

Whippet Resource Center

The Journee Chronicles: The Long Road Back Authored by Mary Alderman, Jaama Whippets - July 24, 2008

Thursday March 13, 2008 is a date that will be indelibly etched into my memory. It was a semi-warm winter day with both ice and mud on the ground and the Whippets were having a grand time doing their usual zoomies. Journee flew out the back door as usual and ran to the back "40" and then turned and zoomed back to the house, only to slip on the ice about half way back in, where she then lost her footing and landed in the mud with her hind legs folded up toward her back. All I heard was one yip and then saw her trying to right herself with her hind quarter trailing behind her. My heart sunk, for I knew that she had sustained a very serious injury.

I ran outside and grabbed her up and within minutes we were on our way to the veterinarian. Journee was bright eyed and I could see the look of terror in her eyes that she couldn't move her hind quarters, but I was helpless to fix this. Tears welled up into my eyes and all I could do was cry. Arriving at the vets office only 20 minutes after she was injured, the prognosis given by the veterinarian was guarded at best, but I could see by the look in Journee's eyes that she wasn't ready to give up and she would fight to regain what was once hers, her mobility.

So the long road to recovery was begun, and the following pages document the emotional rollercoaster I went through, the physical challenges Journee endured, and our deep bond that was strengthened through Journee's journey, as chronicled on two internet Whippet message boards, Whippet World (<http://groups.msn.com/whippetworld>) and Wonderful World of Whippets (<http://groups.msn.com/wonderfulworldofwhippets>), between March 13, 2008 and June 6, 2008.

So without further ado, welcome to Journee's journey, and I hope these chronicles will give you a better understanding of what it means to hope beyond hope and to believe in miracles. Journee is my walking miracle, and this is our story.

From:  JaamaWhpts (Original Message)

Sent: 3/13/2008 10:25 PM

Journee, my beautiful Journee needs your prayers tonight more than ever. She slipped on the ice and landed in the mud and now is paralyzed from the chest back. I rushed her to the vet and the prognosis is not good at this point in time. The only good thing about this is she still has a deep pain response in her back limbs, but she can't move from the chest back. I'm beside myself with worry... this is my heart dog, and I'm helpless to fix this. Please pray for her with all your might,

she needs it.

Mary @ Jaama

From: 🐶 [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/14/2008 10:22 AM

UPDATE: Journee had a restful night, but she does not have any deep pain response this morning. The x-ray didn't find any evidence of fracture, which is good, but now we're in a holding pattern to see if the decreased sensation is due to temporary inflammation or is in fact the result of trauma to the spinal cord. I'm at a loss what to think at this point in time.

So now I'm in a holding pattern and thinking ahead to if the deep pain response returns, what steps will need to be taken to give her the greatest hope for recovery. Thank you all for your prayers, and please keep them coming... she needs them more than ever right now.

Mary @ Jaama



Journee in better days.

From: 🐶 [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/14/2008 1:32 PM

UPDATE 2 - 12:30 p.m. (19 hours post injury): The vet just left me a voicemail that Journee just wagged her tail a bit and extended her right rear leg on her own. I'm afraid to get my hopes up right now, but this update is definitely a positive thing.

Mary @ Jaama

From: 🐶 [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/14/2008 3:49 PM

UPDATE 3 - 3:45 P.M. (22 hours post injury) - Journee is surprising all of us with her continued improvement. The veterinarian and the staff at the clinic have been getting her up and working with her on walking, and she is quickly regaining use of her legs. She is still not walking, or able

to empty her bladder herself, but has slight movement in both rear feet now and is trying to walk on her own. I'm scheduled to pick her up at 5:30 p.m. to transfer her to a 24 hour veterinary hospital that I use (a bit further away from home, thus the reason she didn't end out there last night when all this happened), but it will sure make me rest easier knowing that someone will be there to watch over her tonight.

Believe it or not, the veterinarian actually said that if she keeps improving at this rate, she might be able to go home tomorrow?!? Dare I hope for such a thing? Keep those prayers coming... the power of prayer is working miracles today. God bless you all and thank you.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/15/2008 6:31 AM

UPDATE 4 - 6:15 a.m.: It's taken me all night to be able to write this current update. I transferred Journee to the 24 hour practice last night and the new vet is not nearly as optimistic about the prognosis as the previous vet. He has put her on IV steroids, muscle relaxers and pain killers, and instead of manually expressing her bladder they were going to catheterize her, since it causes less trauma and bruising to the bladder and will give her more quiet time to heal.

