

A Sound Beginning: 14-Day Plan on How to Adjust Your Adopted Animal Successfully

By Dr. Karen Becker

Dr. Karen Becker: Hi, I'm Dr. Karen Becker. Today I'm going to introduce you to two ladies who are changing the rescue world for dogs specifically. This is Julie Dorsey-Oskerka and this is Pat Rattray. They together wrote a book called *A Sound Beginning: Setting the Right Tone for Your Newly Adopted Dog*. My client, Lou Ann Forbes, brought this to me about eight months ago. She brought it to my practice and said, "Listen, you see a ton of rescue dogs, and this book can change their lives." So I read it.

I was totally onboard. I ordered a bunch of them to sell at the practice. We totally encouraged people. When I got a dog in that was fresh out of rescue, it was automatic. This is what you need to do. It's an easy 14-day program. It explains it step by step. But part of the reason that I wanted to interview these two women, not just these two women but the collection of people that came together to make this project happen, is that out of your passion came a project, an initiative, a program that has the potential to I think really change rescue in general.

Today, I'm going to take you on a journey of really the process of how this program, this initiative, or this project came together. Because it's through the passion, the commitment of a whole multitude of volunteers that have come together with the common goal of improving the lives and the healthy emotional well-being of animals that have been given a second chance.

Pat Rattray: My name is Pat Rattray, and I'm one of the authors of the book *A Sound Beginning: Setting the Right Tone for Your Newly Adopted Dog*. My background has been in training for... I hate to say how many years I've been doing this, but it's been 20 plus. I started out with Narnia Pet Behavior and Training in Naperville. I was there for seven and a half years. I decided to take it on the road and hit park districts and vet clinics. That's what I kind of concentrated on.

I have been doing boxer rescue. This is my 25th year. I also work for Dr. John Ciribassi, who's one of the two board-certified vets in behavior. I've been with him for 13 years. I had a lot of training and taught a lot of classes, but my love is still with the rescue dogs. That's what I did for 25 years, and I'll continue to do that because they're in jeopardy of not having a good life and not getting a forever home.

Julie called me one day and said, "Let's write a book." This is the result of what we did. It's a program, a 14-day program for people to acclimate the dog into a home. It plays a beautiful solo piano music that is supposedly the guru of music to play for calming and stress-related situations for dogs, to relieve that for them. I met Julie because she was a photographer. She did a lot of dog photos. When I was at Narnia, she did our whole group photo of all the trainers and all the dogs and when I did my personal stuff with my boxers.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: I've worn a lot of hats in my lifetime, I'll tell you that. But yeah, it started out when I met her and 11 different trainers as well, too, because I was doing pet photography at the time. I was working for a lot of different companies that were asking me for well-trained dogs that could be in magazines to display their product, either to lay down in a dog bed, to wear a little outfit for Halloween, or something. I had to find well-trained dogs, so I went to trainers and I met her.

And then I adopted my... I've always been adopting dogs my whole life. But I adopted this beautiful Doberman. She's the reason why this whole program actually exists because she was a year and a half old when I got her. I had no idea what a reactive dog was. I had dogs that didn't really do a heck of a lot. I

didn't really react because there was nothing to react to. They were just at our house. This dog I got, I have these dreams to do all these wonderful things with her.

But I couldn't take her in public because she barked at everybody and everything, and anything that moved, it didn't matter. The trainers, at the time, that I was listening to were telling me, "Oh, you got to get control of that dog. You got to make sure that that dog knows who's boss. You got to get on top of her." I'm thinking, "I love this dog. Why in God's name would I want to do anything to hurt this dog? She's just barking because she's worried." I just would nod and go, "Uh-huh." I didn't do anything because I just felt that's not right.

And then I ended up talking to her one day. We were talking about a photo shoot because I was going to photograph Sugar. I said, "You know, I've got this situation." She says, "Oh, no, that's really easy." She said, "You just go someplace. You just park yourself and your dog far enough away, so your dog can see what they're worried about, but not so close that they actually bark and react. You just stay right there and you give him a cookie." I go, "Okay, that sounds easy. I could do that." And so we did. I thought, "God, that worked really nice."

The next time I went out with my dog I was able to inch up a little bit closer to the scary environment, which was the other dogs that were in the building. It took a while, but all be darned she ended up being the dog that the puppy trainers were using to come in class and show people how their dogs should interact with people and other dogs.

She ended up being like the poster child for what compassionate and positive reinforcement training can do to a dog that's had a lot of fear issues in their past. Because this dog was a breeder reject. The dog had never had any experience with anything in life, much like a lot of the dogs that do come into the shelter environment. They're just understimulated. They've never been around anybody or anything. Everything is new to them. It could be very scary for them.

She gave me all these great knowledge, and then we ended up staying friends. I got sucked into it big time. I started reading everything that's ever been published about positive dog training. My very first book that I ever read was *Don't Shoot the Dog!: The New Art of Teaching and Training* by Karen Pryor. And that one, I was just like, "Oh, my God, this stuff applies to people, too." I kept on going and going and going.

It was a couple of years ago, I said, "This is crazy." We've got people who are coming into my class and they don't belong in the class because they're trying to get their dog to sit, stay, and come, and the dog doesn't even know his name yet. They just adopted the dog two days ago. There's no relationship. This is so backwards. We've got to do something about this. I said, "I think we could write a book about it. I've got a really good idea," and Pat says, "I'm in."

