

Adopted canine movie star

Local Marley & Me lab was a rescue dog

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MOVIE STAR Brodie shines under the harsh paparazzi lights at home. Photo courtesy of Kristy Middleton.



With an estimated \$37 million worth of tickets sold through the three-day Christmas weekend, moviegoers flocked to see the Labrador Retriever in the film *Marley & Me*. The film also featured Jennifer Aniston and Owen Wilson, who may have had something to do with the movie's success, but it's always a challenge to upstage a cute dog.

Local star

There were 22 cantankerous canines used for the role of Marley and one of them is poised to become Colorado's newest star. Brodie, who turns nine on March 24, 2009, is part of the Middleton family, which includes mom Kristy, dad Andrew, their son Drew and their other Lab, Lava, who is 11. The family resides in Monument.

The Middletons adopted Brodie from Safe Harbor Lab Rescue in Golden and Kristy ended up becoming much more than a new Lab parent.

"I got involved with Safe Harbor Lab Rescue back in August 2001, when my husband and I were looking to adopt another Labrador to add to our family. I expressed my interest in volunteering, became the Intake Coordinator and shortly thereafter, adopted Brodie from them. I was then elected to the Board of Directors and later served as President for a few years. I resigned from the board in 2007, but continue to volunteer, working with shelters, Good Samaritans and other rescue groups to bring Labs into our program.

Successful audition

Brodie was chosen for the movie by a scouting company named Birds and Animals Unlimited. They had contacted Safe Harbor looking for a Labrador that would fit the requirements of Marley. Kristy sent in some pictures of Brodie. Birds and Animals Unlimited visited the Middletons to meet him and a star was born. Earlier this year, a trainer, Jim Warren,

flew with Brodie to Florida for a few months of filming in Miami, then drove to Westchester, Pa. to film the conclusion. Brodie was sent back home on Memorial weekend.

"I never got to fly out to be on set during filming but that sure would have been fun," said Kristy. "Being in contact with the trainer was great, hearing what they were teaching him, how he was behaving, etc. I sure would have loved to be a fly on the wall to see all the dogs together! We did attend the screening last week at The Regal Continental Theater, where I had Brodie available to interact with the crowd, be in photos and show a few tricks."

Rescue options

If you are interested in adopting a dog, check out some local shelters. Visit the Metro Denver Shelter Alliance (www.MDSAlliance.org) to get started. Here are some individual shelters Web sites to research as well:

Safe Harbor Lab Rescue: www.safeharborlabrescue.org

Dumb Friends League: www.ddfl.org

<http://www.thedenverdailynews.com/article.php?aID=2893>