



Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project Fact Sheet:

Puppy Mill Survivors: Josie's Diary



Wuff, I am Josie. You may know me by my "slave name," Christy – that's what I was called in the place where I used to live. For the first two years of my life, I was "livestock," kept with dozens and dozens of other dogs for the sole purpose of making puppies for my owners to sell. I wasn't fed well, or treated well, or even given water out of a dish. I didn't have a soft bed to sleep on, and never heard a kind word. When I had trouble having my puppies, I wasn't taken to a vet – my "owners" cut my belly with a knife, with nothing to stop the horrible hurting. It was so awful that I just "went away" in my head.

10 March 2007 was the best day of my life, though it didn't seem like it at the time. As I was pulled out of my cage by the scruff of my neck and held up with my front legs in the air and my belly facing a lot of noisy people (my long, matted hair hid my scar), I just wanted to fade away. I didn't know what was happening to me, but past experience told me it couldn't be good. There was some shouting, but it was all over quickly. I was put into another cage and taken away.

This time, though, I was taken to a clean, nice-smelling place, where people talked with smiles in their voices. I hugged the wall and tried to become part of it, but they still talked softly to me and, when they had to touch me – which I hated! – touched me gently. They didn't grab me by the legs or the scruff, the first of many small blessings I was to receive.

I was scared for a long time. I was scared in what they call a "shelter;" I was scared in two foster homes although the people were unfailingly kind to me. Who knew when that might change? Who knew when they might hurt me again, grab me, hit me, cut my belly with a knife? Still, as day after day went by, I was just the tiniest bit less scared. And there were other dogs there who weren't scared at all. Not at all!

Now, I'm in what they call my "Forever Home." I don't know what that means, Forever. I hope it's good. I'm not as scared as I was, but still, the fear is there. If I do something wrong, will I have to go back to that horrible place where I started out?

Some of the kind people in my life have been

keeping a diary for me. They said that since I cannot speak, they will do it for me. I would like to share my journey out of the Mills with you.

March 2007: At the Shelter

"Listed as Christy. This dog was so shut down we called in rescue and thankfully a mill dog rehab foster was available. [Christy] hugged the wall and nobody could get near her." – note with photo, from a worker at the shelter that rescued her.

"Our little Christy the scared Westie, had a cesarean scar from a previous delivery. Doc said there was a lot of scar tissue inside of her - uterus, bladder, the horns attached to each other, mometum (fatty tissue) were all attached to abdominal wall. Doc and Tom says it was a mess - so they probably dumped her because she wasn't getting pregnant again!" – note from shelter worker after Christy's spay.

From Christy's WPMP "Auction Scrapbook" page:

Christy is two years old. Terriers at two are meant to be active, playful, happy-go-lucky balls of energy, bright-eyed and eager for the attention of their People.

Christy, however, is so "shut down" – terrified of humans – that she runs to a "secure" corner and hugs the wall as if she is trying to become a part of it. She doesn't know what a toy is for, and she hasn't played since being separated from her littermates at all-too-early an age. She has probably NEVER before known a kind word or soft voice.

Her physical problems – that "home" c-section, matted coat, and badly decayed teeth – pretty much fade into insignificance next to the fact that she won't let anybody get close to her – either physically or emotionally.

18 June 2007: In a Foster Home

"We have been fostering Christy for almost 8 weeks now. She was re-named Susie before we started fostering her.

"I don't know where to start. Susie is a sweet little girl but she has so many fears. She is still terrified to leave or go into her crate. I am sure she associates that with terrible treatment so I only crate her in a HUGE crate when I am at work. I have to stand to the side and she rockets out of the crate as fast as she can and races over and jumps up on her "safe" recliner. She is still so terrified that she sometimes runs headlong into the crate door while I am still in the process of opening it. She also is terrified to go in and out the back door to go outside. It breaks your heart.

"We are also struggling to get her to eat or drink. She will only drink when we are not at home and she is in her crate. She sometimes will take a couple of panicked bites of food in her crate but I have had the best luck hand feeding her. She seems afraid of bowls, plates, etc. She ignores food that I leave on the floor of her crate. She loves treats now, too, but the only way I can get her to eat more than a couple bites is to hand feed her when she is in her "safe" recliner. She usually will finish her serving that way before running for the hills. She now weighs about 12 pounds.

"The good news is even though she is still fearful of people she loves to cuddle in my lap and lie across my chest and she sleeps on our bed at night. She also runs up and gives me nose bumps now and does play bows in front of me when we are outside in the yard. She watches the attention and lovin' my dogs get and then she gets brave enough to come up close to me. Susie spends nearly all her time sitting in one of our recliners. That is where she feels safe. She has shown no interest in exploring the house. She has only recently started to jump down and run around a little or occasionally to follow me into the bedroom but that is progress

"I speculate that maybe her cesarean was done in a kitchen because Susie is terrified to go in the kitchen and there are other rooms with the same flooring that don't scare her. Susie urinated on me every time I tried to pick her up when I first started to foster her but we no longer have a problem with that. She has come a long ways but still is struggling to conquer her fears. She is such a sweet, affectionate girl in her own way and I am smitten. She has been through a lot but she's young and I hope she will get to the point where people and most of what she sees in the world aren't the source of so much stress and anxiety. She just seems to always be in fight or flight mode and I hope that won't always be the case. She is an adorable little Westie and deserves a lot better

than the start she had in life!" – Susie's foster mom

23 August 2007: Adopted!

"I just adopted one of your featured dogs on the website, 'Christy' now Josie, the scared to death westie who had a home c-section from her former adoring owner.

"I also adopted another westie in June that came from the puppy mills. Tucker was terrified of men, especially ones who wore hats and had beards. Tucker has done remarkably well, and to my dismay, sometimes picks my son to sleep with instead of me and the other 2 westies!!

"Josie, on the other hand – it's going to be a long road for her. She is making progress, but it is one step forward and 2 back. She is such a sweet dog. It angers me so that people can treat animals like they did with her. She is still very fearful of people and has her 'safe spot' on one end of the couch.

"I have noticed that when I wear my hair up in a ponytail on top of my head, she seems fearful of me, and I've come to the conclusion that I must resemble an amish woman to her. At first, when I got her, I had to leave the leash on her when she went outside as I was unable to get her to come to me and I didn't want to chase and scare her. I would usually have to call Toby & Tucker over to me, then she would follow them and I could get close enough to her to step on the leash, then softly talk my way up to her, pick her up and bring her in the house. She has made progress in that I leave the patio door open, she either will come in by herself following the boys in or responds to the word "treat", comes in and goes to her spot on the couch. She still will not come directly to me when I call her, but is coming closer and gives me her nose bumps to get petted or treats.

"She is eating out of a bowl for me, which is progress also, as her foster mom had to put her food on a towel or on the floor to her kennel. I have 2 soft furry toys with soft squeakers in that she is starting to play with!! My 2 greatest joys: watching her run in the backyard with the boys playing doggie tag – She is fast and can turn on a dime, and keeps up with the boys and doesn't take any guff from them!! – and cuddling with her, just petting and letting her know she can be close to me. She has come to enjoy having her hair brushed. She shows trust to me there, as she will stretch out and lay with her eyes closed, enjoying her massage. Thank you for all your hard work for these wonderful animals." – Christy/Josie's Forever Mom