

Suffield Veterinary Hospital December 2011 Patient of the Month

We proudly present Olivia the Newfoundland Water Rescue Dog, owned by Linda and John Freitas of Enfield. Her "Wonder Dog" photo below was taken by Lori Radke. Here is her story, told by Linda:

We were so lucky the day this adorable puppy came into our lives. It was amazing how quickly she learned. Olivia is very willing to please, and gives so much love to everyone she meets.

When she was young, the worst happened and we almost lost her. Olivia was gravely ill twice prior to being a year old with severe bleeding complications following 2 emergency exploratory surgeries at Tufts University, and following a hysterectomy at Suffield Veterinary Hospital. Because the unusual surgical events at Tufts warned Dr. Huntington to take extra-aggressive post-operative monitoring and care at Suffield, she weathered that storm as well.

Within 3 months post-surgery she was enjoying kayaking. It was amazing to see how excited she was to jump into the boat and go for a ride. It looked like she was watching for people in trouble. That summer we started water rescue training, which came naturally to her. Within 9 months she earned titles in obedience, rally, draft dog (cart pulling) and a junior water dog title. We continued water training, which definitely seemed to be her favorite. She was swimming out with a life ring to rescue victims in distress and jumping off the boat to help drowning victims. At age 3, Olivia earned her Senior Water Rescue Title with a spectacular performance.

Olivia was busy training this past spring and summer to take her Water Rescue Dog Excellent (WRDX) test in August. The Newfoundland Club of New England had only passed 1 dog in 7 years. On test day, Olivia had an unbelievably enthusiastic "I can do it" attitude and I thought she might have a chance. There were 6 exercises to pass including towing a boat to shore, jumping off a boat to rescue 3 people, swimming out and taking an unconscious victim's hand and towing her to shore, and diving under a raft to rescue the person trapped underneath. Yes, she did it! Olivia, at age 4, passed on her first try and is now an X Dog!

We are so proud of this amazing dog. We refer to her as the "Wonder Dog" because of what she has gone through and has accomplished.

Suffield Veterinary Hospital is proud to name Olivia our December Patient of the Month for being such an amazing WRDX Wonder Dog!



Suffield Veterinary Hospital

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View Olivia and all our Patients of the Month on our web site, www.suffieldvet.com