

## 10-021SN Finn

<b>Foster Home: DK</b>			
<b>Status:</b> Ready for Adoption	<b>Age:</b> 6 years	<b>Weight:</b> 33.3 lbs	<b>Color:</b> Gold
<b>Mix:</b> No	<b>Housetrained:</b> Yes	<b>Crate Trained:</b> No	
<b>Good w/ Children:</b> Yes		<b>Good w/ Seniors:</b> Yes	
<b>Good w/ Dogs:</b> Yes		<b>Good w/ Cats:</b> Yes	
<b>Special Needs:</b> Yes, neurological issues affecting motor control			
<b>Reason for Surrender:</b> Wanted care for his medical needs			

### August 11, 2010

According to the therapist, Finn is on his way to a forever home. His current status on the Chinese herbs is being maintained, so we are at a point that we can estimate what it will take for a home to care for Finn, and it seems less scary than most dogs. His present meds are about \$30 per month, and it is hoped that these will limit the need for additional visits to a therapist for chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture.

In addition, Finn will need a home where this care is supported with massage, exercise, variety and lots of people to say hello to. We've noticed that Finn really comes alive in social situations. He loves people, tries to interact with other dogs and in general becomes more mobile, which only serves to improve his posture and confidence. The idea of him serving as a therapy dog has come up more than once. We are eager to begin the search, and know that it will be a very LUCKY home that gets to make him part of the family.

### August 1, 2010

So we've met with Finn's therapist, and we are now onto a course of Chinese herbs to aid in his already amazing progress. This marks a final chapter of sorts, and we are hoping that over the next month, his condition is maintained and even improved by the medicines. They are a combination to address his digestion (while not so gassy in the nether regions, he still has a noisy stomach) as well as his muscle strength and tone.

The strategy at this point is to supplement his treatment plan with these meds to limit the frequency of chiropractic and other in-office care for his forever home. Finn's only 'special need' is for such care, but with his progress, that care won't

be as daunting. His Dr. also strongly recommended that massage continue to be a part of his care. He is often so tight in his neck, head and shoulders because they continue to work the hardest, and massage helps relieve much of the erratic gait that is so characteristic of Finn. To have fostered such a sweet but determined 'little bear' has been a remarkable and humbling experience. He has lately looked larger to us, almost as if by just being able to relax, he can lengthen out his body, and he looks more like retriever to us than anything else. We look to the end of August for a more definitive answer as to his adoption status, but it is with mixed emotions that I feel our 'small blond soldier' will have no further reason to stay.

### July 25, 2010



It's been longer than I care to lapse in updates for Finn, but we were on vacation in the past week, and I wanted to report on how our small blond soldier did in the great northwoods of Wisconsin. While he didn't warm up to the water, our little guy showed his social and interpersonal skills by winning over every child under 12 and many of the adults as well. We stay at a resort that allows dogs (obviously) and among the 14 cabins on the property, family and friends occupy 12 of them. His mobility also increased as the week went on, as the comfortable weather meant he was outside, patrolling the circle of cabins for much of the day. His big feat for the week was his willingness to go down a set of stairs that leads to the lake....all 27 of them! He actually got started without me, but I quickly 'spotted' him as he carefully plodded down. Going up of course was even faster...I swear the boy is part mountain goat.

I am convinced that Finn will thrive in an active environment, with lots of attention and time for his type of exercise. Children are some of his favorite people, and the dogs he met this past week all treated him with the same respect for his age and special circumstances. Finn also showed that he's definitely a sporting dog by pursuing a rather tame white dove that came out of nowhere around mid week. The bird would land and walk around the dogs, only to take off if they got too close and then land again among them. His brain got lots of exercise as well, and I believe that is the part that most forget about. He is 'all there' cognitively, and the mental stimulation this week was fabulous for his overall state. We will visit his therapist this week to review his progress, and I will again update after that.

### **July 1, 2010**

A fragrance-free dog is a beautiful thing!! With the diet now completely changed, Finn is much less gassy, although he is still noisy internally, which manifests mainly when you need to pick him up. Kinda gurgly. Finn knows what you are saying, but weighs the importance of listening to you, and you can just see the wheels turning in his head. "Come" and "no" and "let's eat" are all in his vocabulary, but he's a stubborn little guy at times and yes, I've had to use my 'outside voice' with him. Make no mistake, he's completely aware.

