

*“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”*

— MAHATMA GANDHI

Brandon was wandering the streets of an Indiana town, a lonely, rail-thin dog without a home. He was captured and taken to a city shelter that imposes time restrictions on every animal. Known as ‘high-kill’ facilities, these shelters are most common in the Midwest and South, where the longer an animal goes unclaimed or adopted the closer it comes to euthanasia.

An Indiana rescue group noticed Brandon and pulled him from the shelter, hoping to find him a home. He was heartworm positive, deaf and presented serious behavioral issues. The rescue group felt they could not give Brandon what he needed nor could they find appropriate foster care for him. Knowing that sending Brandon back to the city shelter would mean certain death, the rescue group contacted the shelter manager at Cocheco Valley Humane Society (CVHS) as well as a local dog transport group, The CanINE Express. Brandon’s star was rising—by coming to CVHS, he would learn to conquer his fears through kindness and training, and have a chance at a happy, long life.

CVHS is *more* than an animal shelter—we are a safe haven for all animals that come into our care. We do not euthanize based on length of stay, nor do we euthanize for space. Our goal is to find each animal an appropriately matched forever home.

Brandon arrived at CVHS in January and immediately began a behavioral enrichment program. He was experiencing a great deal of fear and confusion, startling at even small movements and gestures. CVHS worked with Brandon helping him to see that everyday happenings can be normal and even fun. Through affection along with food and play, Brandon went from fearing to be touched to seeking out love and attention. With that mastered, he was then ready for the challenge of learning commands through sign language. He now knows the visual commands for ‘sit,’ ‘come’ and ‘stay.’

Thanks to the efforts of CVHS staff, Brandon transformed from a timid, unwanted stray to a happy, confident dog who finally found his forever home. Some say ‘you don’t get a second chance at life,’ but Brandon is clearly a happy exception to that rule.