We contacted another friend of ours who was director of training at Narnia at the time. That's Rebecca Cann. We contacted her and said, "Hey, the three of us are all in the same thing. We have the same problems, the same goals." We got together. It took us a couple of months. She and I were mainly up at like 2:00 in the morning. That was the only time everything was quiet, where we could actually concentrate. We put this together.

Actually what we did was after the book was together, we started testing it out. I have an adult daughter who has a learning disability, a very minor one, but still. I thought, "You know what? I need to make this so that it's very understandable." Because a lot of times with trainers, you're getting into your own language and then you forget that if a regular person's reading this, they don't know what the heck you're talking about.

We had my daughter read it. She works for a vet's office. She's a vet-tech, so she knew a lot of stuff about dog training. But still, this is different stuff. We would have her read it. I said, "Do you understand it?" She goes, "Yeah." I said, "Okay, well, tell me what we're supposed to do," and she would recite the exercises back. I'm like, "Okay, we're on the right track. We've got it."

Because in fact, we needed to put it together so that we're so ultra-simple that nobody would have to actually think that, "Oh, God, I have to read a novel in order to adopt this dog. I can't do it. But if I only have to read two pages one day and put it away, fine. If I only have to do this for a couple of minutes a day, a couple of times a day, fine. I can do that." That's how we put the program together and that's where it's at.

And then from the book we went into the training program. That started in November of last year. It's actually when we started to say that we really need a class, because a lot of people get the book but they still don't understand about body language and how their body affects the dog, what their dog's language is saying to them, and how they should respond accordingly, so that you start getting this communication, which is what's going to save that dog's life – to be understood and everything. That's where the class developed.

We knew that the main things we needed to teach were: canine communication, so that people could be able to talk to their dogs, right, and be understood, and the dogs to understand them as well. In the dog training world, it's called common conditioning and desensitizing, but basically it's just getting the dog to have a better attitude about things that they might be fearful of, overreactive to, or whatever. It's just very simple, just getting that nice, simple information out to people in really easy-to-do exercises.

When people start training their dogs in this class, they feel so much better. We've had such a really nice response from people saying that they just feel so much better and that they had no idea that reaching towards their dog... That's why the dog was backing away. They thought it was just the dog being stubborn. They had no idea that reaching forward and bending over is considered threatening to a dog. Of course, the dog's going to back away and turn away. That's appropriate. Once they learn that, they say, "Oh, this is much easier. Now I understand. If I want to get my dog, maybe I should just turn sideways."

[----- 10:00 -----]

All these little things that they learn and are going to be learning in this class are the key to keeping it all together.

Pat Rattray: Right. And we tried to like... When you reach to the dog and he backs away, they would just continue to keep going at the dog. We tweaked that for them. Let's turn sideways. Let's put our hand up the side. Trying to get the message across that when you run into these situations, think about what you can do to make it easier for the dog and less threatening. Let's turn. Let's put our hands closer to our body, not stick it out.

We're trying to also teach them that when they get into a situation where the dog is doing something that isn't like it's supposed to be in the book, where the dog comes up and touches your hand and wants to greet you. They have kind of a lesson or they can have a plan to try to fix all those situations, so that the dog succeeds basically.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: [We] help people become problem solvers basically. We're kind of helping people to get a basic understanding of behavior, a basic understanding of communication with their dog, and just be able to kind of figure it out like, "Hmmm... Okay, my dog isn't coming when I call. How come? Let me think about this. What am I doing? Am I chasing the dog?" Well, that's one reason why the dog's not coming. "Or maybe I'm yelling at a really loud voice. Hmmm... Maybe that's another. That's right. This program says that you're not supposed to do those things."

They start getting a different approach and a different attitude about their dogs. It isn't so much about dominating the dog; it's about working with the dog and making it a family. That's what it's all about.

Leanne Falkingham: I just started working in shelters when I adopted a dog from the Sutherland Shelter, and she had some behavior issues. I went back for training and then got a job there. I was actually managing shelters before I even started training. I started to rehab a shelter in New York State that was suffering from hoarding situation.

The Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at Cornell University came down to consult with me. They showed me what clicker training was all about. And I thought, "That's what I want." I signed up for the Karen Pryor Academy and became a certified trainer through them in 2008. I've been training in a shelter setting ever since. I just feel that it's one of the ways that we can make an animal's stay here at the shelter more humane: through training. You can increase adoptability with training, you can reduce stress, and just help dogs transition better into their current families or their new families.

My mentor in 2008 at the Karen Pryor Academy was Steve Benjamin. After I graduated from his class, we stayed in touch. About two years later, he called and said, "I'd like to develop a shelter medicine and enrichment training course for the Karen Pryor Academy, an online course that people could take. Would you help me?" I said, "Sure." We wrote the course and filmed at my shelters. It's available online now. People take it from all over the world, learning how to train in a sheltered environment, always taking into consideration the extra stressors and the limitations that we have when we train in shelters.

Today we're at A.D.O.P.T. Pet Shelter in Naperville. I started contracting with them in February as their trainer and behavior consultant, bringing their first training program to the shelter and their first behavior program as well.

