

## **The 2014 Run For The Animals is dedicated in memory of Spyke.**

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### **Spyke**

I found Spyke (or rather she found me) in January of 2003, during my routine early morning runs.

She and 2 siblings were existing by feeding on deer carcasses commonly discarded by hunters in the area. The discarded parts were not much to eat, just the skin and lower legs, so I began dropping off food. The dogs were very emaciated and suspicious of my gifts, but hungry. An extreme cold snap was forecasted, and I decided that to save them I had to trap the dogs and get them to the vet. Spyke was the hardest to trap - It took 3 hours of coaching, food and the entrapment of her siblings to accomplish.

Spyke and her siblings had been neglected; they were starved and had heart worms. They had also been physically abused. I found homes for her 2 siblings, but decided to keep Spyke.

My children decided to name her after the cartoon dog on the Rug Rats. Spyke was also the shyest of the 3; for weeks she would just sit in the corner and turn her head away. It took months before she learned to wag her tail, and about a year before you could touch her without her flinching. She never got over her fear of umbrellas or car keys or a hand extended over her head.



I began to bring Spyke to work with me at my office, and she gradually began to thrive. She became our official greeter and would often entertain children and clients who visited the office. She was smart and quick to learn tricks in exchange for treats; she could shake hands, play dead dog, roll over, and speak. Spyke was very vocal; she could say "I want it," "out," and would sing to me in the mornings to say hello.

Spyke never quite recovered from the starvation and would eat at every opportunity that presented itself. She was adapt at foraging. I had left her in my car while Christmas shopping, and returned to find her eating an vintage mink hat that I had purchased. Once on my way home from the grocery store I left her alone for 5 minutes, and returned to find that she had eaten an entire rotisserie chicken - probably a third of her body weight. She loved candy and had all the bank tellers trained to give her lollipops instead of dog bones when we visited the drive thru.



Spyke's health was fragile because of her early neglect. She suffered from Pancreatitis and had to be placed on a strict low fat diet (much to her regret). She was subsequently diagnosed with Pancreatic cancer. I could not bring myself to follow the vet's recommendation to have her euthanized. I began to cook ground lean turkey and brown rice for her to encourage her to eat and gain weight. She recovered and shared 3 more years with me and the rest of her extended family and friends. "Spyke was a good dog" says my mom, who loves dogs - but at a distance. I agree; Spyke's many virtues included not shedding, not licking, not barking unless requested, and always loving unconditionally. She will be missed by all.

Anita C. Johnson

