

# Ontario Coalition Against BSL

A story of BSL related to a dog named Banjo... Below is his story:

"I was asked to write about Banjo's story and to be honest, it took me a long time to get to it. Ironically not because of our new baby, but because thinking of how his story started gets to me every single time...

I first saw Banjo on a post on Facebook from Carter's Forever Home and Rescue. His face absolutely melted my heart. After reading his biography, I told Ian I wanted him. He insisted we waited until after he was done school, but you all know me and the rest is history.

A couple of weeks later, we headed to Carter's to walk some dogs. I actually didn't even think Banjo was there because I hadn't seen his picture. When we arrived, Brenda, the owner of the rescue, asked us if we had anyone that we'd like to walk and I said 'any bully breed you have'. She laughed and said she had a young one named Banjo and would be right back. I gasped when she walked out with him. This little wiggly boy was ready to go. He was still thin but so full of love and it was clear he wanted to walk (or should I say pull haha).

Anyways, we left that day with Brenda telling me that another person was interested in him but she thought we were a better fit so if we wanted him to get back to her as soon as possible. I ended up crying to Ian after we left and was completely miserable for a couple days until he gave in and told me to call her and go get him. I went back 4 days later and he was mine.

Upon getting him in the car, I accidentally dropped my keys and it scared the heck out of him. Not knowing much about his past, I just thought (hoped) it was a fluke. We got home and gave him time to decompress and during this period I luckily was contacted by Banjo's road trip buddies mom, who then connected me with Vicki, the lady that rescued him in Texas.

I spoke to Vicki and completely broke down hearing his story, but was thankful to know more about my dog.

She told me how she started keeping an eye on him when he was about 5 months old since the 'person' who had him was known for dog fighting and abusing animals. Banjo would run away from this person's house looking for food and would arrive at Vicki's house, seating her cat food. Vicki started feeding him every time, in hopes of gaining his trust. He came by often and that trust grew.

That 'person' came by one day when he noticed Banjo had escaped. When put on his leash, Vicki said she could see the way that he was using the leash was the same way the dog fighters did with their dogs. She became more scared for Banjo and his safety.

After a while Banjo stopped coming by. When she passed the house, she noticed he had been chained up with a massive chain and padlock around his neck so he couldn't leave anymore. He had a dirty mattress that landed against a wall for shelter and that was it. Vicki finally decided he needed to be rescued after seeing how skinny and dirty he was getting and, especially with the rumor she heard about him being put out for dog fighting season.

On the day of Banjo's rescue, Vicki arrived at 4 am with chain cutters. She tempted him with food, cut him free and got him in her car. 18 days later, that 'person' arrived at her house asking for his dog back. She played stupid and said she had no idea what he was talking about. He claimed that the dog was 'for a friend' but Vicki was adamant and he eventually gave up and left. Vicki knew she had to get him out of there and thankfully, contacted the right person and got him to his new life in Canada.

Fast forward to now, Banjo is absolutely our best friend. He bonded to me right away and warmed up to Ian quickly after. He was been an amazing ambassador to his breed and has changed many peoples minds because he is such a well trained and happy boy. Banjo is always up for adventure and we have met many friends, both dog and human, through his Instagram page. We have gone on many pack walks, hikes and training classes together. Banjo is a brand ambassador for Raw Performance Dog Food and a store ambassador for The Fluffy Carnivore. He loves going to the cottage and for canoe rides. Banjo loves to do zoomies in the sand and taking full gulps of water but not going too deep because gosh forbid his belly touches the water.

His greatest joy, though, is being a big brother to his 6 month old human brother, Blake. Banjo is so sweet and attentive to him. I honestly believe he was put here to be his big brother and his protector; it's a job that he takes very seriously.

I am forever grateful to everyone that played a part in making sure Banjo was able to be exactly where he needed to be, here at home with us.