There is a trend toward shelters having more and more in-house trainers and behavior advisers, because there has been a trend in recent years towards no-kill and towards trying to increase live release rates in the sheltering world. In order to do that, the shelters have to have a training program and a behavior program in place in order to save more animals. There is a lot of opportunity for trainers in the sheltering world.

I think that for me this course is one of the missing pieces. When I was going to the class, the first class I attended with Julie and Pat, I went, "Okay, this is going to be perfect for our adoptive families." Because a lot of the dogs that are here at shelter are not ready for a mainstream class. They're not ready for the Obedience 101 classes because they had so much stress in their recent lives. They may have come from either neglectful or abusive backgrounds. They need a class where they're learning to interact and communicate with their new owner. Their new owner's learning to interact with them. They also need a calm, non-confrontational atmosphere. That's what this class provides.

I'm actually hoping that, as a shelter, we can take a lot of our newly adoptive families and have them attend this class. We may be seeing a lot of families going to this class from the A.D.O.P.T. Pet Shelter. Because as the single trainer here, as the only trainer here, I can't be there as much as I want to be there for each adoptive family. I do home visits. I do phone consultations. But I never feel like I can give enough time to people.

If we can get them into a really good class where they're getting a lot of support, a lot of great information about how to handle their dog in those first few weeks of transition and how to develop your relationship with their new dog, I think we're going to have a lot more successes in terms of long-term adoptions and a lot fewer returns, a lot fewer returns. And that's important. Because people will just understand the dog better in this course. That's I think the part that was missing.

Pat Rattray: When I met Julie and she suggested that we're going to write a book, it was on my bucket list so I jumped on it. But the goal for us is the passion that we can save dogs (trying to save the world, of course), one dog at a time. There's just too many of them for us to do that. We wrote the book so that we can catch the adoptive parent for that new dog in the first 14 days of that home environment where all those problems happen, all the mistakes happen, and the returns happen.

Our goal is to catch them there with the adoptive family. But if we can get to the shelters, the rescues, and the fosters, and teach them the dog language, the communication that's going on, and how to handle all the problems, so that they can give the people there at the shelter – the volunteers, the dog walkers, and those kind of people – that knowledge, they can start to see that transpire right in the kennel runs with the dogs being different. Gladly approach a person instead of shying away from the front gate when some adopter goes by.

The goal was to get the shelters to get their people trained, get the book out to the adoptive family, and get the family to get into the class maybe, which will teach them more about the book, the communication, and how to interact with their dog so it's a bond. But we can't do it the two of us alone, which we tried.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Yeah, we're trying.

Pat Rattray: If we can get shelters, fosters, and the adopting families, we're going to get that forever home, and that's what we're looking for. But we want to be like a franchise that can go out to North Chicago, South Chicago, Iowa, or wherever we have to go. But we need people and trainers like Leanne to go out there and put that program in place. Our goal is to contact the shelters, contact the rescue groups, and get this out there so that they can see.

And it is a good program. It's so simple. We tried to think of every possible thing that could go wrong and give them a solution. Because when nobody's there, and it's 11:00 at night, they have no help. That's where the dog gets taken back to the shelter or returned to wherever it came from. That's our goal. Our dream is to get them placed and staying in their home, and build that bond with the new adoptive family.

Leanne Falkingham: And it's heartbreaking with the dogs that are here. To see them perhaps having suffered in their previous life, because people didn't know how to treat them or didn't know how to communicate with them, and then they come to a shelter, which is even with everything that we do for them is still very, very stressful. If they go into a home and they're struggling transitioning there, we've just had a series of difficult aspects in a dog's life. It's not getting better for them. I see this program as being a place that they can come to and life is going to get better for them.

[----- 20:00 -----]

Life is going to be easier for the owner if they go through this program because they're going to understand the dog better. The dog is going to destress more quickly, having just come out of a shelter or a rescue situation, and the bond is going to form more quickly. They'll be in a better place, in a safer place because of a program like this.

Chris Stirn: One of the things that we do as part of our adoption process is a lot of counselling and education. We really rely heavily on that, making sure we find the right fit for the dog. We also have a trainer on staff, which is absolutely fabulous. That helps also kind of nourish the relationship between the adopter and the dog because she's working with the dogs regularly. We're doing enrichment. We are doing a lot to try to get to know the personalities of these dogs and help them with their adjustment from shelter to home, which can be stressful.

Michael Heck: One of the things we've been trying to do lately is to get these behavior violations in place prior to their adoptable status, so that we can be very frank and upfront with people about what the dog's potential issues might be and be very proactive in preparing our adopters to handle, manage, and adapt to those situations.

Chris Stirn: That's crucial. I mean, I think it's really important to be very transparent and let potential adopters know exactly what issues the dog may have. Every dog that's in a shelter is in adjustment to go into a home. You can be the best shelter runner but it's still a very stressful environment.

It's crucial to provide enrichment, to get to know the dogs, and to do the evaluation, so that when they are going into a new home, the doctor has all the information that we can give them to make it successful and to provide continuing education once the dog is in the home, and support for our doctors. We definitely do that. Our trainer is very good about following up, checking in, and consultation after the adoption. I always tell people, "The dog you see today might not be the same dog in three weeks." We want to be there to support them for any issues that arise.

