

August 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Letter of Recommendation

I can't begin to express our gratitude and appreciation for Kari's skills as a dog and human trainer. We have a young chocolate Labrador mix, named Einstein that we rescued from a local animal shelter. When we first brought him home we realized that he had severe food obsession problems but, other than that issue, he seemed fine with our other dog and two cats. However, when he was about one year old, he had an encounter with a dog that tried to take away his raw hide. He got extremely obsessive and vicious towards the other dog and from that point on, for almost a year, he was completely out of control around other animals, especially dogs.

Let me explain what we mean by out of control – he would crouch down, bare his teeth, give a deep chest growl, and then would proceed to bark like a vicious police dog. He would do this every where, on walks, in friends' houses, in our house with the cats! To try and figure out what to do he went to private training classes, we consulted a behavior therapist, talked to the local shelter about what we could do and nothing seemed to work. He would improve slightly but inevitably he would regress to being a very vicious animal. He never bit anyone or anything, but we were extremely afraid that his behavior would escalate to the point where he would hurt someone or something. In fact, we were very close to the point of thinking we needed to give Einstein away –we were scared of him and heart broken at that same time. We wanted to help him!

Luckily we found Kari, via her website, and had her come out and meet with us. Upon first meeting us, she put us at ease by letting us know that we could work with Einstein and we would be able to see improvements. Her calmness about his behavior really helped us be calmer about it also. She was knowledgeable and gave us practical, easy to do assignments that have given us our dog back. After working with him everyday for about a month we began to see major differences –he didn't immediately want to attack *every* dog and he wasn't going after our cats.

In addition to working with Kari privately, she also allowed us to bring Einstein to her dog obedience classes. Remember, changing behavior can be a life long process, so when we first started class I think many of our fellow class members were very frightened at Einstein –he growled, barked, and was generally mean. But Kari acted as if Einstein was supposed to be in class and that set the tone for how everyone else treated him. We believe by allowing him to be in classes (both Basic and Basic II) Einstein grew more comfortable with other dogs and became less aggressive towards other animals. With the support of all the people in our classes, Einstein has become a much more relaxed, fun dog to be around. He still has occasional outbursts but recently he attended a dog event sponsored by Wag and Train and City Bark doggie day care. There were at least 25-30 dogs off leash wandering around playing with each other. And Einstein was one of them! He was able to socialize and play with the other dogs, off leash WITHOUT one vicious incident. In fact, everyone in our class that saw him praised how much he has learned and changed. One woman said, I remember when we saw Einstein and said "Uh-oh, it's Einstein." Now, she sees him and he plays nicely with her dogs *most* of the time.

We love our dog so much and Kari helped us learn how to be with him and read his needs. Her knowledge of how to help humans help their dogs saved us from giving up our boy! We hope to work with Kari in the future to see if we can help Einstein learn to have a brother or sister because we would love two dogs! We can't begin to express how much we appreciate the skills and knowledge that Kari has shared with us. Without over exaggerating, sometimes we feel like she was a miracle worker with Einstein. Please feel free to contact us at 303-725-6143 and ask us any questions about working with Kari.

Sincerely,

Justin and Jennifer Silverstein