

Pandemic Pooches Thank You

By **Sheralyn Roman**

Hi folks, guest columnist and ?roving? reporter Otis here, taking the place of my human while she takes a little break from reality. At least, that's what she's calling it.

I don't know why she needs a break, if you ask me this ?reality? thing is pretty sweet. Since this whole thing called a ?pandemic? happened, I've made a bunch of new friends, found a brand new home and I get more cuddles now than any canine could ever dream of! That's why today I'm writing on behalf of pandemic pooches everywhere to say thank you for rescuing us!

I don't like to talk about it much, but I want to take you back to a dark time in my life. I lived (if you can call it that) in a barn, mostly in a cage. I didn't really have many friends and sometimes I even had to grab my food and run away to another part of the barn to eat it or another dog would steal it.

The people who came to the barn sometimes weren't very nice and I'm being polite, ?cause Mum told me this is a family newspaper. Anyhow, one day a really nice lady came and rescued me, and a few of my friends as well and took us to a place called a shelter. Guess what? There I found a whole bunch of other dogs, just like me, and even a few cats too. I was SO nervous I didn't know what to do, but the nice people gave us all baths and brushed our hair and gave us yummy food and even toys to play with. I won't lie, it was kind of overwhelming and I had no idea what to do with a toy but, boy, after a year of practice, I sure am learning now!

It turns out, when I chat, sniff and play with some of my new friends at the park, like Sophie, and Bear, Harley and Raffi, that a lot of humans got puppies (or some of us more mature dogs, I'm 4 but age ?is just a number?, right?) and that has meant a whole bunch of pooches found great new homes during the pandemic. Lucky us!

I want you to know on behalf of pandemic pooches everywhere that we are really, really thankful.

I have buddies who had it worse than me, living outside ALL the time and some lady dog friends who had to have lots and lots of puppies that all got taken away from them. I sure hope those pups are in nice homes now and thank goodness someone rescued my lady friends too. From what my pooch pals tell me, it seems like this pandemic thing isn't that great for humans but for us ?shelter? dogs ? it's been great! We have new homes, families that love us and for those families with lots and lots of patience, we're learning how to love them back.

I guess my only real complaint is that when I was rescued, there were 5 humans living in my house and I really, really loved them all, but especially ?my two girls.? Now they've both left me and went to someplace called work and another place called university. One of my male humans was also pretty cool and sometimes put me on his skateboard, but now he's someplace working too.

The good news is that he and his girlfriend rescued their own dog so now I have a cousin I can maybe go and visit one day! I hear he's a lot bigger than me, even though he's younger! For now, I guess I'm ok with Mum and Dad. At least when Mum goes to work she takes me with her and I meet other people called customers and they are even taking me to new places too. Just the other day I had my first ride on a kayak! I'm not a fan of the lifejacket, but Mum said I needed it to be safe and I trust her now to know what's best for me. Afterwards we went to GoodLot and the nice owner there gave me a treat. Yup ? life is pretty sweet now.

Anyway, all I really wanted to say is that if you, like my ?pawrents,? have to go back to those places called work and school, don't forget about us pandemic pooches. We're ever so grateful for our new lives and we're happy to be a part of the family even when it starts to look a little different from when we first joined the family.

We've already gone through one big adjustment, so please be patient and give us a little time to go through this new phase too. One thing I can share about all my friends is that we are very loyal. We love our humans ? so please keep loving us too! I'm not sure I'll

get a chance to write to you all again but thanks for reading my column today and Mum told me before she left that I should include some information about our very own Caledon Animal Shelter; so here it is in case you'd like to know more about rescuing dogs (or any animal friend!):

Caledon Animal Shelter. A 12889 Coleraine Drive, Bolton, ON L7E 5R9?(905)584-2272 (Extension 4698)