

PHOEBEE

FINDING FREEDOM IN PRISON



Like humans, animal suffering comes in many forms. Sometimes, emotional wounds are just as damaging as physical ones. When Phoebee was surrendered to our partner shelter, Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services (JACPS), she carried with her the psychological injuries of an unknown past. The shelter terrified her - she trembled with fear, cowered in the back of her kennel, and cringing upon being touched. Because staff feared that she may bite potential adopters out of fear, she was considered for euthanasia.

However, someone important noticed Phoebee. Sandy, our behavior specialist, is placed within JACPS to assess and train pets with behavioral issues so that they may become suitable for adoption. Sandy decided that Phoebee was a perfect candidate for our new program, Teaching Animals and Inmates Life Skills (TAILS).

Through a partnership with the Florida Department of Corrections, TAILS places hard-to-adopt dogs into state prisons for rehabilitation. Three inmates are assigned to each dog, and the inmates learn the skills to train and socialize them.

Phoebee was especially withdrawn, but as luck would have it, so was her inmate trainer. Over the nine-week training course, Phoebee and her trainer grew to understand, respect, and trust one another. They bonded over their similarities and grew emotionally together. The shy dog became an apt pupil; the withdrawn inmate an able leader. When Phoebee's training was complete, she had to return to the shelter in order to find a home. As hard as it was to part ways with Phoebee, her trainer made sure she left with a letter of recommendation he had written himself.

Meanwhile, Roger and Deb were looking for a new addition to their family. After losing one of their own pets, they finally felt ready to adopt. They knew about the TAILS program and wanted to support it by adopting one of the graduates. Upon meeting Phoebee at the shelter, staff handed Deb the letter. Deb tried to read it aloud for Roger, but her voice became choked with emotion. The words of the inmate revealed just how special Phoebee really was.

"Phoebee hands down is one of the coolest dogs I've run acrossed...Once she gets to know you she opens up into a completely different dog...if you move slow and with love she'll start to trust you more and more, so much so that she'll try anything to please you and will be one of the most loyal companions you'll come across.

Phoebee's a true blessing, and one of the best dogs to have. She'll change your life and make you a better person if you give her a chance!"

Thanks to the TAILS program, Phoebee escaped euthanasia and healed her emotional wounds. After finishing the inmate's letter, Roger and Deb adopted Phoebee, and she is now home for the holidays!

First Coast No More Homeless Pets partners with both public and private animal welfare groups, and our employees are dedicated to saving lives. Help us help more special pets like Phoebee—donate today!



Phoebee in her new home!