



This is Cooper!

He is my dog and I am his people, Ann Rackow :)

I am preparing him to train as a Therapy Dog (*not a service dog*) so he can go into hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and other places to bring love and affection to others.

When you see Cooper at the Center wearing a bandanna, he is at “work”, and he knows about “work”! He gets very excited when I get ready in the morning and ask him if he’s ready to go to work!

Part of Cooper’s readiness for Therapy Dog training is getting used to people of all ages, commotion, and uncommon smells and sounds.

One of his biggest goals is to remain calm and allow people to approach and pet him, so if you can help with that, it would be awesome :) Another of his goals is to wait to be allowed to cross the threshold into a classroom. He is also working on allowing me to walk out of sight of him (tethered to my desk) without pulling or whining/barking. We have many other goals as well, but for now that’s what he’s working on.



Cooper also “works” with dogs on occasion at Safe Haven of Iowa County. He has a natural ability to sense another dog’s disposition and matches it. If a dog is aggressive, he drops his posture and walks away, circling around to try it again. Usually, if given enough time, Cooper can get the other dog to calm down and at least sniff if not play with



him. If a dog is very shy or small, he will lay down and let the other dog approach him. If a dog is playful, Cooper meets him head-on and off they go! It’s been really something to see.

Cooper’s story is a strange one. My daughter, Natasha, and I met his mama, Babe, at Safe Haven where we volunteer each week. When Babe came in, she was covered in fleas and had a yeast infection all over her skin that had caused her fur to fall out, her skin was even black in some places! She had a double ear infection, with one ear flap swelled up with a hematoma. She had pin worms and hook worms, and both anal glands were infected. She was a hot mess, but her personality was very sweet.



Safe Haven had found a microchip in her and traced the information back to a breeder who had since gone out of business. They had bred her as much as they could and sold her on Craigslist. After that, the next owner had separated from his girlfriend and given her to his aunt who promptly turned Babe out on the streets of a small eastern Iowa town to fend for herself.

After two weeks of vet care and attention at Safe Haven, Natasha convinced me to adopt her. Babe was so sweet I couldn't resist and she got along well with our other dog, Naomi, who was 12 years old at the time. Babe was 11, so I thought they'd enjoy their retirement together, lounging in the sun, snoozing the days away.



Well, was I ever surprised when I came home for lunch a week later and found that Babe had had a puppy! In my bedroom! There was Cooper, the lone survivor of a litter of three. The delivery was too much for 11 year old Babe, so his brother and sister perished before being born. She was a good mama, but at about three days old, Cooper was in trouble. We underestimated the role a litter plays in the vigor of newborn puppies. Without his litter mates, Cooper lost vitality. He became cold and dehydrated. We took him to the

ER vet and they warmed him up, put some fluids into him, and taught me how to bottle-feed him.

He bounced back from his ordeal and seems to have his mama's sweet personality. He is now a year and a half and 85 pounds!



Already we've seen what a joy a good dog can bring to a child care center and it is my privilege to bring Cooper to work with me so others can enjoy him too! Our ultimate goal is to be certified through Therapy Dogs International.

If you have any questions or concerns, just ask. I'll be glad to talk with you about all of this any time.

