

This was a difficult week for me. The puppies were making great strides in their training, but they had a few setbacks this past week. It is to be expected as their training becomes more individual. The boys are usually behind the girls as far as maturity goes, and I have to remember that.

Up until last week, everyone was sleeping together in a large crate. The mamas were in their own area away from the puppies. As they outgrew one of their large crates, I put them into an even larger crate. Unfortunately, I started to have potty spots at night. Now I have everyone in pairs in a smaller crate. Just about everyone is fine with it, but Opie and Duke are having issues. After the 2nd and 3rd night of no sleep, I ended up putting them in with Choo, their mom at night, just so everyone else could sleep.

Each boy has gone through his own crate trauma. Jack was first. It took about 2 days for him to finally calm himself down. Now he is fine in a crate. Duke started up just after Jack settled. Again after a couple of days, he calmed down. I am now working with Opie and Duke. It is taking a bit more time, but consistency is key, and lots of patience.

This week our field trip has special meaning. In my church, there is a family with a 7 year old girl named Haley. In June, Haley was playing outside her home. Her neighbor's dogs got out and mauled her. The dogs were eventually euthanized. Haley spent 12 hours in surgery and many days in the hospital. I saw her last Sunday when the family came to church. Even though it's been a month, Haley still has horrible wounds on her face, and her arm is still bandaged. Emotionally the family is still in recovery. They actually moved out of their home and into a rental. The mental recovery will take much longer than even the physical recovery.

I was invited to come to their home and bring the puppies for Haley to hold. To see the utter delight Haley had in holding and kissing each puppy was astounding. It brought tears to her stepmother's eyes. Neither parent wants Haley to be afraid of dogs. They have 2 of their own. One of them is being fostered while the family is in a rental. The other is very small. It was still challenging to Haley to say hello to the dog even this many weeks later.

I received a text the next day. Haley had a huge emotional breakthrough after playing with the puppies. She had never spoken about the actual attack. Her therapist has been working with her to try to get her to open up. After playing with the puppies, she wanted to talk to her stepmother. She opened up about the whole attack. It was as if the puppies were the safety release valve for her. I will be taking the puppies once a week over to their home for Haley to pet. I am honored to be a part of her recovery. Due to significant injuries to Haley's face, the family asked if I not post a picture of the event.

The puppies also went on a 2nd field trip. I took them all back to a friend's house this week where they were handled by lots of kids. It was the 2nd day that the puppies had not slept through the night, and they were grumpy! They didn't really want to be held, they wanted to be in their pen sleeping. It was interesting to see how similar they were to tired toddlers. Everyone was whining and restless while being held, but as soon as they were put in their pen, the pups curled up and went to sleep. It is so important for baby's to get rest, even when they don't want it.

Maggie is becoming a dominant smart girl. She was the first to figure out how to climb on the elevated dog bed. She was the first to figure out the water bottle. Yesterday my husband was vacuuming. Everyone else scattered. Maggie walked right up to the vacuum, sniffed it, and just calmly walked around it. She wasn't fazed a bit. She is a very confident pup.

Jack keeps everyone smiling. He is such a clown. His favorite thing to do now is to run full speed up and down the patio. He loves to be chased, or to chase someone. It is hysterical to watch him stop and his behind not stop and flip over. He is constantly falling off or over things, or running into things. He just doesn't watch what he is doing. He just does it!

Opie is a people dog. His biggest issue is that he does not like to be by himself. He wants to be able to see me. He is fine in his crate, as long as he can see me. On Friday, everyone else was taking a nap, but Opie. He did not want to settle down. I ended up taking the crate around with me as I cleaned the house. He was good as long as we were in the same room. I am being very firm. He is not allowed out of his crate while he is whining. He is learning quickly that when he is quiet, he comes out sooner.

Duke is picking up on some of Opie's bad habits. I jokingly told Brian, my husband that Dancer and Opie believe themselves to be "free range" puppies. Unfortunately it doesn't work that way. Free range puppies are not housebroken. Dancer is doing very well with sleeping through the night, he just doesn't like taking naps in the crate during the day. As stated earlier, consistency will win out.

Dancer had his share of moments last week. Each boy just needs a bit more extra attention, especially when it comes to crate time. One thing I am doing with everyone is feeding them in their own crates. This works very well with Dancer. He is a chow hound. He cries in the crate, until he sees his food dish. Food makes everything all better.

I am continuing to work on leash breaking. It is a slow process, but when done correctly, it really does help with the overall leash training. I also introduced them to the pool. Maggie likes water, none of the boys were impressed. I will keep working with them.