

My time with these puppies is almost over. I'm sad and excited at the same time. I feel like there is so much more I should be teaching them, yet I also know that it is time for them to be in their new homes. Most puppies are already with their new families, but I choose to keep mine for just a while longer. Puppies go through multiple fear periods during their young lives. The first is around the 4th week. The next fear period is around the 8-10th week. This is why I keep my pups a bit longer. To transition a puppy to a new home during its fear period can cause extra stress issues.

Last Friday my puppies went to Kennedy Elementary School. Kennedy is considered a high risk school, with most children in the "high risk" category. These kids come from broken homes, drug homes, alcoholic parents etc... My contact with the school is a friend from church who is the school's counselor. The puppies and "Auntie May", my adult dog who acts as the puppy babysitter visited Pre-K thru 2nd grade. We saw 10 different classes throughout the day. The kids were incredible. As they sat on the floor, each child was able to hold a puppy for a short while. While some children were holding puppies, the others were petting May Day. It was the highlight of the day.

As the kids were holding puppies, different stories were emerging. There were several children who were terrified of dogs. It was amazing to see how the puppies calmed the children. May Day was a bit big for these kids to handle, but the puppies were just the right size. It was heart warming to see kids who were so anxious and scared about dogs slowly melt and even smile while holding puppies.

I am so excited that Kennedy will be receiving a therapy dog of its own. The school counselor, Christi is receiving one of my future puppies. Taking my puppies to Kennedy is actually the first step to see how the students would react to having their own therapy dog. It was a huge success. Next week we will be visiting grades 3-5.

The puppies themselves did extremely well in such a stressful environment. Dolly was the most outgoing excited puppy of all of them. Every child and adult who held her received a happy wag and lots of kisses. All the other puppies were very calm and content. Neige was a huge hit with everyone. The staff members carried him from class to class and had a difficult time giving him up to the children. Even Star, who is my shiest puppy enjoyed all the extra attention. I was very proud of the fact that no one had a potty accident. I had a 10 minute lunch break in which the puppies had a chance to potty and get a drink of water. From 10:30 to 2:30 we were at the school, with no issues. It was amazing. When we came home, the pups slept about 30 minutes and then were playing and very active. The reason I put this in is because it shows the puppies were not stressed at all, but enjoyed the whole experience.

I'm not going to talk about each individual puppy. At 9 1/2 weeks, personalities are pretty much set. From now on, I will be talking about what we are doing with everyone. We had our first bath this week. Usually I try to have several baths and grooming sessions, but due to the extreme cold, I was limited. I will bathe everyone a few more times before they go home.