia, Opal (now Lino), Pantufa, Pulga (now Nina), Quim (now Kruger), Rebeca, Sansão, Sata, Sebastião, Silvia (now Mila), Smile, Thomas, Tobi, Yorki (now Milu), Yuri and Zeca (now Barneby).

If you have adopted a dog or a cat from us, give us news!



MOLLY | SENIOR ADOPTION



"In October 2013 we adopted Molly. She was 8 or 10 years old and thus a senior dog. The first month she practically lived on our couch, obviously shielding herself from too many new impressions, by staying at the place she felt safest. We experienced some really "cartoonish" situations; once, while shopping for a harness for her at a pet store, Molly decided to lie down flat on the floor and never-ever get up! Neither treats or gently pulling her leash could convince her to stand up. Molly just slid across the floor like

a four-legged mop! We had to lift her up on her paws and gently push her outside to the car again. Likewise, she rarely wanted to get up for walks, but insisted on staying on the couch or on her dogbed. We discovered that the easiest way was to carry her to the front door, that usually convinced her to go outside. While on a walk, she would also suddenly refuse to go in a particular direction. One day we were passing some noisy road work, and Molly put the brakes on. She was NOT going past them. It did not make sense to push her if she felt uncomfortable, so we just turned around and walked the other way. Allowing Molly to make decisions on her own never caused me any worry. I believe that it was important to give her time and calmness. Today, she will happily come running when she hears the leash, though she can still occasionally make a "sit down strike" while out on a walk. If I want to extend our walk, she notices immediately, and is not really fond of that. She has a highly developed sense of direction and knows very well the shortest way home. If we're passing a place that makes her uncomfortable, I squat, make eye contact and encourage talking to her. Sometimes it's enough just to lightly touch her harness as a sign that we are moving forward.

In the beginning, I constantly praised her while we were out on walks. Every time she showed initiative to sniff or pee acrobatically at something, I encouraged her. And yes, you read that right: Molly pees like a male dog! Our (male) dog Sofus taught her that in no time. We went for the same short, familiar walks the first weeks and it made her feel at ease.

A few weeks after we got Molly, I suddenly had doubts; was it right to move her away from everything she knew? She was just laying there on the couch and seemed a bit gloomy. Would it be possible for her to adapt and profit from having a calm home? I had already read that it could be this way, but suddenly I felt sorry for her.

I sat with her a lot. Pet her belly, cuddled and talked, so she would feel comfortable. She seemed to enjoy it. She stretched her legs and turned her belly up as soon as we approached her. She still does that. Every night before I went to bed, I sat with her for half an hour and cuddled. If it was too overwhelming for her to approach us, then I would approach her.

After a month she suddenly blossomed. She started to follow me upstairs when I went to bed. We heard her bark for the first time, and her "sit down strikes" were fewer.

Today Molly is happy and outgoing. She is not a playful dog, who will chase balls or sticks, but she has a lovely life. She comes running with her tail wagging and greets me when I return from having been out. She barks along with Sofus if someone passes the hedge. She jumps up to me in bed every morning and rolls around the duvet and wants to cuddle. She will tap dance with joy when I take out food for her, and will jump around like a lamb going out on grass for the first time, when dry dog food is served scattered over the lawn. She is trusting of strangers and is not startled by loud noises as often as in the beginning.

Of course we will not have Molly with us for as many years as if we would have adopted a young dog or a puppy. But every day we get to see a beautiful senior dog enjoy her retirement and it is a great joy. I would never have anything but an old "second hand" rumpled dog."

Henriette
Molly's adoptant