With the introduction of another foster that is like having a second Gus, there is a ton more activity in our house, but the boy takes it all in stride. Despite the wrestling matches that the other two display, he's never been knocked over, and I attribute that to a better balance. He enjoys the atmosphere of play anyway and tries to put his two cents' in occasionally.

Finn is definitely turning toward home, as our therapy visits continue to reveal improvements, and he is now spacing them about 4 weeks apart. While chiropractic care will be an ongoing MUST with this dog, acupuncture is being taken out of the protocol for now. While we assess how good he is after this most recent visit, his therapist will determine what herbals to supplement his diet with.

For those of you keeping score at home, and I know you all are from all reports (thanks by the way) Finn's weight is down just a touch, and we're keeping an eye on that. We'd like to see him build more muscle mass in his hindquarters than he is, and hopefully additional meds may help to address that issue. His therapist has characterized him as 'blood deficient in Eastern Medicinal terms,' and that can mean weaker muscles. For now, he remains our 'fearless, fightin' Finn' and he continues to show us all what a strong will can do.



### **June 21, 2010**

What a difference diet makes. Finn loves his duck and sweet potato, and while we're still not completely transitioned over, he is much easier to live with and breathe around. He was assessed officially and to no one's surprise passed with flying colors.

He has proven himself quite the social butterfly - he mingled so well with the 'big dogs' at Bark in the Park that it was often hard to spot him. We quickly understood that what is normal for Finn,

and as we've had him about 3 months now what's normal for us, isn't always apparent to everyone else. I've come to the philosophy that there's nothing 'wrong' with Finn, but he has his issues and he teaches us daily how to embrace them, and keep moving forward with a smile on his face and a disposition that is always sweet. He faces anything with curiosity and despite living with us now for as long as he has, he didn't feel the need to be 'looked over' as I tried to do at BITP. Anytime I would approach him, he'd look up at me and do a u-turn. With a yard full of dogs, I was apparently cramping his style.

We've introduced another very active male into our household, and Finn remains unflappable. As young as the new guy is - 18 months - even he understands that Finn handles differently and he is gentle with him.

Our next appointment at the therapist is still about a week and a half away, but he is also being helped digestively by herbal supplements, which also curb his gas issues. Our goal will be to continue to lengthen the time between visits to see where his treatment plan will need to fall once he is deemed ready for adoption. Our ideal forever home will be as committed to this as much as they are to Finn, and it will be to his best health that we keep up with regular visits. However, for anyone who spends even a little time with this guy, I don't foresee it as a problem in getting that commitment.

### **June 13, 2010**

While our little soldier keeps improving with physical therapy, his sensitive digestive system seems to be demanding more attention. The heat intolerance he shows means that the chicken-based dog food is not a good idea. He was noticeably more gassy and his stools softer, so we are transitioning him to a duck and potato food, which will also provide a little more fat in his diet. Good on two fronts: added weight and it's also good for the brain, as fat is the only thing the brain can metabolize.

Therapeutically, his continued improvements from visit to visit means that he's earned another week off from therapy. The objective is to stretch out the visits to see what will maintain his overall ability so we can gauge when he is as good as he can get. Happily, he keeps getting better, so we're encouraged by how far this boy will go. We are nearly at the three-month point in foster care, and we are excited to see what additional time could bring for him. We have also heard him bark again, which is always a neat event!

### **June 06, 2010**

With a recent change in food, Finn has let us know that he's got a really sensitive system. Even though he was transitioned over several days time, he woke up one morning and refused breakfast, opting instead to eat at lunchtime. Not completely alarming, but he's so steady that it was notable. His overall attitude was also more sluggish and his gas output was getting worse, so we made an executive decision to take him off the food he was obviously not enjoying. (In mixing other kibble in with the offending food, he ate around the 'old stuff' and left it in his bowl, kind of like what I do with kidney beans in chili. Smart guy.)

