

Xena

Xena is a 2-3 year old Newf who was the victim of a divorce. She was confiscated by the Nebraska Humane Society due to neglect. She spent a couple of months housed at NHS. In June 2009, Brent Ellis took her from NHS to VCA Animal Hospital in Omaha. At VCA she was treated for mange and a host of nuisance infections. Brent and Debbie Ellis and John and I took turns going out to the hospital to take her on walks. She was such a happy girl whenever anyone went to visit her and everyone at the hospital loved her. She was in the hospital for almost 3 weeks and then got to come home with me as a “foster.” The remainder of the characters in our home are as follows: Udo; a 10 year old grumpy Great Dane. Tash; my first HANC “foster failure” adopted at the speed of light! Gus; a 23 year old African Grey Parrot who gets the world’s biggest kick out of herself. Ben; my animal-loving 29 year old son. Below is an email sent to Brent, Jocelyn and a few friends who had followed Xena’s plight after her first night in foster care.

Xena’s First Night

The Not-Yet-So-Mighty Princess Xena came home from the hospital last night! She came home with a truckload of medicine some of which she likes and some of which involves free-style wrestling. After a brief introduction to the crew; Udo and Tash must have decided that Xena was a sickly youngster. They let her get away with things last night that would cause the gnashing of teeth were they to do that to each other; i.e. approach a bowl other than one’s own or approach a bone other than one’s own or finally approach a hand that was already busily patting another black dog. The ultimate was being able to enter the sacred den of Udo and receive only a watchful gaze from the dweller within. Ben mentioned on the way home from the hospital that Xena looks a little like a monkey because of her fine features and her lack of hair, now it’s hard to look at her without offering her a banana.

She is incredibly sweet, friendly and gentle. She was caught chewing on just about everything she came in contact with last night, with the exception of her food. That meant she had to go to her kennel at bedtime. Tash rarely barks but, when she does, it is an unusual sound, very low and quiet like she has a throat full of socks. Xena went into her kennel just great but after about 30 seconds she figured out she was alone and made a noise that made Tash's bark pale in the "unusual" department. It was between a squeak and a squawk. Not a bark by the stretch of anyone's imagination. After about the 3rd time, the other dogs must have sensed "unknown beast" in the 'hood and went wild. Gus (the bird) always happily picks up on the strange and unusual or foul and repeats the same often and loudly. Bedtime went like this:
Xena: Squeak, Squawk,squeak, squawk Udo & Tash: (ears & heads cocked) Udo: BOWOWBOWOW... Tash: mhmhmhmh..
Xena: Squeak, Squawk.....squeak, squawk Udo: BOWOWOW...
Tash: mhmhmhmh Gus: Squeak, Squawk...UDO NO!, UDO BE QUIET, YOU GUYS WANNA GO OUT?, Squeak Squawk, (whistling of a police siren) UDO NO, YOU GUYS WANNA EAT?, Squeak, Squawk Zoo Keeper: Everyone be quiet! 30 seconds of peace. REPEAT ABOVE CHORUS.

After about 20 minutes of this, I couldn't take it, I also could no longer tell the difference between Xena and Gus. Gus was having so much fun egging everyone on it could have gone on for hours. Xena ended up sleeping upstairs and she slept through the night. Now it is December 2009, a long time from Xena's first night in what has become her permanent home. She has come a long way physically. She has gained almost 30 pounds, some of which is thick shiny healthy looking hair! She has not had an accident in the house for a month (fingers crossed). We got to attend an obedience class together. She is very attentive, very bright and eager to please. She makes fast friends with everyone she meets

whether they are 2 or 4 legged -- even if they have bird legs. She has been in attendance at many area events and has made quite a splash with her friendly, gentle nature...and occasional sporty wardrobe!

Once again, I cannot say enough about HANC and its members. Xena's future would have been questionable had she not been rescued from NHS. I received a tremendous amount of much-needed support, advice and guidance from Jocelyn, Brent & Marty regarding her care. Kudos also to VCA Animal Hospital, the staff there and Dr. Batenhorst. They treated Xena and continue to be thrilled at her progress! I am so happy that once again I have failed in the foster arena and Xena is part of our family!