He reviewed the x-rays and can see evidence of a lesion at the sacral/lumbar juncture (13/14 I think he said) and he stressed the severity of this injury. So what was a happy update yesterday has turned into a much more grim update today. I'm just praying that a quiet night under observation will afford her body enough time to rally again and show him the signs that the previous vet was seeing, but he felt that the other vet was just seeing what she wanted to see, rather than true improvement. Who knows, at this point I can just trust in the healing power of God and all the prayers that are going out to Journee right now. Thanks all again, for your thoughts and prayers, as you can see they are needed more than ever.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/15/2008 12:02 PM

Update 5 - 10:30 a.m.: A different vet in the 24 hour hospital examined Journee this morning and found she had some anal tone this morning and had a bowel movement, which she said is a sign of improvement, from what was reported last night by her colleague. They are going to continue the present course of treatment, and that I should stop by to visit with her today for a while. I'll post another update this afternoon once I've visited with her.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/15/2008 11:24 PM

Update 6 - 11:15 p.m.: I spoke with Dr. Melanie again at about 4:30 p.m. and she stated that Journee was acting more restless and possibly reacting to pain, so they upped her pain meds. She said that the admitting vet, Dr. Bob, will be checking on her in the morning, and to call him at 10:00 a.m. to see what, if any, improvement he's seeing from the time of admission to present. Dr. Melanie feels there has been some small improvement, but small is the operative word. I also spoke to one of the vet techs about 9:00 p.m. and they said that Journee had sat up a few times and was a bit restless but settled down and went to sleep. While she can't move her hind legs, she is able to sit up and flip herself over at least.

So the rollercoaster of emotion continues and I've found more tears since this ordeal began than I thought my body could produce. My eyes are red and swollen, but yet it's 11:15 at night and I

don't feel like sleeping. This hospital has 24 hour visiting hours, which is a blessing, and I will be there at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning to bring Journee a fresh comforter and what reassurance I can give her. I've been praying the Lord will guide me in making the right decisions regarding her care and guide the hands of the doctors caring for her. I'll post another update tomorrow.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your calls, notes, thoughts, and prayers. It's your kindness that is giving me the strength to handle all this. God bless you.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/16/2008 10:33 PM

Update 7 - 10:00 p.m.: Thank you again from the bottom of my heart. Your outpouring of prayers and support have been truly overwhelming. Now on to the Journee news...

I went to see her this morning about 8:30 a.m. and was greeted by Dr. Bob with the news they may remove the urinary catheter tomorrow. I just said "what?" He said that she has shown remarkable improvement and he is very optimistic with the direction she is heading and wants to get her into the hydro pool ASAP (luckily they have one in-house). She is showing muscle tone in her right hind leg and some resistance in her left. All I could say was WOW!!! I had a nice long visit with her this morning and just felt her climb inside my heart like she always does. She was saying, don't give up on me yet Mom. God I love this little dog.

So I changed her bedding to another of her favorite comfy comforters, one I had actually slept on last night, and she was very pleased as evidenced by the look in her eyes. I said good bye and told her I'd be back later to visit. I then spoke briefly with Dr. Bob and asked him not to be too hasty with removing the urinary catheter, since Journee is a princess and will not leave her "water" just anywhere... that she has gone as much as 26 hours without going when on the road... and she can be quite stubborn. He thanked me for the information and said it was good he knew that.

So I went about my business today and returned to see her about 7:30 p.m. and I darned near dropped over when she sat up when she saw me, and actually had both hind legs under her and was trying to stand up... she was doing this drunken swaying motion, but it was evident she was determined to get up. I freaked and rushed over there and grabbed ahold of her before she killed herself. I just kept saying over and over, thank you God, thank you God...

Journee has a very long way to go, but she is heading in the right direction. I honestly believe through the power of prayer that I'm witnessing a miracle. God bless you all and keep the prayers coming.

The only tears I shed today were ones of joy...

