

Brianna Leigh Rockman, Our 2006 Goodwill Ambassador for
German Shepherd Dog Club of America

August 2, 1999 - March 11, 2011

Brianna Leigh, also known as Brie or Brie Brie, my GSD, was an active member of the St. Louis Chapter of Love on a Leash from May 2003 until she passed away on March 11, 2011. Brie was a laid back German Shepherd Dog with a keen sense of humor, loved her life with humans and dogs. Two weeks before she passed away, Brie was climbing on metal folding chairs at training class wanting to play with "Hero," a toy poodle.

At 6 mo., Brie started flying from St. Louis, MO to Elmira, NY to visit my mom who was in her nineties at the time. Behaving well in mother's pristine apartment was not a challenge for Brie as she had decided early to do whatever it took to spend time with family, friends. She cooperated and that's the way it went for her whole life. She enjoyed the Hospice visits through the Visiting Nurse Association; looked forward to our Whiskers and Tales library visits and loved our *Love on a Leash* performances. I once told our directors Suebee Baxter-Carr and Karen Green that Brie and I didn't know many tricks and stated we didn't dance very well. As I reflect back on those happy times, I realize that it was I who didn't know much about tricks and didn't dance very well. Brie Brie was willing to learn to do anything that we wanted her to....absolutely!

Brie was often quite mischievous doing such things as eating pockets with treats in them, or possibly running around the obedience show ring. However, Brie behaved in an exemplary manner during our nursing home visits, received the AKC CD title in 2004 and Rally Excellent title in 2009. In 2006 Brianna was named the Goodwill Ambassador for the German Shepherd Dog Club of America in appreciation for her work with *Love on a Leash*. She received a Certificate of Appreciation posthumously for 250 visits documented with the *St. Louis Chapter of Love on a Leash*.

Brie's indomitable spirit showed ever so brightly after her diagnosis on December 3, 2010 with hemangiosarcoma of the spleen. Her veterinarian, Dr. Bruce Garber, removed Brianna's spleen on December 6. Brie's oncologist, Dr. Michael Buss, supported our girl by administering four chemotherapeutic treatments over a twelve week period. Brie had good quality of life throughout much of this time, was able to attend group visits and visit nursing homes with me when I would sing Karaoke with residents during this period in between chemotherapy sessions. Sadly, we lost Brie four days after her last chemotherapeutic treatment.

Our *St. Louis Chapter of Love on a Leash* helped to make our team's life richer and fuller as a result of being members. We had a wonderful time. Putting on the vest and scarf meant **Go, Go, Go!** Believe me, we loved every minute of the volunteering, the residents, the kids at the libraries, the dogs, and cats, the social gatherings of our group, the tailgating after our performances. Brie and I had a great run!

Our German Shepherd Dog Club of St. Louis has always been supportive. Brie was a fixture at meetings and was well-socialized with dogs and people. Two weeks before Brie died, Marcia Hadley presented Brie an award for her service and accomplishments over the years. Marcia had recommended Brie for the honor she had received in 2006. Brie was at the meeting with me when we received the award, the last award of those presented in February 2011 at our Royal Hecht Awards. She passed away exactly three weeks later.....a "tough dog" Dr. Garber later stated.....I will always remember Brianna for her unconditional constancy, her total commitment to her people. It was an honor to have been able to share 11½ years with 'my girl!'

Helen Rockman
December 1, 2011