

## Why are Seniors So Special? By Sue Berkhard

In life there are so few air tight, rock solid guarantees. Greyhounds are, as most of us agree, a special breed. The breed that we all love for a wide variety of reasons. And adopting animals that for the most part come to us as adults, already imprinted and molded in many ways is different then most dog adopters who seek out puppies and very young adults.

We as humans are compelled for some reason to want more. And I think Americans are more prone to this trait then other nationalities, for the sole reason that there is so much more here then in many other places. We are blessed. So naturally when we look for a new companion animal to share our lives, we look for the ones we think will give us \*more\* time. More time to love, more time to play, more time to share quiet moments, more time to spend happy moments. But then we forget to notice so many of those gifts in our busy homes.

Senior greyhounds don't always give us more. You take the chance of having a couple months, if your lucky, a couple years. However when you adopt a senior greyhound something changes inside your brain. A switch is turned on and suddenly you notice all those things you take for granted in a young dog. You appreciate them more. Those moments of intense play strike a chord deep inside your soul. It's as if a powerful joy hormone is released throughout your whole body. When they run, the real beauty shines through every time. You see every sprint, every jog, every wobble, and every stumble; and yes, you hold your breath the whole time, and when they are done, you sigh a happy sigh.

When they sleep, you watch them with the wonder you would view a newborn baby. You relish every new day with them. Seniors bring out the best in us. We so want them to be happy and content and comfortable that we strive to make their every moment the best that it can be. We don't take for granted that they will be here tomorrow, for sadly tomorrow may not come. We understand that and because of that realization we live in the here and now. We don't have their past to remember, that belonged to someone else. We know we don't have an extended future with them of many years. What we do have is today.

And today me and my senior greyhound will play in the yard with her ball. I will hold tightly in my mind every toss, every tail wag, every bark and prance. My senior greyhound and I will sit side by side on the sofa, her head resting in my lap, my hand stroking her head, trying to convey just how much I love her, even though I've only had her for a year and 2 months. I will watch my senior greyhound as she rises and as she lies down, as she sniffs the cat, and eats her food. I will notice the light that shines in her eyes when she sees me walk to the treat jar, and I will laugh at the little digging thing she does with her bed. I will fret over her as she comes in out of the rain and make sure she isn't cold as I dry her off and kiss her head. And I will not take her for granted one moment of the day.

I believe this is, sadly, a major difference between seniors and other greyhounds.

They teach us exactly how precious life is every day. Because owners of seniors do know that more isn't necessarily better. What is it they say about Quality vs Quantity? Owning a senior Greyhound could easily explain that definition!