

# Meet Logan

This dog went from biting — and almost being euthanized — to cuddly and sweet  
With loving care, Logan learned how to trust again.



Courtesy Erica Ryan, Lori Fusaro

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ByJen Reeder

A fluffy little dog named Logan is proof that with love and care, traumatized dogs can learn to be happy again.

Last year, the 8-pound Bichon Frise mix barely escaped a Southern California shelter with his life. Surrendered with a handful of other pups by someone forced to do so by the county, Logan (then called Rusty) was so matted and filthy that the intake paperwork mistakenly listed him as female.

After displaying behavior issues like biting shelter employees, the 5-year-old dog was given just two hours to be pulled from the shelter before being euthanized.

That's when the nonprofit **Bichon Rescue Brigade (BRB)** stepped in.

*“He was in just horrific condition,” Lisa Burgett, vice president of BRB, told TODAY. “He had chronic skin issues when we got him. His eyes were inflamed. He had a bunch of yeast in his ear. He had [foxtails](#), tapeworms — his nails didn’t look like they’d ever been trimmed. He wouldn’t eat. He definitely needed to be socialized and seemed almost feral.”*

When Logan entered the care of Bichon Rescue Brigade, he needed months of veterinary care and customized training with animal behaviorist, Jesse R. Booker.

The all-volunteer nonprofit paid for his veterinary care, which involved staying at an animal hospital for two months. When he finally went to a foster family, he bit the foster as well as her nephew and her mother. Showing food aggression, he also started lunging at the family dog.

When BRB sent him to a training facility, he shut down and didn't want to leave his kennel. But working one-on-one with animal behaviorist Jesse R. Booker for four months did the trick.

*"I allowed him to first decompress and then learn to trust me in his own time," Booker told TODAY in an email. "He was a biter and guarded his food, so I had to take things slowly. It's important to let the dog lead the way."*

The key turned out to be long, purposeful walks together. Logan learned he was safe and didn't have to resort to menacing behavior to protect himself or his food as he did in his previous home, which was probably a backyard breeding or hoarding situation.

After living for years in fear due to neglect, Logan needed to learn to feel safe.

As Logan became more adjusted, his ability to trust grew. When professional photographer Lori Fusaro, who photographs adoptable dogs for rescue organizations like BRB and Best Friends Animal Society, first met the dog, she said he was *"very standoffish."* She followed Booker's directions for interacting with Logan and one day, he *"just started wiggling and dancing."*

*"I'm not sure why he decided that he liked me so much, but it made me happy"* Fusaro told TODAY in an email. *"When I took him to the studio for his photos, it was a joy to see him act like a dog. I knew his background, and to see him play with toys and run around was really amazing."*



Courtesy Lori Fusaro

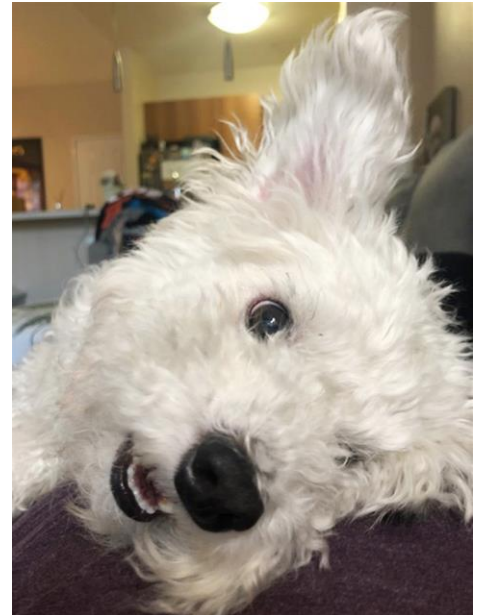


Courtesy Lori Fusaro

A small group of volunteers from **Bichon Rescue Brigade** has saved around 900 dogs since 2012. *"I think a lot of people don't understand how many little fluffies find themselves in this situation,"* Lisa Burgett, the nonprofit's vice president, told TODAY.

All Logan needed was someone willing to continue nurturing his adjustment. He finally found the perfect match in June with Orange County resident Erica Ryan, 42.

Ryan's beloved poodle mix, Henry, had suddenly died in May, leaving her heartbroken. When she heard about Logan, she hoped they could *"rescue each other."* They did. *"Logan is the most cuddly dog I've ever had,"* she told TODAY. *"He just wants to be by my side, curled up next to me, wherever I am. It's really cute. He's a little love."*



Courtesy Erica Ryan

Erica Ryan and Logan bonded quickly. *"I knew within two days that I was going to end up adopting him. There was no way that this little love was going to go back in the system,"* she told TODAY.

Logan delights in taking walks with his mom and running around their apartment with a toy in his mouth. They recently moved in with her mother, and Logan loves her, too.

Logan's mom, Erica Ryan, says the only thing that matters is that he is happy now. Ryan said adopting Logan has worked out perfectly.

*"Now he realizes he doesn't have to fight off other dogs for food. He gets the whole space to himself: All the toys are his. All the beds and laps that he can find are his,"* she said. *"It's really exciting to see him explore everything life has to offer."*

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