

# FAMILY

## Rescued sheltie struts stuff to help others

### ■ Sequoia B&G Club welcomes canine visitor

By Stephanie Sumell  
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A model, philanthropist, aspiring actor and, most importantly, a survivor, Landon the sheltie is adored by many.

"Everybody loves him," said his owner and manager Connie Coleman. "Landon is a very calm, very intelligent, very sweet dog. But at the same time, he has that little rascal side that is fun and surprising . . . he likes to make people smile."

On Aug. 3, the 4-year-old rescue dog with an infectious personality came to meet a group of 60 children at the Sequoia Boys & Girls Club in Newbury Park.

While Landon sat quietly on a padded table, Coleman shared the canine's dramatic tale of perseverance.

In 2009, when he was still a puppy, he was hit by a car and left for dead near Ojai.

A good Samaritan rushed the badly injured dog to the Pet Emergency Clinic of Ventura. He received treatment for a broken tailbone, dislocated hip, wounded tail and gashed legs.

After his hospital stay, the black-and-blue pup was taken to the Camarillo Animal Shelter.

After reading about Landon on the shelter's website, Coleman, a volunteer for Southland Sheltie Rescue, took the battered dog in.

"He was pretty miserable," she said. "His stomach was black (and) all four legs were in casts."

#### Dog does catwalk

After months of rest and a hip surgery, Landon was back on his paws.

Since then, the lucky sheltie has carved out a successful career in modeling.

In July 2010 he made his first public appearance—on a catwalk.

He pranced up and down the runway at Pattern for Paws, a fashion show fundraiser for the Amanda Foundation, a Beverly Hills-based animal rescue organization.

Coleman, a fashion design graduate of the Art Institute of California, had experience making dog clothes and lent her hands to the effort.

For the event she designed a red-and-gold Louis XIV costume for Landon that made tongues wag.

"I didn't realize how big of a deal it was," Coleman said of the event. "When I got there, there were celebrities everywhere and press from all over the world."

Landon did not disappoint.

"His hip surgery gave him a signature walk," Coleman said. "It's sort of like a John Wayne swagger but a little more sophisticated. It's very cute."

Coleman, a former model, said Landon's talent was obvious.

"A lot of the other dogs were causing a ruckus on the runway,

but Landon was a natural," she said. "I never thought I'd be a stage mom (but) we kind of fell into it."

In true supermodel style, Landon has taken steps toward transitioning into acting.

Shortly after his runway

debut, he began taking acting classes at Hollywood Paws in Hollywood.

"He's been doing training films . . . things like that," Coleman said. "No James Cameron movies, no big blockbusters."

But that could change.

Jack Remington, a student taking UCLA Extension film classes, hopes to feature Landon in an animal documentary.

"I want to do a film on inspirational animals and pets," said Remington, who filmed Coleman's presentation at the Boys & Girls Club. "I really love this project because I really love animals."

Landon's newest role is as a therapy dog.

On Aug. 20, the recently certified canine will visit the residents of Thousand Oaks' Our House of Hope, a residential care facility for end-of-life patients.

"Landon is very cuddly and knows when people need comforting," Coleman said.

#### Fun visit

The sheltie's spirit rubbed off on the children of the Boys & Girls Club.

Camper Billy Mitchell said he found inspiration in the canine's ability to rebound from a near-death experience.

"When Landon was hurt, he got back up and didn't stop," the 12-year-old said. "I love soccer and if something crazy happened to my leg, I'd keep playing and not give up."



# Landon

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Photos by IRIS SMOOT/Acorn Newspapers

**MEETING THE STAR**—Boys & Girls Club of Conejo program assistant Cody Mauricio, left, smiles as 5-year-old David Thomas meets Landon the sheltie, a motivational canine who came to the club with owner Connie Coleman to give a presentation to the kids on Aug. 3. At right, Landon, a professional stage dog, hits his mark.



**THEY'RE A TEAM**—Connie Coleman of Thousand Oaks adopted Landon from the Camarillo Animal Shelter and nursed him back to health after he was hit by a car.

Billy, a student at Sequoia Middle School, was impressed by the dog's ability to follow direction.

At the blow of a whistle, Landon would run and sit on his mark, a square pad Coleman placed on the ground, a basic but essential skill in pet acting.

"He was so cute," Billy said. "I wish I had a dog like that."

When Landon isn't making appearances, he enjoys eating holistic dog food, taking naps, walking to the park and spending time with Hannah, a female sheltie Coleman calls his girlfriend.

Named after soccer great Landon Donovan, the pooch also loves spending time on the pitch.

"He's a great soccer player," his owner said with a smile. "He can do head bumps (and) just kind of attacks the ball."

Coleman uses her 20-pound sheltie as a model for her soon-to-launch dog wear company and plans to write his story as a children's book to be published in 2013.

She's also putting the dog's story out over social media: Landon has a blog, website and Facebook page.

"I like delivering important

messages through him," Coleman said. "Kids are more likely to listen when he's there."

Landon shows no signs of slowing down.

On Friday, he and Coleman will visit the Boys & Girls Club in Calabasas.

"He likes to meet new dogs and new people," Coleman said. "He's a very special dog."