



## Vinnie's Happy Ending – May 2009

Hi Debbie,

My husband and I wanted to express our thanks to you for the work you've done in building and maintaining your website. We have a two dog household, and our younger dog Vinnie disappeared after getting spooked on Sunday evening this past holiday weekend. He was staying with our friends out in the country, about 50 miles away from our home in the city of Chicago, a place he has stayed many

times before, but had never had the chance to explore beyond their large yard, and always on leash. Sunday evening, he backed out of his collar and took off running. It was a special collar, called the Canny collar, that is supposed to prevent that sort of thing, but the situation that was created must have built the perfect storm for an escape.

My husband had just arrived there as Vinnie ran off and was part of the crew trying to call him back and to follow him. He is very speedy, like a greyhound, and he had adrenalin firing his every step. After three hours trying to recapture him, they called me to announce that he was missing. I left the area I was in, about an hour away, and drove to their house with Paulie, our other dog, ending our trip early, so I could join the search since I am most closely bonded with Vinnie. I joined the crew who spent the balance of Sunday night and Monday driving around rural Marengo and calling for Vinnie, hoping to coax him out of wherever he was hiding, and hoping he was still in the area and alive. It being a holiday, it was difficult to do some of the things we'd do on a regular day like print fliers, speak with police/sheriff/animal control. We were however able to speak to many of the people in the area who were working in their yards, and we did spread the word to people electronically using email and all the social networks and casting a wide net.

Even though we hadn't seen Vinnie since a sighting late Sunday night, we decided to stay in Marengo another night, so that we could use the weekday morning to print fliers and posters and place an ad in the local paper, etc. However, at around 4am today, I was awake as was Paulie and around that time the motion sensitive lights at our friends' house went off, triggered by something outside. It could easily have been deer as there are many in that area, but I got up to look on the off chance it was Vinnie and in fact it was. I grabbed Paulie's collar (to keep him from charging at Vinnie and potentially scaring him away), and slowly slid the glass door open a bit and called to him in a low pleasant voice. He approached tenuously, and my husband woke up and started to call to him too. I put a hand up to stop him as I thought a male voice could freak him out (he much prefers women).... Because of your site, I was aware that even my calling him could cause him to run off again, but he came to me and I got him inside and got Perry to close the door behind him and then just hugged him close.

He seems little worse for the wear - soreness, probably from running all night through rough ground - woods and fields - and some small cuts on his feet, but really, all told, in

pretty decent shape. We were blown away that he found his way back, and so soon, as we were afraid his general panic would prevent this. Although in truth, it was the longest 36 hours of our lives. We had put some familiar smelling items on the front porch of the house, including dirty t shirts from me and Perry, we put Vinnie's bed out there, some food/water and a really stinky pair of Perry's shoes that Vinnie seems to be attracted to. Paulie also left a little deposit outside before we went to bed, so the area had to smell pretty familiar.

Vet says he looks fine... some soreness which is evident and a few small cuts on his feet, but otherwise physically unscathed. Both Perry and I feel extremely lucky - it was a terrible 36 hour period with both of us trying to push the worst case scenarios far from our minds. We are all exhausted given the little sleep we've gotten over the last few days.

As I've posted our story, and heard about others with missing dogs, I have been spreading the word about your site as I think it is very helpful in a moment of crisis. I also passed it along to Steve Dale who does a pet oriented blog and radio show on WGN-AM, a radio superstation based here in Chicago.

Again, thank you. I am attaching a picture of our Vinnie in case you want to feature his story.

Teri and Perry