

## READ MY STORY—GUNNER

### I Have A DoveLewis Story...

True to form, Gunner is a Labrador Retriever which means no morsel—no matter how gross or uneatable—goes unnoticed and, if possible, is usually eaten. She was the proud purchase of my then 20-something son, Matt, and later lived with my oldest son, Erik, when Matt moved out of state.

Gunner lived with me for a year while Erik traveled through Europe (we call her the “Jones Family Dog” because she is equally at home with the whole family). When Gunner came back to live with me, we walked every morning before I left for work and again in the evening when I came home which put her in excellent shape and dropped her weight a whopping 20 lbs. Each day after work, I would leave my bag sitting by the door where she would give it an obligatory sniff and then totally ignore it in favor of more important things ahead—like walking and EATING! Among the items in the bag were several blister packs of Claritin D which I kept with me during allergy season.

On one particular evening, we were all away and Gunner was especially “ticked” that she was left at home and didn’t get to go along with the human pack. Her way of letting us know she didn’t like this arrangement was to open the cupboard door, pull out the trash can and eat her way through it while scattering the contents around the kitchen. When my son came home he found her in quite an excitable state of hyper activity. He let her out in the back yard while assessing the damage that she’d done and realized she was madly running all over the yard—something was definitely wrong. Then he spotted the tooth-marked blister packs of Claritin D sitting near my bag and realized it wasn’t just the garbage can she ransacked. There were 9 punctured packets of pills sitting on the floor and this was now one dog in big trouble. Erik immediately loaded Gunner in the car and frantically drove to DoveLewis. The staff went into action. One of the techs offered her some charcoal to help neutralize the drugs she had ingested and wondered out loud if she would eat it but then realized, “She’s a Lab”, and, “Of course”—she’ll eat anything!” Gunner woofed down the charcoal without a second thought. She was put on a tether so she could run and run and run. It



seemed as if she ran in circles forever. She had an IV and was given medications to aid her recovery, but no one was sure her heart could stand all of this ill-fated stimulation. After a few days, she began to look better, but it was still uncertain whether or not the ingested drugs would leave any long term damage. We were all heart sick that we might still lose our food-driven hiking companion and family pet. At last she came home—one exhausted and tired out, mischievous dog. Over the next couple of months we noticed no permanent damage and she seemed back to her old self. The daily exercise and drop in weight had, in fact, strengthened her heart and undoubtedly contributed to her ability to withstand the drug overdose and recover.

Gunner’s story happened 7 years ago and she’s now a nearly 14-year old black Lab in her senior years. Her eyes are a little cloudy and her joints a little stiff now. She still loves to walk, is in good shape for an “old lady” and hasn’t lost any of her intense interest in food or anything that

might be or probably isn’t eatable. She is a true scavenger—clearly exhibiting her “Wolf to Woof” connection. This summer she had a return visit to DoveLewis after ingesting a fruit pit that lodged in her intestine needing the expertise and overwhelming kindness and care of Dr. Curtis Brandt, Dr. Jason Nicholas and the DoveLewis staff—again!

She loves being with her people, sitting in the sun with her Kong near by; she’ll never turn down a good, rousing belly rub and she is especially fond of small children with hot dogs in hand.

We will always be grateful to the staff at DoveLewis for saving her life (more than once!) They did all the right things and made sure she had every opportunity and all the right treatment to recover. We still need to secure the trash and clear the area of anything hazardous to her health for she will always be a Lab Foodie and on the prowl for anything she can eat. There’s just nothin’ like a Lab!

**Jan Lindsay**

## TELL YOUR STORY!

Everyone has a DoveLewis story. We want to hear it!  
Send your story to: [contact@dovelewis.org](mailto:contact@dovelewis.org).

# Goodbye Gunner

The knarly, arthritic toes and cracked, worn pads revealed a glimpse into the life of a black Lab with 15 years of serious fun behind her. Recently, the maladies of aging began to slow her down, robbing her of energy and her usual zeal for all things fun and exciting. Sleeping became her pastime. She began to exhibit signs that told us that the end of her cherished place in our family life was coming to a close. In the course of two days, we watched her become confused and unable to stand. When her fever would not subside, we headed to DoveLewis and the inevitable discussion with Dr. Katherine Earl regarding palliative care and euthanasia. This Lab had lived her life well, happy and content with all of her people, fully and unendingly dedicated to pleasing us all with her presence. What a dog! A bird hunter she was not, but she wiggled into our hearts with eyes that promised us her loyalty forever. And now it was time... we gathered in the Comfort Room and watched her tail wag one last time as those loving Techs wheeled her into this quiet, peaceful sanctuary. We said goodbye a thousand times and then left her with our tears...

Gunner had the dubious opportunity of visiting DoveLewis on five different occasions throughout her lifetime. From a puncture wound to her belly to ingestion of Claritin D and various fruit pits (she was a true Lab!), our experiences with Dove from the moment we walked in the door to the happy departure with our recovered case study of "how-much-trouble-can-a-Lab-get-into" have been nothing less than phenomenal every time. Compassionate, empathetic, knowledgeable, able to communicate are just a few of the words that describe the people who kindly work so hard to save the lives of animals every day.

Thank you Dr. Earl for talking us through symptoms, probable diagnosis, prognosis, and helping us find the courage to let her go. Thank you to the gentle hands that lifted Gunner from the car. Thank you Dr. Kelly Flaminio. Thank you for kind words. Thank you for knowing the meaning of Dog Love.

With heartfelt appreciation,  
Jan Lindsay