



Annabelle: Street Dog to Obedience Dog to Therapy Dog

By Diane Richardson



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Dee Landis & Annabelle, CDX, RE 1st Rally Excellent, CRC Silver Eligible
Photo by Terry Rowe Photography
www.rowepetart.com/support/pets.html

On October 23, 2006, Dee Landis adopted an approximately one-year-old girl from Superior's Haven, a Pennsylvania Rottweiler rescue. The rescue had been called about this "stray" Rottweiler, but after some discussion with the callers, it was discovered that they were being less than truthful. They finally admitted that their son owned the dog and no longer wanted her, so he dropped her off at his parents' home. The parents did not want her, so they turned her outside on the street! Dee had owned Annabelle for about a year, when she suddenly became very ill. When Dee left for work that morning, Annabelle was

somewhat subdued and inactive and just "not herself." When Dee came home, Annabelle was on the couch, lying with her front paws hanging over the edge of the couch. Her front paws were swollen to double their normal size. She was quite lethargic and could not get up. Poor Annabelle was rushed to the veterinarian where it was discovered that she had severe Lyme disease and was very ill. It was a long road back to good health, but she eventually had a complete recovery.



Annabelle providing some therapy for children at an event for children affected with cleft palate and their families.



Annabelle & Dee attending the Roslyn Pet Fair to represent the Comfort Caring Canines Therapy Group

At one point, Dee's male Rottweiler, Toby, became blind. It was quite a difficult adjustment for Dee, Toby, and Annabelle. However, once Annabelle realized that her friend could no longer see, she actually looked out for him. Dee witnessed her on the back patio on a few occasions, pushing him away when he was walking too close to the edge, which had about a one-foot drop off the edge. Dee started training Annabelle with an eye towards obtaining obedience titles, but the Novice stand for exam proved to be quite a challenge.

Annabelle loves people, any and all people, in spite of her past. When anyone would approach her, her whole back end would shake because she was so happy! After much work on self control, this was overcome. Annabelle first earned her AKC Canine Good Citizen certificate as it was a requirement to enter the competition novice obedience classes. She then passed the obedience and temperament evaluations with Comfort Caring Canines, a Therapy Dog Organization, in March 2008 and became a Registered Therapy Dog. She passed the American Temperament Test Society's Temperament test at the Colonial Rottweiler Club's Specialty on April 28, 2008. Annabelle then earned her AKC Companion Dog title in May 2009, AKC Rally Novice title in February 2010, AKC Rally Advanced title in June 2010, AKC Companion Dog Excellent in September 2010, and her AKC Rally Excellent title in November 2010. Annabelle also qualified for a Bronze Achievement Award with Colonial Rottweiler Club in May 2010. Annabelle and Dee are currently working towards Annabelle's AKC Utility Dog title and also plan to trial towards an AKC Rally Advanced Excellent title. However, Dee considers Annabelle's service as a working therapy dog to be her greatest achievement. Annabelle is remarkable with people. She loves anyone and everyone equally: young or old, healthy or sick, mobile or immobile. She visits St. Joseph Villa weekly, and Norristown State Hospital (a psychiatric facility) twice a month. Dee is most proud of her interaction with those who have various levels of psychiatric disabilities. She has remained caring and loving, even in the most spontaneous and difficult situations. In 2010, Annabelle worked approximately 88 hours as a therapy dog. When asked for a parting comment on this wonderful girl who has overcome a rough start and being tossed on the street like a piece of trash, Dee said, "I consider myself very, very blessed to have this amazing dog in my life! I hope that I can always strive to help her achieve all that she is capable of." I agree. Annabelle CDX, RE working therapy dog is a very special Rottweiler girl!

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