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/17/2008 10:17 AM

Update 8 - 10:10 a.m.(Day 4): Miracles do happen!!! I just spoke to the clinic and they pulled the urinary catheter this morning and are going to start hydro-therapy this afternoon. They said that she has both hind legs under her again... let me say that again... BOTH HIND LEGS UNDER HER AGAIN!!!!... WOW, how great is that. If the hydrotherapy goes well, they might even send her home this afternoon, if she will urinate on her own... hehehe... yeh right. ;-) Dr. Bob did say he may try to send her home later today even if she doesn't urinate for them, given her "water holding" issues.

I'm just over the moon right now. This has been the most terrifying ordeal I've been through with the dogs and to think my baby girl might come home today is a blessing from the Lord. Just 4 days ago I thought I was going to lose her, and the words "may be going home today" were music to my ears. I'm supposed to call this afternoon for an update and I'll post another update later today.

Thank you again from the bottom of my heart for your outpouring of prayers and support.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 3/17/2008 9:56 PM

In record time Journee was able to come home. She still has a very long way to go, but she is able to pull her hind legs up under her and support her weight, although she stands on the top of her rear feet right now. She will be going back every day this week and spending the days at the clinic, where she will get in the hydro-therapy pool, but she's home. Now I just need to convince her she needs to let me help her pee... she is so modest. ;-) I figure she'll have to go eventually though. I'll keep everyone updated on her progress. Thank you again all for your prayers, it's because of you and the power of God that she's doing so well.

Mary @ Jaama

Who's now off to try to get Journee to pee. :-)

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/18/2008 11:20 AM

Update: Well Journee didn't pee last night and when I took her out to go this morning she didn't want to pee either, so I picked her up and was carrying her back into the house when she peed... all over me!!! hehehe... oh well, I'm sure her bladder felt better for it, but then her and I both smelled pretty bad. I cleaned her up and changed my clothes and went about my dog duties. By the time I got done, she had ate 1/2 her breakfast and drank a bunch and looked quite pleased with herself.

Last night I made a little make-shift sling to carry her back legs which seems to work well for now. So I packed her up about 8:00 a.m. and took her to the clinic for her hydro-therapy. She walked into the clinic under her own power (with me carrying her hind-quarters of course), and when we got inside I put her rear feet under her and she stood for about 30 seconds without teetering too much. She seemed so happy walking in on her own, at least that's the way she saw it... hehehe.

I'll be picking her up after work and then the whole peeing and pooping adventure starts again. I would imagine she will get the hang of things in a day or two, but she's so modest, she doesn't want me to watch, let alone help her. Silly girl.

I'll post another update later this evening. Thanks again all for your continued prayers.

Mary @ Jaama

And Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/19/2008 10:56 AM

Update 3/18/08: Journee had a restful night, but I still can't get her to pee on her own. If I pick her up under the loin, she will squirt, squirt, squirt though, so I think her muscles are just not strong enough yet to do it totally on her own. I rigged up a trolley system last night so she could

walk back and forth in the yard, with a harness to support her hind quarters, but all she did was stand there and walk in circles.... hehehe... it was so darned cute. Then she started hopping up and down and her backside did this cute little up and down bobbing thing. It reminded me of those baby jumpers that you can affix to door frames for babies to bounce up and down in. ;-)
I've started making her walk back into the house by manually moving each hind leg into position (only about 15 feet). She really can't "move" her hind legs on her own yet, but I figure this will help with mobility, if nothing else. She is eating and drinking well and seems to be in good spirits despite everything, which is a blessing. Well that's all for now. I have a call into the vet to discuss the peeing issue and I'm hoping he has some suggestions to help her understand she can't just run out to the back 40 to potty anymore and she needs to let me help her. Her modesty is going to be her downfall.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/20/2008 11:09 AM

Update 3/20/08 (1 week post injury): Well it's time for the daily update on Journee's progress. She is now able to pull her knees up under her and sort of stand, but still is standing on the top of her feet. She is now sleeping a bit more curled up too, like normal, with her knees bent and looks much more comfortable overall. She still is not peeing on her own, which is problematic, but she actually pooped on her own outside this morning, which is the first time she's done that. I think she will pee on her own very soon.