Michael Heck: When I first looked through the book, I realized that it was set up on a day-to-day basis, meaning do X on Day 1 and do Y on Day 2. I felt that that while it may be a little bit of a hand-holding technique, for a lot of people they've never experienced bringing a dog with issues or that's been in a stressful situation into their home.

For me, for people who aren't experienced with the process, this is a very good way to take them through it step by step and to prepare them not just for what's happening on Day 1, but they can look forward to Day 4. We're going to need to set the dog for success by doing these certain things.

I think the musical component of the program is important, too. There have been a lot of studies done, I believe, on the effect of calming music on dogs. Like Chris mentioned before, it's an extremely stressful environment, no matter how clean, beautiful, and well-treated they are. A lot of people don't realize that. They think that they bring the dog home, "It's in a home now. It's going to be happy."

Chris Stirn: Right.

Michael Heck: I think this book prepares them very well in terms of the step-by-step process of how to acclimate their new dog into the home.

Chris Stirn: Yeah. And I think it's important, too, because it's about building a relationship and trust. You're not... This is a new environment for this dog. A lot of dogs have, not a rocky background. But some of even the best-adjusted dogs, they need to build trust with their new owner. A step-by-step program and going slow is really crucial to building that trust.

Michael Heck: It assists the dogs in building confidence as well. Because when they go through a situation where they're being surrendered from a family to a shelter, I'm not a dog psychologist but I can imagine what that does in their confidence. Taking, like Chris said, the process slowly, being prepared for it, and setting the dogs up for success in little steps, to me, are a crucial step for the process of getting acclimated.

A Sound Beginning CD

Leanne Falkingham: We use the A Sound Beginning CD in our sound system to help relax the dogs. It's part of our enrichment program. We also use clicker training. Jerry's brand-new. He's just learning. Lady is fairly new, too. She's just... But the idea is to be able to walk down the row of kennels and have dogs who are calm, who are relaxed, who will sit, and who make a good first impression on the people that are

coming through to adopt. Chevy's brand-new. Chevy, he's just learning to do an automatic sit and he's learning not to bark.

[Talking to the dog] Good boy. Good job.

This is the impression that we want our clients to have. We want the dogs to have basic skills, too, like to be able to sit, make eye contact, and not bark. Sally's one of our very shy dogs.

[Talking to the dog] Hey peanut.

She'll be an excellent candidate for A Sound Beginning program. Actually all the dogs would be, but especially her, because she's showing a lot of stress. We've even had trouble getting her through the doors. We've worked very hard to get her to go in and out of the kennels because she doesn't like thresholds. I can really envision her being a perfect candidate for this particular program, where the atmosphere is very calm and controlled. We learn a lot about communication from shy dogs or fearful dogs. She would really excel in the program and will encourage her new family to bring her.

Dr. Karen Becker: My question to you is this part of the book, the part that you're involved with.

Bruce Oscar: Yes.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: There he is. Hi.

Dr. Karen Becker: Yes. Okay, talk to me about your role. How did this part come to be? I mean, this is a vital part of this entire program. How did this unfold?

Bruce Oscar: Well, I am a jazz musician. Julie had kind of approached me and said, "Do you think you could do music to calm me?" Because I know what she wanted. She said, "Do you think you could do that, without making it sound jazzy?" I said, "Sure, no problem." We set up a recording date. The date got sooner and sooner. And she said, "Aren't you going to rehearse?" I said, "No, I'm not." I said, "I am rehearsing in my head." I have themes I'm working on, but that's just all totally impromptu.

Dr. Karen Becker: You just sat down and played.

Bruce Oscar: I sat down and played.

Dr. Karen Becker: Okay. That is amazing.

Bruce Oscar: But, say, being jazz, it's a piece of cake because you do that all the time.

Dr. Karen Becker: Because you just improvise anyway.

Bruce Oscar: Improvise anyway. I just kept it unjazzy.

Dr. Karen Becker: That's amazing. Wow. That's really...

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Well, he did have too jazzy tunes, but those are...

Bruce Oscar: But those aren't on there.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Those were cut.

Bruce Oscar: I'm just joking.

Dr. Karen Becker: And just so you know, my dogs all like jazz. Just so you know. There are dogs out there.

Bruce Oscar: Yeah.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: I'm like, "My God, it's just incredible music." It was absolutely incredible. All I did was tell him that it has to be just specific tones and tempos. It has to fit within this range. It has to fit all these. He just went in and did it. He did his own original music. It's all from his heart and soul.

Bruce Oscar: That's right.

Dr. Karen Becker: It's awesome. What a beautiful contribution, really, Bruce. It's amazing.

Bruce Oscar: Oh, I'm blessed to be able to be in this project and book with all these talented people. Wow, I mean, everybody that's associated with it.

Dr. Karen Becker: That was my next question. You've done some amazing things in your career. But I bet this is the first. I know you're a passionate animal lover.

Bruce Oscar: Yes.

Dr. Karen Becker: But your career has been music, music, music, broadcast music. Is this your first go around being involved with animal-related music?

Bruce Oscar: Yes.

Dr. Karen Becker: Specifically to help calm?

Bruce Oscar: Yes. Actually, I'm a magical musician.

