

Mikayla—From Dumpster to Performance Dog

By Diane Richardson



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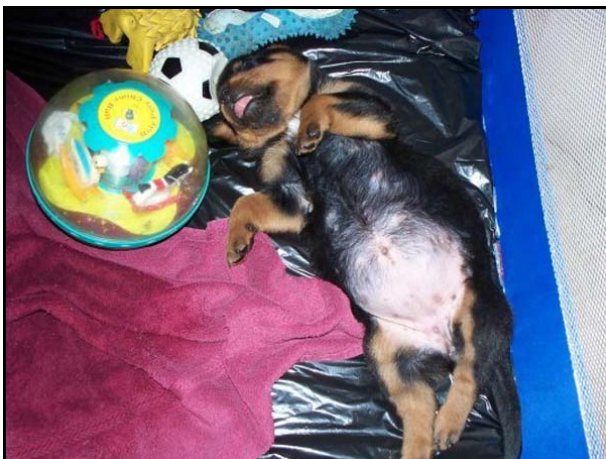
Mikayla



Mikayla started out life in October of 2007 in a very inauspicious way. She was found somewhat hypothermic, wrapped in rags in a dumpster when just a day or two old. Kathy Braza's veterinarian asked her to take this little life on and see if the puppy could be saved.

Kathy worked with the infant and, despite the

odds, she survived. Then came the task of making sure that without a mother and littermates she turned into a "normal" dog. She even borrowed two other young rescue dogs to teach Mikayla about having siblings and living with other dogs.



Kathy loved the puppy but was afraid to keep her because she was a Rottweiler—one of "those dogs"—and she did not feel that hers was the right home for such a dog. As Mikayla grew, it was clear that she was going to be quite a dominant dog and would need a very experienced home. When the puppy was old enough, the rescue group Kathy works with adopted Mikayla to a woman with high references. It seemed like the perfect placement. Then the new owner brought Mikayla back for "baby sitting" more and more frequently. A couple of times it was obvious that Mikayla was entering a very serious testing stage. It seemed as if the new owner simply did not know how to handle Mikayla and her level of activity.

When Mikayla was just 8 months old, she was returned to Kathy and the woman walked away as if she'd never even owned and spent time with Mikayla.

Mikayla needed a lot of work with dog and human socializing, so again, Kathy borrowed another rescue dog for a while. She also took Mikayla for dog play dates to teach her dog skills. Kathy worked on her a lot with the people manners but it was obvious she needed far more people exposure than she'd get in their rural home.

Kathy joined the Salisbury Kennel Club to be around other dog people and dogs and to attend a wide array of classes to expose Mikayla to many people, dogs, and mental activities. She succeeded beyond Kathy's dreams.

Mikayla has not only changed Kathy's mind about the Rottweiler breed, but has earned her Canine Good Citizen certificate (and was recently approved to be the neutral dog in CGC tests), AKC Rally Novice and Advanced titles with placements at both levels, her AKC Companion Dog title (in spite of attacking Kathy's feet on the fast at one trial to the crowd's entertainment!) and is working towards her AKC



Mikayla and her freestyle instructor at a Responsible Dog owner days freestyle demo.

Companion Dog Excellent title! She is also having a blast at Freestyle and in being a wonderful ambassador for the breed.

Briarhook's Miracle of Mikayla, CGC, CD, RA has come a very, very long way from being discarded like trash to a well-adjusted, social, obedient, and loving Rottweiler. Kathy and Mikayla live in Delaware, USA.