

Lexi Barab and Dori



After 3 Covid rescue dogs all with their own challenges (bone cancer, dog reactivity, and degenerative myelopathy), I was looking for my goldilocks dog: a dog gentle enough to play with my elderly German Shepherd who couldn't run around anymore and aware enough to know when my reactive dog needed alone time. A dog that was already socialized and young enough to grow older with me. A dog that could go on hikes with me and cuddle me while I worked from home. With my impossibly high expectations, I kept my eye out at Humane Colorado (formerly the Dumb Friends League) where I

volunteer once a week, peeking into every single kennel during every shift. In the middle of winter, I found a small, golden dog in the lost and found kennels, slowly wagging her tail, timid, but clearly craving attention. I offered her a hot dog, but all she wanted was a hug. At home, I got permission from my roommate to bring another dog into our home, already full of fosters and resident animals. A few days later she was making slow introductions to the house and everyone inside it.



It turns out the timid, skinny golden I picked up was closer to 8 months old instead of 2 years old as estimated by the shelter. She was house trained, and the only "command" she knew was hug. She loved playing in snow and chasing her friends around, but she didn't yet understand the concept of toys. She quickly became my much more social shadow. Everywhere we went, she became everyone's new best friend, always able to pick up on who needed a soft dog to pet in the middle of any dog friendly store. For extra socialization, I enrolled the two of us in every PetSmart class on offer from brain games to therapy.

Unsurprisingly, she never mastered her colors or learned how to read, but she excelled at the therapy classes, and I decided to start the Pet Partners registration process as soon as we were allowed.

DPP Team of the Month (February 2026)



Dori and I became a registered Pet Partners team in November 2023, and therapy visits became a regular part of our bonding time together alternating between a local elementary school and the Denver International Airport.

Dori's two volunteer jobs couldn't be more different. At school, Dori often takes naps, rolling over onto her back for students to brush and pet her while practicing their reading skills or telling her about their upcoming weekend plans. At the airport, Dori is a showgirl. She confidently walks the concourses giving out her business card and collecting new friends, travelers and staff alike.



Dori is not the perfect goldilocks dog I once dreamed of 3 years ago; she's my quirky best friend. I will never tire of her excitement when I walk through the door after being gone for less than a minute or the joy in her eyes when she rolls upside down with a toy in her mouth. Whenever she's scared of something new or challenging, I will be there to hold her, just as she literally sits on me whenever I need comforting. I am so grateful that Dori chose me as her parent and that through Denver Pet Partners, I am able to share her with those who could use that soft golden touch and soulful eyes. I know that whatever adventures Dori, her furry sisters, and I have ahead of us, we will share what we've learned from being a Denver Pet Partners team.

Thank you to Denver Pet Partners for the support, the knowledge, and the opportunities to share more quality time with my best friend!