Dr. Karen Becker: Okay. And?

Bruce Oscar: And you're going to wonder what that is.

Dr. Karen Becker: Yes.

Bruce Oscar: I could sit down and play and make a whole room vanish in front of you and I could put the dogs to sleep.

Dr. Karen Becker: Which is good. You can add that to your resume. You're good at knocking dogs out. So, back up and tell me, your career started... You played a gazillion instruments growing up or just the organ?

Bruce Oscar: No, just piano actually.

Dr. Karen Becker: Okay. And the organ.

Bruce Oscar: Yes, for a while, but mainly piano.

Dr. Karen Becker: Your roots were in classical.

Bruce Oscar: Yes, I started off in classical.

Dr. Karen Becker: And then?

Bruce Oscar: Well, at an early age, I'd come in for my lesson and my teacher would say, "Why did you play it that way?" I said, "Because I think it sounds better that way." She said, "That's not the way it's written." I said, "I don't care. I think it sounds better that way." She said, "Well, you're not going to be a classical player." She taught me how to be an entertainer and I went from there.

[----- 30:00 -----]

Dr. Karen Becker: Well, what a great conversation. It's fun that you enjoy your job so much, jazz.

Bruce Oscar: Yes.

Dr. Karen Becker: But also that you've been able to share your talents in this particular way with all of the animal lovers.

Bruce Oscar: Oh, yes. I'm really excited to be able to do that.

Dr. Karen Becker: It's really, really great. Well, thanks for your contribution.

Bruce Oscar: It's my pleasure, trust me.

DOOZIE

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Okay, I've got the music playing. That's Bruce Oscar's music from A Sound Beginning. Our little Doozie is back there. We adopted him about four months ago now. Pat Rattray's back there with Doozie, keeping him company. But the music is very important to help dogs feel comfortable.

Pat, what I want you to do is just talk a little bit about how music is effective to be able to help dogs in a lot of different situations. Like right now, we're just filming Doozie and being comfortable in the car. Because car rides are stressful for dogs, we play this specific kind of music to be able to help the dog find some ways to be able to relax. What are some other ways Pat that we can tell people about that they can use the music for to help their dogs be more comfortable?

Pat Rattray: Well, I think the main thing is to do it in any kind of situation where we feel that the dog is going to get stressed out. If they're in a brand-new home, the car ride home is one. But once they get home, they're in a strange house. They don't know where they belong. Playing that music during the entire time while they're there getting used to the crate, eating their supper, observing the other things happening from their safe place, if they've created a safe place in the house where the dog can kind of go and be safe from anybody bothering him. He can kind of adjust to the lifestyle that he's been put into.

It helps in kennel runs to reduce the barking and the stress level of dogs being put in a kennel, where they're in between a permanent home. It just helps about creating a nice, calm environment from when they're sleeping and it's bed time. It's just a way to get their mind to relax with that soothing music.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: In fact, one of the things that I found out recently is... I have a very old dog – well, I have a lot of old dogs. But my middle-aged dog, she's 10 years old. Recently, she started waking up at about 3:00 in the morning with a lot of anxiety. I thought it was pain-induced or whatever. The holistic vet that I go to, she said, "I don't think it is." She said, "I think it just be a neurological. You might want to actually use your own music and play the music for her at night. I thought, "Well, geez. Why didn't I think of that?"

But anyways, first night, I'll be darned. I just put it on my computer and I just put it on continuous play, so it shuffled and played the music all night long. She slept all the way through until 6:00. I have been playing the music for her every night before I go to bed. I put it on. Because she doesn't like to sleep upstairs or anything with us because she's got some structural problems going up and down the stairs. It's very limited for her. But she sleeps comfortably on the couch in the office area. And because of the music playing every night, my goodness, she's sleeping and she's comfortable. That means I can get a good night's sleep, too. It helps both people and dog. And what else, Pat? Thunderstorms. Fireworks.

Pat Rattray: Oh, thunderstorms. I played that music of Bruce's from our book for the last three nights because it's been kind of bad out in my area. It's been very soothing. There's less panting, less pacing. They seem to be enjoying their sleep much better, and so am I.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Yeah. That's the thing. If you can calm down the dog, you calm down the people. It goes hand and paw.

CHAZ

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: This is Cathy Butler and this is Linda Chicola. These lovely ladies are both volunteers at West Suburban Humane Society in Downers Grove. They volunteer so much of their time and effort in helping dogs to be adoptable. This is the second dog that they brought from our program. This is John Boy. Can you explain to the audience what you think about the program and has it helped with the dogs that you both work with?

Cathy Butler: I believe it has helped. Chaz, our first dog that we brought here did not approach people in the shelter. After our session of this, he became very friendly and he got adopted. Now, John Boy is very similar. We're working on him.

Linda Chicola: Trying to work with him.

Cathy Butler: Yes. But it's a very good program.

Linda Chicola: It's definitely a good program.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: This is Sue Bolton. She is the proud adoptive parent of Chaz. Chaz was our rock star. He's the first dog that actually started in this pilot program several months back. He's the first dog that came through. He's the first the dog that reaped all the benefits of the cool program that we have and everything. He was adopted by Sue and her husband, and he has a wonderful home life. We're so happy. We couldn't be happier when he found such a wonderful home. If you want to just tell them what did you think about Chaz and our program?

