

# A BROWN DOG'S COMMUNITY

By Andi Christine Bednarzig

As “That’s not a puppy,” I exclaimed, as a wiry, mud-coloured creature with amber eyes tumbled out of its traveling crate. “It looks like a miniature dog. I thought Evelyn was sending us a puppy?!”

Evelyn Fuller at the Cree Nation of Waskaganish on James Bay had arranged for the adoption of our new pet. A quick check with her confirmed the dog’s birthdate. This dog was just 8 weeks old.

My husband and I met Evelyn while on a teaching contract in the north. At the time, we had discussed adopting a dog.

Now back at our permanent home here in Rockport, we have kept in touch with many members of the community.

In early November of last year, we learned Evelyn had rescued a litter of puppies. The mother of the four-week-old mixed white and brown pups had succumbed to malnourishment in the unseasonal -30 C degree temperatures. The white puppies were adopted quite readily. A remaining brown one still needed a home.

“It will be so nice to have a puppy for Christmas,” I sighed. A fat, fuzzy little puppy, delighting us with its clumsiness and curiosity. Tumbling about under the twinkling lights of our Christmas tree . . .

Evelyn’s dedication to the village dogs has won the trust of the community.

After a busy day as the head of the Special Education Department at the Cree School Board, Evelyn engages in her other passion: the pets and strays of Waskaganish. She deworms, administers rabies shots, and takes care of the basic medical needs of not only dogs, but rabbits and cats as well. Homes are found for surrendered dogs and arrangements are made for injured dogs to receive medical care in the south. On a weekly basis, dogs are flown out to animal rescue organizations. About once a month, Evelyn can be found on the James Bay highway driving south with a carload of puppies.

“I’ve managed to rehome over 500 dogs, cats, and rabbits since moving there and I will continue to be of service to Waskaganish as long as I can.”

Arrangements were made, and the little brown dog arrived via Air Creebec Airlines a few days before Christmas. No sounds came from the crate on the back seat as we drove him to his new home. “Ah! A nice quiet dog.” I thought.

After his introduction to the two resident cats and after his dinner, Tanner settled into his basket with three large balled up socks and slept through the night. At first stirrings, he leapt to attention and skidded across the wood floor to his food dish in a desperate attempt to reach it before we did. Unable to contain his excitement, he relieved himself on the floor. This would be repeated each morning.



**Tanner acquainting himself with the resident cat, Skotty**

Looking up at my husband with a spray bottle of vinegar solution {to clean up his mess} in one hand and a roll of paper towels in the other, I mumbled “It’s like having a new-born, except you can put diapers on a baby.”

Once food was placed in his dish, Tanner transfigured into Tasmanian devil, mad with desire, snarling and growling.

His food aggression was not just contained to his chow, but also to chewy toys and rawhide bones.

Tanner was due for his booster shots. Evelyn had dewormed and vaccinated him for rabies, but we needed to follow up. I made an appointment with our cats’ vet, Dr. Laureen Taylor of the Taylor Veterinary Clinic, just outside of Lansdowne.

On the appointed day, I arranged Tanner’s blanket on the passenger seat. After the initial shock of his bed moving, the yowling and

squealing began. At one point, when the shrieks reached a barely tolerable crescendo, I glanced over at the trembling pup to glimpse the whites of his eyes as he collapsed. Tanner had fainted. Before I had a chance to pull over, he revived himself and continued wailing.



**Brown dog at Taylor Vet Clinic**

Dr. Taylor examined Tanner and stroked his dense double coat and said she was familiar with northern dogs. After listening to my concerns of food aggression and what appeared to be extreme separation anxiety, she recommended that I speak with David Swartwood of Prelude Farm and Kennel.

Not only is David a regular at the veterinary clinic assisting with hospitalized pets, he is an experienced canine behaviouralist, trainer and licensed judge though the Canadian Kennel Club. At the farm and kennel, David and Thomas Nesbitt breed Bryden English springer spaniels and mini wire-haired dachshunds. Not restricted to canines, Border Leicester sheep graze amongst three stately llamas and a couple of donkeys on their 57 acres of pasture land.

David arrived at our home for a private consultation and explained basic training steps. Tanner readily learned to sit and lay down, and grasped the fundamentals of the command “stay” to an endless supply of treats. David shook his head quite sadly at my attempts to replicate his well-honed techniques.



*As noted in the story here are some of the people that helped Andi and Tanner on their journey and their contact information if you have a dog or adopting a dog and wanting care given.*

**Left & Bottom Left:**  
*Evelyn at shelter*

**Below:**  
*Being taught manners by Cooper Cat*



**Dr. Lauren Taylor**

*Taylor Veterinary Clinic,*  
613-659-2960  
[taylorveterinaryclinic.net](http://taylorveterinaryclinic.net)

**Bailey Tysick**, one of the first people you will meet at the clinic

**Marla** is TVC'S pre/post-operative care veterinary assistant.

**Becky Mills**

*Klips Pet Grooming & Boutique, Gananoque.*  
On. 613-382-9696  
[www.klipsboutique.ca](http://www.klipsboutique.ca)

**David Swartwood**

*Prelude Farm and Kennel*  
613-382-1123  
[preludfarmkennel.webs.com](http://preludfarmkennel.webs.com)

**Evelyn Fuller**

*Cree School Board, Waskaganish First Nation*  
Evelyn has a Go Fund Me Page on Facebook. She has received help from donors and rescue partners and is able to offer leashes, collars, food, antibiotics, flea and tick treatments to the community.  
[gofundme.com/4fcpyy-help-volunteers-save-northern-dogs](http://gofundme.com/4fcpyy-help-volunteers-save-northern-dogs)

He also demonstrated the "alpha roll" where he suggested I would drape the weight of my body on Tanner and keep him in the down position for ½ hour a day. Tanner didn't seem to mind this at all. After a bit of wiggling, he'd resign himself, sigh heavily and doze off.



**Brown dog and David Swartwood**

To counter the food aggression, I learned to flip food into Tanner's dish from a few feet away, coming closer each day do help him understand that I had no interest in stealing his dinner.

As the weather grew warmer, we visited the dog park in Gananoque. A few adult dogs were happily socializing. Within moments,

I heard the familiar screeching ... several dogs had cornered Tanner and were sitting in a crude semi-circle around him, probably wondering what type of animal could make such sounds.

As Tanner grew, so did his confidence. I met many dog owners at the dog park in Gananoque where we exchanged tips and advice.

If you happen to be at the dog park just before lunchtime, you may meet dog minder, Lavinia. "Liv", as she calls herself, pulls up in her small car with four super-sized dogs. Not only does she scoop up after her charges, but also after anyone else who may have missed. "It's part of my routine," she said. "Sometimes I have five bags full."

Cutting Tanner's nails proved to be a challenge, so I brought him to Klips, Pet Grooming & Boutique in Gananoque. Owner, Becky Mills, wrapped a wiggling, yelping, urinating Tanner in a large towel and deftly clipped his nails before he realized what was happening. Becky has become my dog guru, cheerfully sharing her experiences.



**Brown dog and Becky Mills**

It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. But living here, our little brown dog has built a community. Tanner continues to bask in the warmth and attention dispensed by David, Dr. Taylor and her welcoming staff, Becky, and the lovely Lavinia who minds dogs. By the way, if you ever see us out and about, Tanner, wants you to know that dehydrated liver treats are his favourite!

**LH**