

## Maximus

Never, ever have I known a dog like Maximus, and I doubt that I will ever will again. I had learned of the plight of this nearly ten-year-old Anatolian Shepherd from a friend and colleague of mine who belonged to K9 Friends Visiting Therapy Dogs.

Apparently, Max had been her family's dog prior to her parents' divorce. He had been a playful, snug- bug, lovable couch potato, beloved family member and overall great canine companion. Following a bitter custody battle, my friend's father took poor Max and then kept him as a hostage confined to a small gardening shed with minimal food, water, interaction and exercise. My friend's father eventually informed his "ex" family that Max had died.

It was sometime later that my friend learned from her father's ex-girlfriend that Max had not died after all but was living in terrible, heartbreaking and deplorable conditions. He was very weak and had many health issues, which required veterinary treatment. He had been isolated and very much alone. . No more a member of a loving family, he was essentially abandoned and left on his own. My friend found and took Max who required extensive veterinary care. She was unable to keep him as she was a student and could not legally keep a large dog like Max in her apartment,

My friend worked for a local vet who cared for Max and brought him back to some semblance of health. Max was the gentlest, most loving, mellow and even-tempered dog one could ever encounter. He brought a smile to everyone's face and was a wonderful patient throughout his recovery. He was frail and vulnerable but so very warm, intelligent, friendly and loveable. He bore no resentment and held no grudge against those that had been responsible for the tragic circumstances to which he had fallen victim. He was pure love and affection, warmth and camaraderie.

However, when he was well enough, Max would need a home. My friend ideally wanted him to be an only dog and the recipient of as much love and affection and interaction as possible – to make up for all the years he had spent in isolation and without love and attention. However, there were no families that wished to adopt old Max – his age and other medical issues were major deterrents to his becoming adopted as a family member.

However, Max had paid a visit to our home. He was so happy and seemed intuitively to know he belonged with us. Although our friend was concerned he would not receive the enormous amount of individualized attention this beautiful old dog deserved, my husband and I knew that Max was meant to be a member of our family. No one could have loved and appreciated him more.

When our friend was unable to find anyone to adopt him, we inherited our beloved Max. He adapted beautifully and magnificently to our family. All of our dogs seemed to appreciate and respect our Max as an elder. Our other canines adored and respected him immediately as a beloved and highly regarded "senior citizen". Max quickly became a

Beloved appreciated and respected member of our family. No one could have loved and enjoyed him more than Norman and me and our canine kids.

When we first met Max, he was eager to play with tennis balls and to sniff and walk around the pond and the back yard. He acted as though he were once again a puppy and was enthusiastic about every aspect of life with us and on our property. We were enthralled with Max and couldn't wait until he became a member of our family.

However, Max's Mom was still hoping that he would be adopted as an only dog with the advantages and attention he so truly deserved. No one stepped up to the plate, however, and Max soon became our beloved dog. And truly, I do not believe any dog could have been so dearly loved and appreciated as our beloved Max when we adopted him.

We did our very best to rehabilitate him mentally and physically. He was quickly assimilated into our brood. He was immediately accepted and respected by our other dogs. He was as playful as a pup and enjoyed walking around our two-acre backyard several times each day. No matter the weather, Max was a trooper. As for rides in the car, these were Max's dreams come true! He adored riding in our Suburban with his k9 siblings and went with us whenever we were able to take him with us!

I'll tell you much more about Max – his remarkable recovery and history in future episodes. Max is one of our most beloved and beautiful dogs ever. He blessed so many with his magnificent personality and disposition. He developed and was certified as a Therapy Dog and achieved success far beyond anyone's expectations; he served and blessed so many special needs children and adults.

Maximus was a great gift to so many in so many ways.... He served so many of all ages and conditions in emotional and mental support.

More about our wonderful Max in future segments.