



**StubbyDog™**

Rediscover the pit bull.

## What a Beautiful Pit Bull

***Once shocked to find they had a pit bull,  
now they can't imagine life without her***

*By Amanda Mueller*

How do I fit 13 years of love and life into a few paragraphs?

I suppose I should start with the words that opened my mind and changed my life for the better: "This is a beautiful pit bull."

This is what the vet said on our fifth visit with our new rescued puppy, Sierra. When we first brought Sierra to the vet, she was malnourished and covered in open sores from the mange, so it wasn't until she started to heal and fill out that the vet commented on our beautiful pit bull.

"Oh my God," I thought. "A pit bull? We can't have a pit bull! We have baby nephews and nieces who we need to protect."



But then I looked down and saw Sierra. I couldn't wrap my head around the clash between what I had heard about pit bulls and this little dog that stole our hearts the first moment we met her. It only took minutes of research to learn that pit bulls are individuals like any other dogs. And with Sierra, we fell in love with the breed, and so did countless friends and family members upon meeting our affectionate goofball. Even my 80-year-old grandmother, who dog-sits Sierra often, is not shy about telling strangers about the wonder of pit bulls.

Fast forward to when Sierra was 6-years-old, and we found out she had a cancerous tumor in her hind-left paw. In order to save her, we had to amputate the entire leg. She still had such energy and life. How could we not save her? The vet projected it would take her at least two weeks to learn to walk again. Little did they know the heart of this dog. A few hours after the surgery, the vet technician called to ask if she could take Sierra around the block for a walk because Sierra was awake, happy and ready to go. When we came to pick her up, she had no left leg and staples showing, but she was wagging her tail and giving kisses to everyone at the vet office. Sierra, being the model patient, is now the vet's "spokes dog" for other owners considering amputation.

The first few years after her surgery, Sierra remained my loyal running partner. Eventually arthritis set in and she retired from running, but she is still happy taking leisure strolls through the neighborhood with all the kids that come over to play with her. I have to admit, when we had her home the first week with her stitches exposed and our toddler accidentally bumped into it, I am ashamed to admit I had a moment of weakness when the thought flashed in my mind: "She could turn at any moment."

Right?

Know what Sierra did with all that pain? She kissed our toddler as if to reassure him it was OK. Because that's what our pit bull does. Sierra went on to be a wonderful foster sister to many other pit bulls in our home when we worked with Indy Pit Crew in Indiana. She looked after pregnant mommas, little tiny baby puppies and adult dogs that eventually found love with their forever families. We brought these abused souls into our home to foster, and in return they taught my whole family, especially our young boys, love, forgiveness, acceptance and true happiness. Through the same process, Sierra has taught us patience and tolerance.

*Photos courtesy of Aleksandra Gajdeczka*



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I suppose I should mention that Sierra is also deaf. Many worry that deaf dogs are not trainable or that they will be fearful biters, so they don't give deaf dogs a chance. But the truth looks more like this: Sierra doesn't care when other dogs are barking, the doorbell is of no consequence, and she sleeps through even the worst thunderstorms. She smells when new people are in the house within moments (even from the second floor), and she is very visually oriented. Sierra can be fast asleep, and if she gets a whiff of nearby human or if she is startled awake, her tail starts wagging a mile a minute at the anticipation, even before she opens her eyes.

She still helps out when I'm home alone and feeling scared. She senses and watches my reactions to things and will go and investigate. As for training, Sierra, like any deaf dog, relies on eye contact and hand signals. Trainers I have worked with have occasionally been reluctant to let Sierra in their class, but Sierra has graduated at the top of her class each time. And even better, each trainer said they wished they had more deaf dogs in their classes!



Sierra is now an Elderbull at 13. She continues to show the world that pit bull type dogs have an insurmountable amount of love to share. The fact that she's deaf, a cancer survivor, a tri-ped, a pit bull, well, none of that matters in the end because to us she's just Ci-Ci, the best dog in the whole world.

*Photos courtesy of Alexandra Gajdeczka*