

Donovan - Animal-Assisted Therapy Dog

Donovan was a scared little pup who never left his kennel when he originally arrived at foster mom, Marcie's house in March 2013.

Marcie felt it was best for Donovan to go to a quieter foster home and Kayla and Cong were kind enough to foster him.

We adopted Donovan on May 25, 2013, which happens to be our wedding anniversary from DREAM Rescue in Houston, TX.

Kayla and Cong came over one night for dinner, shortly after we got Donovan and they helped us to take Donovan outside in our backyard for him to do his business. This is when Donovan realized that our backyard was "safe".

A suggestion that Kayla and Cong had since we do not have a doggie door was to put bells out that hang from the door handle. This way when Donovan has to go out he can let us know by ringing his bells. They had been working with him on this at their house. This was a great idea.

Donovan continued to be scared of different things and to be honest we did not know how to handle it. I decided to find a positive based trainer and I found one, Pat Cox, in Bellville, TX. She was a God send. She also has become a great friend.

Pat would show us how to work with Donovan with his fears as it appeared he had not been socialized when he was a puppy.

One of the break throughs for Donovan that helped build his confidence was learning to go through a dog tunnel. Initially, he was very scared. Pat would put treats out in front of the tunnel and in the tunnel and finally one day he went through the tunnel. Now, he loves tunnels.

We took him through training where he learned to have fun. He even has been a demo dog in some of her training classes.

We kept working with Donovan with his fears.

We decided to have Donovan temperament tested with a local animal-assisted therapy program, Caring Critters. If he passed the testing he would be working on a team with other therapy animals visiting hospitals, nursing homes, or other facilities.

We were thrilled when he passed his temperament test. He will be visiting a local hospital with other dogs from his Caring Critters team.

What is so exciting to us is that Donovan is paying it forward. He will be bringing joy and love to others at the local hospital, like DREAM did for him and does everyday for the other DREAM dogs.