

MAX Update

MAY 28, 2009

Here is Pam's update on Max's much-awaited trip to the beach – a mere matter of days after surgery for liver cancer, following his amputation for bone cancer. She wrote this to me and to Kate of Wrapped in Kindness, who is raising funds to help offset Pam's medical bills.

Well, it has been the most extraordinary Memorial Day Weekend. We took Max and his golden siblings to the beach for Max's first swim since cancer entered our lives. On Saturday the water was a bit rough and, at first, I regretted choosing that day for Max's first time back in the water since the amputation. Though he wasn't comfortable with his new life vest, Max soon found out that it made swimming on three legs a little easier. The rough surf knocked him down a couple of times and Julie and I gasped in horror in unison. We were ready to call it quits right then and there but Max had other ideas. Maybe the water was off limits, but playing tug with Mom's towel was fair game.

On Sunday the water was calmer and the air was warmer and Max was already used to his new handsome vest. He swam after sticks and tennis balls, and Julie and I beamed with pride. Monday was a repeat of Sunday and Max was even more comfortable in the water. Beachgoers inquired about the three-legged Golden having a blast in the water and I told them how my miracle boy survived two major surgeries, and look at him now!!!

At our beach, there are about 15 open-back wooden stairs that lead down to the sand. We knew that Max could make it down, but we were certain we would have to carry him back up - especially after all that swimming. Well, ladies, my boy amazed us once again. When we bent down to lift him, he bolted up the stairs, leaving us to run up after him. I know there will come a day when he won't be able to make those stairs, but Max is not there yet!

So, it was a weekend I never would have dreamed we'd have. I am SO thankful for it. I wanted him to swim - NEEDED him to swim - and I got my dream. He was so happy on the beach - not the strong distance swimmer he was last summer - not the stamina he had last summer - but more heart and more emotional strength than one terminally ill dog can have.

You will see a photo of Julie holding balloons, which was taken on Saturday - Max's FIRST day at the beach. While watching my boy play, I saw something out in the water. It wasn't until the tide brought them in closer to the shore that I realized it was a pair of balloons. They washed up right to us. I don't know where these balloons came from - I'm sure there's a logical explanation for it - maybe some communion or graduation party - but to us WE WERE CERTAIN these balloons were a miracle sent to celebrate our Max and his extraordinary life. Hope you enjoy the pictures as much as we enjoyed a Memorial Day Weekend that will live forever in our memories.

Thank you for the wonderful email.

Kate replied: It made my heart smile to hear of all the wonderful memories you shared with Max this weekend - it sounds magical. This makes all the hardship and heartache so worthwhile - being witness to such beauty - love and joy in life. The photos show a smiling dog who clearly still finds much in his life that brings him joy - a reminder of how we should all live and approach the obstacles and challenges we confront.

Thank you for sharing Max with us and allowing us to help him and you. Life is just like those balloons - so much history we will never know - but so much we can take from this moment forward- the smile it brought to your face - the warmth that enveloped your heart when you contemplated how they had been a part of another's celebration - the magic they brought to your own celebration of life - \$1,000 has been raised so far by Wrapped in Kindness for Maxie - from numerous strangers - each who have forever changed the world for another. Hugs to you and Julie - smooches to Max