

## 2016 - Celebrating a Decade

As 2016 comes to a close, I sit thinking, where does time go? How did Slice get to be my oldest dog at 9 ½ and how is Sniper going to be turning 3 already? Pint and Arson are also in that mix of thoughts but they are in the middle. Most of all I am so happy to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of See Spot Run. This little dream that was made possible by a small group of friends and my parents to push me to take a giant leap. Things haven't always been easy but we keep making it to the top of the mountain. More importantly, I have had the pleasure of spending the last ten years with the heart and soul of many families, the dog. Knowing that my customers trust me with a very important member of their family means a lot. I have seen a lot of dogs come and go in those ten years but I can happily say that some of the dogs that first walked through my door are still spending their days with me.

Once again, this past year, Slice and I headed to Europe to compete for Team Canada at the IFCS World Championships. This time we returned to the Netherlands and had the most amazing time. Slice was healthy and running stronger than she ever has at the age of 9. Run after run she came to line in my arms, I kissed her on her head, put her on the ground and we were off. Our team work was amazing she didn't put a foot wrong all competition. We placed well in all our events, various placements in the top 10 in the world! This girl keeps amazing me and the journey continues. Last year I thought would be her last on the world stage but it appears it will be this year, after one last European adventure when we travel to Spain in April of 2017. Slice is at the top of her game and I am drinking in every moment we spend together, whether it is on an agility course or just hanging out.

Keeping on the Team Canada theme, Arson is starting to make his mark in the world too. It has taken us as a team a bit longer to prove ourselves but we are getting there. December 17-19, 2016, Arson and I will be one of three teams selected to represent Canada at the AKC Invitational in Orlando, Florida. I am so proud of this accomplishment and look forward to this amazing opportunity. Arson is ready to wear a maple leaf on his back and do his country proud!

Of course, we wouldn't be where we are today without the continued support of families, friends and customers. Thank you for your continued support and words of encouragement throughout the years that keep pushing us to be better. Most importantly, I could not take on these commitments and adventures if I didn't have my trusty sidekick Amanda. Amanda always has my back and I know when I am away she runs the business as I would. Her passion and attention to detail is what makes us such a great team.

Not to be forgotten, Pint, Sniper, Aries, Keep-Her and Dragon have been busy doing their own things throughout the year. All of them have taken on the new sport of Canine Nosework and simply love it. Sniper and Dragon continue the pursuit of the longest jump on Dock Diving. Truth be told we really don't care how far they jump as the pure joy of watching them throw themselves in the air to splash in the water is worth every penny. As long as they can be at the pool they are pretty sure they are in heaven. Pint and Sniper have taken up competing in Disc Dog and Pint thinks this game is the best thing since sliced bread. I have never seen him so confident and intense as I do when the Frisbees come out.

Sadly, with being in business 10 years, many dogs in our pack are becoming lovely seniors and require special care that we are more than willing to give, but it also means that some of those beautiful souls also leave us. Spending ten years with these lovely creatures is such a pleasure but undeniably they become a constant in our days and our hearts. This year our list of souls that joined the Rainbow Bridge is the longest and most gut wrenching it has been. Even as I put this letter together the tears stream down my face. All of these dogs have spent many years with me and hold a very special place in my heart.

Big Charlie, the Golden Retriever, was such a good boy right to the end. He left the daycare before he passed as his dad got a new job and I cried the day he left and I cried the day I found out he lost his battle with cancer. He followed me around all day and was so very excited to see me when his dad dropped him off. There was always a special cookie for Charlie in my pocket. Charlie was the one of our nannies and took such very good care of all the new puppies that walked through the door. He guided them with his gentle disposition and showed them the ropes with the patience of a saint.

Gambler left this earth way to young and left both Amanda and I in a state of shock when we learned of his sudden passing. He came to the daycare as a wee little puppy and grew up with us. His silly antics kept us laughing as he matured into a sweet young boy and an annoying little brother to his sister Vegas. We miss him dearly.

Old man Chip and his sister Meeko both left us this year. Chip and Meeko were a part of See Spot Run in the very beginning and visited with us almost to the end. I got the pleasure of seeing them in the daycare but also spent time at agility trials with them as we all competed against each other. Chip and I would sit down every time he came and talk about the good old days while I shared my breakfast or whatever snack I was eating, Chip wasn't picky. Chip always got the fluffiest pillow in the room regardless of who may have claimed it first. At 16 years old he deserved all the respect he got.

Meeko was the everlasting energizer bunny, always on the go and tattle taling on whoever was getting in trouble. We ran a tight ship when Meeko was on duty. Her reward was always a tennis ball and a little fetch. She was one of Porter's harem of ladies so I know he is looking after her now that they are together again.

Charlie Corbett our sweet old Springer Spaniel had a short but valiant battle with cancer. Even when he was uncomfortable he still was the sweetest old man and so very tolerant of all the puppies that wanted to hang around with him. It must go with the name as this Charlie was also a nanny to the many young whipper snappers that walked through the door. His quiet demeanor welcomed them all and taught them well.

Molly, my parents 16 year old Cocker Spaniel, decided she wasn't making the trip with them to Palm Springs this winter. Molly also started with us ten years ago and while she was never a huge fan of daycare and the silly antics of the young dogs, she wandered around the daycare with grace and quietly made her presence known. Molly lived a very long and fulfilled life and couldn't have asked for a better family to call home.

Sprite, the toy American Eskimo said goodbye just this past week. This one is especially tough for me as I rescued this poor terrified little girl from the SPCA 10 years ago. I didn't know at the time if I could find a home for her but I knew she couldn't stay where she was. I was able to place her in the home of parents of one of my good friends who had a spot to welcome a 6 year old dog with some issues. They spoiled her rotten and she lived a better life than I ever could have imagined. This past year I got the opportunity to have Sprite back in my home as a guest while her parents travelled. I so enjoyed the time we spent together and taking care of her as an old lady. Her little body decided it was time to retire and head to the bridge. I know her parents will miss her greatly and I thank them for taking such good care of her.

A tough year of goodbyes to our four legged friends indeed. We also had to say goodbye to a couple of long time two legged friends. We miss seeing and visiting with them every week too.

Thank you all for your continued support of See Spot Run. You help to make our family complete. Best wishes from both Amanda and I to your families, both two and four legged members.

*Anneli*