He is now being transitioned over to a more palatable food (bland), but until he's completely used to it, we are enduring continued gas issues. However, his appetite has picked up again, and if you're keeping score at home, yes that weight has indeed gone up again. Now at 32.5, he is continuing to fill out and doesn't get as many 'wow, he's thin' comments from people. We are currently awaiting his next therapy appt (at present, a combination of acu and chiro, which continues to yield results) and he's at about 2 weeks' interval. We have noticed more of an ability to 'walk and chew gum' at the same time for Finn. He can now carry a ball or other toy in his mouth not only while he's walking but when he taking a step up into the house.

We are also expecting a visit from GRRoW assessors sometime soon, and it's my hope that, sensing strangers, he may bark for us again.

### **May 28, 2010**

During the recent mini heat wave, we've learned that Finn hates hot weather. We noticed a definite decline in his 'spunk' and he reverted to slower movements, and the hypermetric gait that was reminiscent of his first days. However, he recently had another chiropractic session with his physical therapist, who is overall seeing

continued improvement, and felt that any decline was not so much due to the space between appointments (we've been stretching to two weeks), but just the weather. As much as I'd like his weight to increase, the slow progress is much better for his skeleton, and his characteristic backbone that makes him look so thin is more due to the lack of muscle tone along the spine.

A few notes to interested parties: pack your patience with this dog. He moves in his own time, his own rhythm, and he'll get there when he gets there. You may find yourself having to pick him up to get there quicker, but I've tried to refrain from doing that unless absolutely necessary. Motivation and speed come when there is a group of people and dogs walking together, because the boy still senses when the pack moves, as he showed in a recent walk I took with some friends and their dogs. It is a mistake to think Finn doesn't 'get' things; he's a very smart, very intuitive dog, and I've been saying that while other dogs may drive the car faster, Finn will get a higher score on the written exam.

With the introduction of another foster, Finn has also shown continued interest in toys, whether they were meant to be or not. Jake 10-032 apparently loves empty water bottles, and now so does Finn. I think it's the crunchy sound they make, but he entertained himself with one the other night for about 1/2 hour. It also seems to be the one thing Gus won't try and steal away.

Finn will continue with therapy and in foster care as long as we continue to see improvement, and that is the case here. We will continue to administer chiropractic adjustments, and eventually try Chinese herbs to measure their success.

### **May 17, 2010**

Finn continues to take the therapy he's been given and use it to the best of his ability. Chiropractic of late has been beneficial, although his therapist is recommending that we skip water therapy for now. It gives Finn way too much to think about, and until we can perhaps work with him outside of a tank of water, like in a lake, he isn't showing much improvement with that form. He decided to climb up on the couch last Thursday, and did so by plopping his two front feet up in one movement, then wiggling forward slowly and bringing his hind legs up and over. He then sat - sat!! - with his back to me for a moment before easing into laying down. He also was caught a couple of times sleeping completely on his side, with all 4 legs out. This is also a first. Because of his continued improvement, however, it rules out one of the possibilities for his diagnosis of cerebral hypoplasia, from which dogs do not improve.

Finn was an ambassador at a recent gift wrap event at Barnes and Noble, and I was amazed to watch children around him. They seem to respond to Finn differently, approaching more slowly and crouching down to pet him. He has a calming influence on them and it is just amazing to watch. He would make an amazing therapy dog.

I also finally heard the little guy bark this week, and like his spirit, it was much bigger than his little body would indicate. His vet visit to complete his vaccines was today, and that too gave us good news that he has added another 3/4 pound. Slow, but steady progress.

### **May 6, 2010**

Finn's progress continues to be steady and for those who saw him in his 'early days' he walks taller, stronger and more upright. We are continuing acupuncture and water therapy, although as one shows less effect, then we go to another try-it-and see. Acu has been yielding great results, but we are now trying chiropractic and eventually will see what Chinese herbs will do for him. His condition is still on the thin side but his overall appearance is healthier, and the boy hasn't met a scrap of food that he didn't like!