Sue Bolton: When we saw Chaz at the Suburban Humane Society, he looked at us and started playing with us. We're like, "Okay, kids, do you want to look at him?" My kids looked at him and they fell in love with him. He's our second dog after we lost our first dog. We love him. He's got a whole different personality, which we love. The program's been wonderful for him. We were told that he wouldn't look at people before. When he started looking at us, that's not what we saw.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Awesome.

Sue Bolton: We're having a great time.

ANGIE

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: This is Pat and this is Tom – Pat and Tom Reiff. They adopted Angie through the DuPage County Animal Care and Control, the shelter out in the Lombard area in Wheaton.

Tom Reiff: Yeah, between Lombard.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Erica Kendzora is the sheltered program personnel there. She's a KPA-CTP trainer. She's worked with both of you guys.

Tom Reiff: Right.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: When they initially adopted Angie. Because Angie is very much like a lot of dogs in the shelter, a young adolescent with a lot of energy that needs a lot of mental and physical stimulation in order to thrive in a home. You guys have done beautifully with her. There's always a lot more to learn. You guys are doing great.

Tom Reiff: Thank you.

Julie Oskerka: What we would like is for you to just say what you thought about coming to the class and the program. When did you work on your hand touch? There you go. You've got some good skills. Go ahead and use them.

Pat Reiff: We totally enjoyed it. The clicker's amazing. She's great. She's really great.

Julie Oskerka: *[Talking to Angie, the dog]* Good girl. Come on. There you go. Good job.

Pat Reiff: She's great. She's really great. She's brilliant. And then you practiced at home and it got better and better.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Awesome. Yes.

APPLE

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: This is Liza Jo Clark and her husband, Tom. Did I get your name right this time?

Husband: Yeah, right.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: I always do. Today it's Tom again. It depends on what day of the week it is. But I know the dog's name. This is Apple. Lisa Jo, by the way, is a very, very, special person as far as this program is concerned because everything that you see on the website, that's all her work. She has donated so much time and effort to this program, and started with us back in October before we even started the program.

She came to us and said, "I really like your book. We really got to do something with it, and I can help you out." She's been working with us ever since. Her dog Apple was rescued from a puppy mill. That's her passion, working with rescues. That's all she does besides trying to keep everything else afloat, right?

Lisa Jo Clark: That's right.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Go ahead and explain anything you want them to know about the program.

Lisa Jo Clark: Yeah. She is adorable. She is. This is Apple dumpling. She's actually a rescue from a puppy mill. We got her out of the mill when she was about six months old. We really got her out of that terrible life. But the problem was she had not been socialized during her critical months, not with anything. She was scared of the world, scared of everything. The first time we brought her to class, she couldn't come at the door. She was shaking. You see, she's quite a different dog today.

[Talking to Apple, the dog] Apple, sit.

She loves this kind of training. She responds to it. It's just really working well for her. I believe in Julie. I believe in this program. I really believe in this kind of training, especially for dogs that come from rescue or come out of shelters. I also volunteer in a shelter where I'm working with other dogs on clicker training, just using the music, and aroma. I could really see her to be an example where we could get them over their fears and learn that the world can be a good and positive place.

[Talking to Apple, the dog] Apple, come. Good girl.

BENTLEY

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: This is Dr. Fiia Jokela from Deer Run Animal Hospital in Schererville, Indiana. This is Liz Geisen and this is their dog, Bentley. The reason why we're staying a little bit further away is

that Bentley's a little bit more worried about new things. Rather than stress the dog out by pushing myself into their space, I'm going to stay back here and let them do the talking and everything.

But that's the whole point about this class, too. Every dog has individual needs. It's not anything that's going to be stressful for the dog. We're trying to make everything comfortable for them and every association become positive for them. Go ahead.

[----- 40:00 -----]

Dr. Jokela: Bentley's story is he was a little lost puppy in Gary, Indiana on a cold January day. He was trying to get into the school. He was covered in fleas, parasitized, and had horrible diarrhea. Some school teachers took him in but couldn't keep him. He came to our clinic, and Liz here said, "Can we keep him?" I said, "Only if you train him, Liz, because I don't have the time." Her mom wouldn't let her keep him, so he became our project, and he's opened up a million doors for us on behavior. At first, he seemed like just a sickly pup physically. But as we worked with him, we discovered he's a special needs dog. He has a lot of fear and anxiety, probably partly due to genetics, but also a lot of stuff from bad experiences as a street dog. He has introduced us to a lot of behavior stuff.

Liz Geisen: I am a Karen Pryor Academy (KPA) for Animal Behavior & Training student. He went through the program with me. He also helped me with all kinds of special needs dog that need a little more time and space. He helped me a lot.

Dr. Jokela: He's kind of developed a pretty intense fear of going to new places or anything too intense before he got brought into this program. When we started out, we couldn't even get him into a building. He would just panic in the parking lot. He's learned how to cross the room. It's a big thing when you cross the room. He's learned that his cubbyhole is a very safe place and that good things happen there and he's starting to relax. He's happy to greet him and meet him. He's made a lot of progress. He's much more relaxed just being in a new place with new people and coming into new facilities. It's still a long way.

