

Carolyn and Rockie's Story



A smile on her face, head up, tail high -- that's how Rockie enters a facility (add a frisbee in her mouth for Mt. View DYC). It's hard to believe that happy Rockie has a survival story of her own that is profound enough to instantly create a bond between her and a depressed wayward youth under lockup.

I rescued Rockie from an irresponsible breeding situation when she was 2 years old; she had just weaned her second litter of ten pups. Rockie was emaciated; every rib was visible through her fur. She had never been in a car or a house, hadn't a clue how to deal with stairs, thought I was crazy

when I bounced a tennis ball in front of her, wasn't sure how to eat or drink out of a bowl. She was terrified of plastic bags, wary of other dogs, of people, of me. Those of you who know Rockie know that's not my girl now --- the real Rockie was waiting to emerge and within two months, she was running after frisbees in the snow, charming the neighbors with her ladylike manners, walking by my side off leash, and clearly indicating she needed a job that would fulfill her golden retriever instincts to nurture every human she encounters. Since I was retiring, Rockie's golden retriever gifts and my own personality blended well into becoming a team.



Perched on a chair at Sky Ridge so she can reach her nose and paw to a patient, Rockie has spread her blanket of calmness over many patients and visitors, diverting their attention from the stress and tedium of a hospital stay. Recently, we sat with a young woman whose family was trying to find a way to get her home to die. She couldn't



she speak but nodded her head that she wanted Rockie to come close; Rockie laid on a chair with her head and front paws over the arm of the patient, eyes closed, not moving a muscle for 20 minutes until family members entered with hospice and staff and we had to leave. We spent another 30 minutes out in the hallway with the ten and twelve year old children of the dying patient, Rockie providing entertainment performing tricks she learned from the boys at Mt. View. The kids laughed and fed her enough dog treats to necessitate opening the car windows on the ride home.

Like all of our dogs who give their time to clients in tough situations, we have numerous tear-jerker stories. But my favorite yarns are about the rooms where a visit is declined when I pop my head in the door: "No thank you" --- and then Rockie pokes her head around the door and the answer changes to "Yes, oh yes, please!"

And the kid at Mt. View who so simply stated, "I love Rockie and she loves me."