Finn is incredibly curious, and has one heck of a memory. He loves routine, and if he were a 10-year old boy would make a great hall monitor. He also seems to enjoy climbing: stairs, hills, you name it. This is surprising knowing that it is his back limbs that are weaker, but it will be to his benefit to encourage such behavior.



Finn will be greeting his adoring and growing public this Saturday at a meet and greet/gift wrap event. He is a dog that people at first say "Awww, poor dog" then realize, "Wow, he's pretty smart!" Indeed he knows how to turn on the charm and I can tell when he is snowing someone to garner an extra scruff, that sly boy.

What I will caution anyone who is following Finn as a potential forever home is to pack your patience. Finn seems to know when he's being led and when you're in a hurry, because that's when he'll generally take a great interest in the patch of grass. He responds to being called, but I don't know

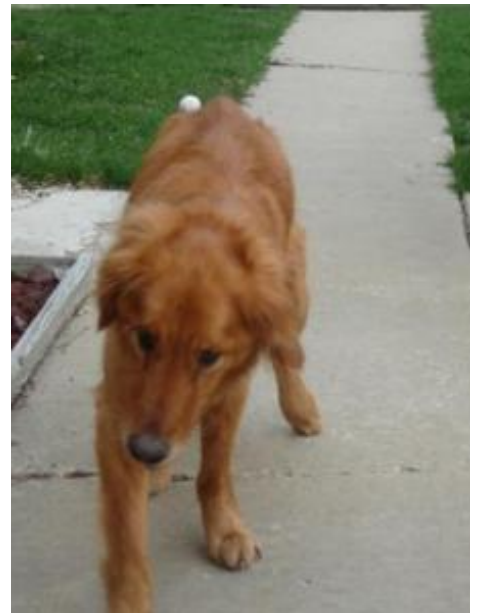
how much he will be able to learn regarding formal commands. As we will have him for at least a few months more, that will remain to be seen.

#### **April 26, 2010**

Finn continues to live up to his name, which means 'small, blonde soldier.' He is a little guy that can walk under our dog, but is afraid of nothing and has an insatiable curiosity which helps him adapt very well.

Since coming into our care 4 weeks ago, he has improved his gait and balance issues with acupuncture in particular, and is also receiving supplemental hydrotherapy. His major milestones in the past week were that he is definitely not afraid to go up stairs, and he is beginning to lay down in the car.

We noted he could easily descend a short flight of stairs (5-6 steps) at the Burlington Pet Expo, and he did so several times, and then this past Saturday I carried him downstairs to our basement to keep an eye on him while I cleaned. When it was time to go up, he did so willingly and with no hesitation. The little guy motored right up like he had done this a million times. Given his balance problems, I don't think going down our steps is advisable, as his front end 'hops' to each step, and doing so more than a few times may cause him to tumble. The funny thing is, I think Finn knows this, too, as he shows no interest in attempting. However, other series of steps he will regard for a few seconds, then proceed, which may indicate he has good depth perception.



Finn adores people, and people are starting to realize he knows how to work a room. He is also becoming more bold and interactive around our Gus, and sometimes will grab at his tail to let him know he's no pushover.



Car rides are something he loves, and he is always walking to the car when we're outside, whether we're going anywhere or not. It has only been in the last week that he's felt comfortable enough to lay down when the car is moving.

How fast he can move is completely up to Finn, and motivation has everything to do with it. For all of his 31#, he has a very strong will, and it's not likely you'll be able to talk

him into something he doesn't want to do. Lucky for me I can lift him if his obstanancy becomes an issue.

We are trying to introduce massage, and that will be a long road...he is OK at the start, but ends the session quickly once you move toward the legs.



The goal for us is to use therapy to better develop his muscles, which were previously not used well. Originally his profile was not unlike a camel with his back very hunched. Now his back is much straighter, and his weaker back end is also showing signs of better coordination. It will be a great day when we see him sit or wag his tail. Because of this, Finn will be a long term foster, which will give us time to really get to know this guy and what his personality is. While he has special needs, they are not extraordinary needs and his forever home will not have to make huge lifestyle changes to accommodate them. He is housebroken, calm, quiet and - as many who have met him will attest - devastatingly sweet.

**April 20, 2010**

Finn 10-021SN came into GRRoW.