

Layla was born sometime in 2013 somewhere in the port city of Stockton, located in the Central Valley of California. It's estimated that she was approximately eight months old when she was picked up by the Stockton Animal Control on March 6, 2014. During that 2014 calendar year, 7,031 dogs, including Layla, were picked up and housed with Stockton Animal Control; 27% of those dogs were euthanized and 32% were rescued. Layla was among the fortunate 32% that year and was rescued by ResQ Animal Coalition just prior to her "Due Out" date of March 11, 2014. She was transported 207 miles to Redding, California where she was brought back to health and advertised for adoption by Pawz For A Cause. Her photo, under the name Daisey, and a brief biography were discovered by my husband in a local newspaper article promoting pet adoptions that sealed our fate and her destiny. Initially hand shy, weighing just under five pounds, and easily intimidated, Layla blossomed under the care and loving environment of her forever home.

After Layla became comfortable and confident in her new home it became apparent to me that she possessed a unique ability to sense when her people or their guests were distressed, upset, or just needed a friend. She would respond to that need by presenting herself to them using the nuclear option of sitting up and quietly waiting for their invitation. Once invited to a lap, it's truly amazing to watch as she calms that person and brings them peace and relaxation. Even people that I know are less than fond of dogs respond positively to her and become her fans. It was clear to me that Layla had a gift that needed to be shared so when my husband showed me the Prescription Pets recruitment ad, I jumped at the opportunity.

Training for Layla began in earnest after I attended the Prescription Pets introduction meeting in early 2016 and learned what would be required of her to participate in the program. I taught Layla the basic commands: sit, stay, leave it, heal, and to follow on a loose leash without becoming distracted. She learned these commands quickly and moved into her role as a registered therapy dog with Prescription Pets in June 2016 and Alliance of Therapy Dogs in June 2018. It is always a marvel to watch her as she shares herself and her calming influence with those confronting the challenges of life in various facilities such as the Veterans' Home, and area retirement/assisted living homes.

That Layla was destined to become a diva was apparent even when she was picked up in Stockton where someone noted on her intake form that "she sits pretty". From the streets of Stockton to therapy dog in just eighteen months is a miracle journey for a tiny and frightened puppy who now weighs a healthy nine pounds and is full of love and confidence.