

## Response about Leila

From: **Samantha Fagnant** (sfag@OSCEOLA.ORG)  
Sent: Mon 4/13/09 5:02 PM  
To: 'Vanessa Weiss' (vanessalweiss@hotmail.com)

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Vanessa, you can forward this to whomever you would like.

To all who may be of concern:

I would like to give you the details of Leila's situation as they happened so everyone is clear and can hopefully help to prevent this from happening again.

Just before this past Christmas, I had a dog come into the shelter that I made an immediate connection with. Her name was Leila and she was a 2-3 year old pit mix that was white with crystal blue eyes and she was deaf. She was standoffish at first, but warmed up and actually started climbing into my lap whenever I would stop petting her. I vaccinated, heartworm checked, and moved her up for adoption. Her previous owner had stated that she wasn't good around small animals as she had a high prey drive. Leila was adopted by a family that fell in love with her. They returned her just after New Year's because they didn't listen to information about her and she had gotten ahold of two of their rabbits. I was specifically clear about her not being around smaller animals and they had said they understood.

I then decided she shouldn't go back up for adoption because we are unable to do proper screening of adopters at our facility. I started looking for rescues that might possibly take her. I was very upfront about her situation from the very beginning. I have been a vet tech for 10 years and in the shelter field for 4 years. I have seen situations occur that could have been prevented had the proper information been given out. I was clear as to her issues and knew that the chances of finding a rescue to take her were slim.

Then, the Monday before her day was up, Vanessa contacted me about Leila and wanted to work with me to get her into a rescue. Vanessa worked diligently with rescue groups all over the country to get this girl into a place. Finally, Lassie's Friends Animal Sanctuary stepped up and offered to take her. Many people stepped up to work on transporting Leila from Orlando, Florida to Athens, Georgia, going out of their way to take this special girl to a place that was supposed to be her sanctuary. I was informed via an e-mail from Dr. Johnson that if the animals weren't adopted, they were able to live their lives out there. A former kennel attendant from my facility fostered Leila for 3 weeks prior to her leaving. She worked with Leila on obedience and had her in the yard with her American Bulldogs and they ran around and did great. Leila would be shy at first, then warm up and play for hours on end. Not once did she show any signs of aggression, because the foster listened to instructions and didn't put her around smaller animals. She had even had Leila around her 6 and 1 year old children and didn't have any problems.

On February 14th, I met Beth at the Mall of Millenia to send Leila on her way. Leila rode all the way to Alabama with Beth without any problems, transferred to Natalie's van, and rode the rest of the way to the sanctuary. Vanessa and I emailed and called to check on Leila with Vanessa being told that Leila was doing great and had made friends with another dog named Spike and that they would get pictures sent out. I received an email on April 3rd from Dr. Johnson stating how great Leila was doing and how everyone there loved her. Not once did anything negative about Leila's behavior get relayed to myself or Vanessa. I didn't send bags of dog food with her because of her changing hands so much. Instead, I wrote a personal check donation, which the sanctuary had no problem cashing.

On April 8th, I received a video forward from Beth asking if a dog in the video was Leila. I watched

the video and then called Lassie's Friends to find out what was going on. I left a message for them to call me back. I then called Athens Dog Pound and Spoke to Timberly about Leila. After describing Leila to her and the fact that she had a tattoo on her abdomen of a female symbol with an x through it, it was confirmed that Leila had been there and was turned in as a stray with another dog by a worker from Lassie's Friends on March 31st. (The email I received from Dr. Johnson was dated 4/3, 3 days after she was turned into the pound)

From there, everything kind of spiraled out of control with it being said that I lied to Lassie's Friends about her behavior and just wanted to push a dog onto them that I couldn't put down. She was aggressive from the moment she got there, was attacking other dogs, tried to attack workers, so on and so forth. So, this dog that transferred between 4-6 people over a 24 hour period without any signs of aggression and was housed with another dog while she was at Athens Dog Pound, was this horrible aggressive monster that no one could control...hmmm...

As the end result, Leila was euthanized because no one adopted her from the shelter. I have no hard feelings or negative energy for anyone at Athens Dog Pound, they were only doing their job, and it is by no means an easy job. I appreciate all of their sympathy and compassion that they have shown in this situation. I have finally received closure as to what happened. I wish that the outcome had been different and that Lassie's Friends actually lived up to their word, but that is not the case. I have been called a liar in this situation and that is not the case at all. I will attach the emails to this email so you can see what was sent back and forth between us and see that, in fact, I was up front about her situation. I have to euthanize animals on a daily basis for a number of reasons. I would not put "my problem on someone else" because I didn't have the heart to do it. I do think about what is in the dogs best interest, and I felt that this dog deserved a chance with the right family.

I appreciate everyone's help in this matter and hope that we can work together to correct such negative behavior and actions put towards animals and those that truly do care about them. I have pasted in the emails that were sent from the most recent to the earliest. I do not feel that I lied, but that I was lied to by this "sanctuary". If at any time Leila was giving them an issue, they had every opportunity to notify me. One of the emails I pasted at the bottom actually occurred on the day that Leila was taken to the shelter. So, I will leave it at that and let everyone make their own judgements in this matter.

Thank you for you time.

Sincerely,

Samantha

**From:** MeDCToo@aol.com [mailto:MeDCToo@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2009 3:46 PM  
**To:** Samantha Fagnant  
**Subject:** Re: hello

We are slow at getting our thank yous out, as we are so busy with animals and all of us are working 7 days a week. We are grateful for your donation and want to thank you ....please know that a formal thank you will be coming soon.

Leila is doing great, we all love her and she is a very active girl.

Take care.  
Dr. Karen

***Lassie's Friends Animal Sanctuary***

Dr. Karen Johnson, Executive Director