Hightails Hideaway

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: This is Leigh Casino, owner of Hightails Hideaway. Because of Leigh's generosity we've been able to develop this program into the stages that now we're able to operate to the public. We needed the space and we needed the ability to have the classes here. She helped us do that. Leigh also volunteers for several different rescue groups. She's going to tell you about this particular dog, Hazel, and how far she's come in the program as well. Because Hazel's only been in the program for I think it's been eight times.

Leigh Casino: Yes, actually three sessions.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: That would be actually nine classes that this dog has attended. But the very first time this dog has attended class, he could not touch her unless he were leashed. He couldn't touch her. Now she's a lot different. Go ahead and explain everything that goes on at Hightails.

Leigh Casino: At Hightails Hideaway, our primary goal is treating dogs in a positive manner, respecting what makes them tick and what makes them comfortable. I've known Julie for a long time. We initially started using Julie's techniques here with A Sound Beginning CD. We play the music at night when we tuck the dogs in and they fall fast asleep. It's their routine. They love it. And then we added the 14-Day book for all our fosters, 20 fosters, who've been adopted successfully, with positive feedback from everyone.

Sniff It

Lou Ann Forbes: Hi, my name is Lou Ann Forbes. I own a company called Blue Sky Prairie Textiles LLC. I've been working with felted wool for many, many years. During the last probably 10 or 15 years, I've become very, very interested in dogs. My biggest interest is in dog rescue, primarily beagles at this point. It just happens to fit with my character and my energy, but rescue in general. I had a dog that I was very fond of and that I wanted to make a statement about. I made some handbags with matching colors and leashes trying to combine my felted wool with the dog.

In the process of doing that, I realized that the felted wool had many uses and many applications. The jump from handbag to essential oils seems like a far leap, except that I had a dog, which I had rescued, that was very 38 pounds of Beagle and could barely breathe. When he lost his weight, he became like a balloon with air going out, would not focus, could not focus, etc. When I was talking to my vet about it, she said, "I wonder if the felted wool would be able to carry the essential oils." I said, "I don't know. Let me see." I went home and I started to work.

The result of that has come to be something that's so much more valuable than a handbag. I mean, a handbag is nice. But the really important thing is the Sniff It that I've come up with. Because I'm an artist and because I work with fabric, I could design my own packaging. It's tied with a piece of felted wool. You open it up. Inside, all of the packaging, the whole thing, when you take it apart, is all the instructions. It tells you exactly what to do.

But inside is this little felted wool piece that fits upon the dog's collar. I discovered that by putting essential oils on it, it could go right on the dog's collar. The scent can go back to the dog's nose. In 10 to 20 seconds, it's in every cell of the dog's body. Suddenly, dogs could be calmer and they could make better decisions. I realized that my Sniff It was a much bigger gift to the dog world than the handbag.

In the process of doing this, I also was introduced with an incredible essential oil veterinarian by the name of Dr. Melissa Shelton. She is known as the Oily Vet. You can go check out her website. She had just come out now with an entire line of essential oils just for dogs. She and I are both working on our collaboration. I have the handmade carrier and she has... Let me put this out of here. She has the oils to be able to put on here and to be able to use it.

All of the dogs in this class use Sniff It. The reason they do that is Julie Oskerka, in the process of writing her book, I asked her if she would do my research and development for me. I gave her a dozen of them. I said, "Try them out. You apply this in your feisty Fido class and see what happens." And guess what? She called me back and said, "What feisty Fido? That's the most peaceful class we've ever had." I thought, "Hmm... I think we're onto something."

We started including that. Now it's growing to the point where Sniff It is part of the A Sound Beginning program. That application, between the music of Bruce Oscar and Julie and Pat's book, that combination of things is appealing to the dogs. Both their hearing and their smell are exchanging a life for thousands of dogs. I am ecstatic.

A Sound Beginning Trainers

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: These are our amazing trainers that put this program together. Because without these people, their help, their knowledge, their expertise, and their compassion for working with rescue animals... It's beyond heartwarming. I can't even tell you how much it means to me and Pat that we have these people onboard with us. Leanne is... Leanne Falkingham. I want them to tell who they are individually, but I have to say something about each of them individually. We'll start with Leanne. I just owe her so much. She's done a lot for the program. Do you want to just explain a little bit about yourself, what you're doing with our program here, and training?

Leanne Falkingham: Yeah. My name is Leanne Falkingham. My background is in sheltering and then more recently in training within shelters. I just think that this program – once I connected with Julie, Ami, and Pat – just fills an incredible need for dogs that are coming out of shelters and going into homes. That’s why I want to be here and that’s why I believe in the program.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Thank you. This is Terri Klimek. And Terri Klimek was originally – and she still is – a friend of Pat Rattray, who’s a co-author of our book, our program, and everything. Pat brought Terri into the program. Pat said, “Oh, we have to get Terri onboard.” She is so into rescue. She’s an incredible trainer. She’s out there all the time working with people. She has the same heart and soul that everybody has. This is Terri Klimek.

Terri Klimek: Hi, my name is Terri Klimek. I am a trainer but I got my chops basically in rescue. I learned so much from the dogs that I have fostered. And really, this program I wish could have been around 12 years ago because it really could have made such a huge difference in the ways of the dogs that were being adopted and returned more than we would like. This is just going to make such a huge difference in the rescue and shelter community. I’m hoping to take it to several of the places where I do classes at and introduce it there.

