



CSDR NEWS

CHIHUAHUA & SMALL DOG RESCUE, INC.

Chihuahuas Can Do Agility By Jamie Seipel



These days, with so many celebrities sporting their Chihuahuas as fashion accessories, it is easy to forget that our tiny dogs are just that, dogs. Like all dogs, they need and love to get out and run and play. Just like their larger cousins, they are very smart, playful and agile. If you are looking for that perfect sport for your dog, I would recommend agility.

Biscuit, my chi, and I started taking agility classes when he was a year old. Up to that point I have to admit that I was a horrible Chihuahua mommy. I carried him wherever we went,



if he whined, I picked him up and babied him. Not only is it a sport that I was interested in doing with him, it was something that he really needed.

To get started in agility, all you, and your four-legged friend, need to know are some basic commands – come, sit, down & stay. If your dog can do that you are well on your way to a great time. Agility combines jumping over bars that are set at a proper height for your dog, going through tunnels, maneuvering through the weave poles, the A-frame, dog walk, and let's not forget the teeter. A good trainer will introduce you and your dog to these obstacles slowly so they learn to enjoy and not fear them.

The first class I went to was just as spectators to see how it was done. Well before long we were the smallest pair out there having a great time. Biscuit LOVED to jump over those bars, and he'd come running back to me so proud of himself. Of course, we went back every week and learned more and more. By the time the

class was over my little Chihuahua ran through the course better than most of the larger dogs in our class, and he knew it too.

Our biggest challenge is that as a Chihuahua Biscuit is pretty stubborn, and he would prefer to run the course on his own instead of listening to his mommy. This is when it becomes really important to use the skills you have learned in training as well. Although you are telling your dog verbally which obstacle

they are going to next, they take their cues from your body language. And being so low to the ground, even the direction your foot faces can determine which direction he would run. And oh the bending over I did during our training sessions – my abs were starting to look pretty good.

Agility can be done either at a competition

level, or just for fun. Biscuit and I did a couple of competitions before we decided to only do it for fun. During the competitions he would get out there, we would start off great, and people would start giggling at the little dog out there – which Biscuit takes as his cue to start showing off. Although that is very cute, it doesn't help win a competition. Besides, we have so much fun at practice, we would like to keep it that way.

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Year Two Highlights By Sue Fisher

We are celebrating our second completed year. What a wonderful year we had. We have grown from 35 volunteers to 57 volunteers. Our volunteers are wonderful; they have opened their homes to the little ones that we rescue, nurse them back to health, socialize them and housebreak them. They give up their Saturdays or Sundays to help at Meet & Greets and fundraisers, all for the little ones. We have an amazing group of people who are dedicated to the cause of saving lives and my heart goes out to each and everyone. Our rescue and adoption numbers will be in our January 2008 newsletter.

One of our major highlights of this year was the rescue of 17 puppy mill dogs. This was a major undertaking for us as we have never taken in 17 dogs at one time and to make this work we needed more foster parents. Our foster parents at the time talked family members and friends into volunteering. So, come that day before the rescue trip, we were able to tell the puppy mill that we could take all the little ones they were offering. It was a great day; we didn't have to leave any behind. The day that all the dogs came in was a day of happiness. Our volunteers banded together at 7:00 pm at our vet's office.



Our vet opened their doors for us even though it was after hours. All 17 dogs got their initial examination and vaccines that evening. Every volunteer that came to help that evening all had to go to work the next morning, and we all knew it could possibly be a very long night. We worked together, gave them baths, got them all bedded down for the night and even took care of the fleas. It was a great feeling to see the teamwork and the dedication that our volunteers have towards these little ones.

All the little ones slept for the first time in clean warm kennels at our vet's office. The next day was spay and neuter day.

So, all the little ones were spayed/neutered and at the end of the day, it was time for all of them to go to their foster homes. Not only did all the foster parents show up to pick up

their new foster dog, but some of the same people from the night before showed up to help sign out the dogs, hand out medication and help clean kennels and crates.

Once the dust settled from these two amazing days so that we could catch our breaths and take a look back on what we did, my heart had a huge smile and I had tears in my eyes for not only did we save 17 lives, we all came together as a great team. The two little ones that we did not think would make it because they were so sick, came through with flying colors. I knew we had a great organization with wonderful people, but these two days showed what an amazing group of people we have.

Thank you everyone for all that you do for our little ones. We had a great year because of all of you.



Agility Continued

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There are several good trainers in the area, with prices that vary widely. Before you sign up for a class, find out what the requirements are – some places require you to know your basic obedience commands, some places will let you learn those while you are learning agility. Also,

check out their equipment; make sure everything looks sturdy and stable, nothing that could harm you or your dog. But mostly, just remember to have fun with it – not only is it a great time for your dog – it is a great time for you as well.



Resources for Agility

Books

The Beginner's Guide to Agility by Laurie Leach. 2006. TFH Publishers. Includes information for building your own agility equipment.

Having Fun with Agility by Margaret H. Bonham. 2005. Wiley Publishing Co. Great layouts for laying out your own agility courses.

Web

<http://www.affordableagility.com/> Source for purchasing agility equipment.

<http://cleanrun.com/> Get a chuckle—click the Magazine Forum and watch as people set up an agility course at high speed. Click Course Designer to design your own course.



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Chihuahua/Small Dog Rescue, Inc.
53 Monk Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80911

Phone: 719-291-3536
Fax: 719-392-4355
E-mail: info@chihuahua-smalldogrescue.org
Web: www.chihuahua-smalldogrescue.org

CSDR News

Editor Jeanne Stroh

csdrnews@yahoo.com

Send letters to the editor to
csdrnews@yahoo.com

Tip

Most toy boxes for dogs are too big for Chihuahuas and other small breeds. Still, I was tired of my dogs' growing collection of toys cluttering up the house. I found the perfect solution when I spotted unfinished, wooden vegetable crates at a craft store. Add a little paint, and you have a toy box that even the tiniest dog can get into. Tip: use spray paint. I used a brush and it was a real pain.

Jeanne



It's Just a Dog

From time to time people tell me, "Lighten up, it's just a dog," or, "That's a lot of money for just a dog." They don't understand the distance traveled, the time spent or the costs involved for "just a dog."

Some of my proudest moments have come about with "just a dog."

Many hours have passed and my only company was "just a dog," but I did not once feel slighted.

Some of my saddest moments have been brought about by "just a dog," and, in those days of darkness, the gentle touch of "just a dog" gave me comfort and reason to overcome the day.

If you, too, think it's "just a dog," then you will probably understand phases like "just a friend," "just a sunrise," or "just a promise."

"Just a dog" brings into my life the very essence of friendship, trust, and pure unbridled joy.

"Just a dog" brings out the compassion and patience that makes me a better person.

Because of "just a dog" I will rise early, take long walks and look longingly to the future.

So for me, and folks like me, it's not "just a dog" but an embodiment of all the hopes and dreams of the future, the fond memories of the past and the pure joy of the moment.

"Just a dog" brings out what's good in me and diverts my thoughts away from myself and the worries of the day.

I hope that someday they can understand that it's not "just a dog" but the thing that gives me humanity and keeps me from being "just a human."

So the next time you hear the phrase "just a dog" just smile.... because they "just don't understand."

- Anonymous

In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train him to be semi-human. The point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly dog.

— Edward Hoagland