[----- 50:00 -----]

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: Thank you. And then this is Liz Mishima. This is my good friend. We have been good friends since a long, long time. We don’t even have to talk about it. But Liz became a KPA trainer last year. She’s just been an incredible trainer and a good friend of mine for such a long time. But when she became a KPA trainer, she got involved in the program with us. Her passion is again rescue. Go ahead and say what you want to say.

Liz Mishima: My name is Liz Mishima. And yes, I’ve worked with Julie for a long time with dog training. In many of our classes, we have adopted dogs. We found that quite a few of them were. We began to understand what those dogs needed, let’s say, as they enter into their new homes. I was a volunteer with a rescue, a dog rescue and again answered a lot of calls post-adoption. What we found was that a lot of dogs would have a much better chance on staying in the homes instead of being returned or just suffering. Even those that weren’t returned just have a tough time. I’m thrilled to be part of this program and to be able to take that out and help those dogs have happy, happy lives in their new homes.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: We like happy, happy lives.

Liz Mishima: Yes, we do.

Julie Dorsey-Oskerka: We do. This is Amy Saletta. Amy is a KPA trainer as well. She is the one who started with me back last year, in November. She had talked me and she said, “You know, we should really make this a class.” And I said, “It’s been in my head and my computer. I’ve been working on it.” She said, “I’d like to help you with it.”

She came up with the modular idea. I didn’t know how in the world that would work. I was just so used to Week 1, 2, 3, or 4. With adoptions, you want to be able to get those dogs the help right away when they need it now, not when the class is starting. We started out the modular program because of Amy. Basically, the whole curriculum has been written by Amy with Pat’s guidance as our director of training.

Amy Saletta: I’m Amy Saletta. I joined the program at its inception. It’s been a really, really fun project to work on. I have my own private training business. When Julie and Pat came out with the book, I read it and I said, “Oh, my gosh, we need this book.” Because a lot of the rescue dogs that I work with in a private training setting, the owners are frustrated. They are missing the connection. That’s where the training program kind of came in, because we want to build a bridge between the adoption and actually

getting into a regular training class. This little piece was the piece that was missing. It's been really fun to develop and be a part of.

90.9 FM WDCB Radio Station

Bruce Oscar: You're listening to 90.9 FM WDCB, WDCBHD1 Glen Ellyn and WDCB.org. We have a guest here in the studio.

Barry: Oh, wait. There's a guest.

Bruce Oscar: Dr. Karen Becker.

Dr. Karen Becker: Hi.

Bruce Oscar: Hi, Karen. You're filming a little bit of a documentary.

Dr. Karen Becker: We are. We're enjoying getting to know all of the amazing contributors to *A Sound Beginning* book, which you were involved with.

Bruce Oscar: I am involved in it.

Dr. Karen Becker: You bet. It's an amazing program. Literally, it's a program that helps newly rescued adopted dogs to be able to adapt to their home environment in a more stress-free and relaxed manner. And you composed some amazing music for it.

Bruce Oscar: Well, it's the least I could do for our little friends. Yeah. Well, Barry also.

Barry: Well, I was going to say. I didn't know that it was a story we would share people now, about how Julie found you.

Bruce Oscar: That's right.

Barry: Yeah. I didn't know that we could tell people that.

Bruce Oscar: I was wet, scared, and shaking at the doorstep one night, and she opened it up and said, "Poor thing, come on in."

Barry: Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Karen Becker: She was a very positive trainer. You can attest to how much better it is to be treated with respect and love versus fear.

Bruce Oscar: Works for me.

Dr. Karen Becker: It does. It works for all mammals.

Barry: Here, Bruce, cookies.

Bruce Oscar: I'm there.

Dr. Karen Becker: Click and treat.

Bruce Oscar: Your website is?

Dr. Karen Becker: The website for the book is ASoundBeginningProgram.com. This is an amazing book that anyone who has a rescued pet or an adopted pet needs to consider absolutely.

Bruce Oscar: Yes.

Dr. Karen Becker: At least going to the website and taking a look at this project. But the book is amazing. The music is amazing. The training program is amazing. It's really a wonderful way to help give your newly rescued, forever furry friend the very best opportunity to be able to incorporate it into a home in a calm, relaxing manner. All because of really good music.

Bruce Oscar: Well, most of the book is trying to adjust people to better react to the dogs.

Dr. Karen Becker: You bet. I mean, it's stressful for everyone. We're brand-new parents oftentimes, brand-new pet parents. That's stressful. The dog is, of course, in a brand-new environment. It's very stressful for the animal.

Bruce Oscar: Of course, it is.

Dr. Karen Becker: This is a great way to help reduce stress with everyone involved.

Bruce Oscar: We'll be talking more about that later. Dr. Becker, thank you. Your website, where this documentary's going to be?

Dr. Karen Becker: We'll be able to not only talk more about the book, but we'll be able to show this documentary at MercolaHealthyPets.com.

Bruce Oscar: All right. Well, thank you all for coming in today.

Dr. Karen Becker: Thanks for having us.

Bruce Oscar: All right.

[END]