As for the strength of her hind quarters, I'm floored at how strong she has become. She is able to keep her entire length of her topline rigid and has managed to wag her tail back and forth a couple of times, not just the one way tail twitch she could yesterday. She is still not able to walk, or even move her hind legs independently, but is able to support her own weight for about 45 seconds to 1 minute, if I place her legs under her. The healing power of prayer and this Whippet's resolve amaze me. I swear she is determined to defy the odds and recover quickly. She is one determined little dog.

I have an appointment at 5:20 tonight to go over her progress and treatment regimen with Dr. Bob and we'll strategize her long term care options at that time. She is currently going for hydrotherapy every day and I have a feeling he will recommend continuing through next Friday.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/21/2008 9:46 AM

Update 3/21/08: Well Dr. Bob consulted with a neurologist yesterday since he was concerned that Journee is strong in the rear but still not using her back legs and when placed in a standing position, still is standing on the tops of her feet. The neurologist didn't seem too concerned at this point and said that if she were 2-4 weeks post injury and showing no improvement, then he'd be concerned. He said to keep stimulating her legs by walking her around (which I was already doing), and start doing deep massage (which I already do), and give her body time to heal.

We've postponed her hydrotherapy for today until Monday and I'll work with her at home and let Dr. Bob know on Monday if I see any improvement overall. I think this morning when I stood her up, she set her one foot down the right way, but I can't be sure it was her doing it or the way I positioned her legs. So not much change to report from yesterday's update, but she is still in good spirits, eating and drinking well, and I'm getting more and more resistance from her each time I express her bladder. I'm confident that by the end of the weekend she will pee on her own... let's hope I'm right. That's all for today.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  JaamaWhpts

Sent: 3/22/2008 9:53 AM

Update 3/22/08: I wish I had news of a small milestone today, but alas she appears to me to be the same as yesterday. She is still not moving her rear legs, other than to pull them up under her to try to stand, but at least she is trying and hasn't given up.

I let her sleep with me last night for the first time since she was injured 8 days ago, and it was an interesting night to say the least. She slept solid but I woke up twice to the smell of poop, and discovered a little hard lump of feces behind her with a disgusted look on her face that that "thing" was in her bed (luckily on the pads I had laid under her and not on the sheets or bedding (whew!)). I picked it up and put down a fresh pad for her and she went back to sleep, but I laid there rethinking whether I was ready for this step or not. I let her finish the night in bed, so she wouldn't think I was upset with her, and we got up in the morning and after she pottied (with help of course) I put her up in her crate where she nibbled on her breakfast and seems quite happy. So tonight, she will sleep in her crate and we'll try the sleeping in bed thing again in a few days. Neither she or I are ready for that just yet.

I've been doing physical therapy on her as often as I can and I have found she has resistance in her right hind leg but the left is much easier to move around. Her joints are still very mobile though and I anticipate I will see more and more resistance from both limbs over time. She is tremendously enjoying the deep tissue massages also, especially since I go over the entire body, not just her rear quarters. She's my special girl, a princess, and knows it.

So this is all for now, but if we have any breakthrough improvements later today, I'll post again. Thank you all for reading these updates and your continued thoughts and prayers. Miracles do happen and the fact she has come this far in such a short time is evidence of that. God bless you.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee

From:  JaamaWhpts

Sent: 3/23/2008 10:35 AM

Update 3/23/08: First let me say thank you to all of you who have offered words of support and their experience with animals with spinal cord injuries. These words will give me hope when things seem hopeless.

Now on to Journee's update for today. She has now developed diarrhea, probably from the decreased volume of stool she has been expressing, so we're now on diarrhea watch so she doesn't get it on herself. Even with the paralysis of her hind quarters, I'm amazed how clean she is able to keep herself, even with this latest problem. My washing machine is getting a work out today, but this too shall pass I'm sure. If it doesn't subside by this evening, I will give her something for the diarrhea, but this is the bodies natural way to prevent getting bound up and I'm sure it will happen from time to time.

Beside that she actually moved her right hind leg enough to bend it independently of the left, and what a great site that was to see. I sat her on the floor in the back room while I was cleaning out her crate and when I went back to get her, she had her right leg bent and was trying to push up on it. Also, for the first time today, when I sat her down, her right hind foot was bottom down!!! So I'd say she is showing slight improvement today. She continues to eat and drink well and appears to be happy as long as she has a comfy comforter to lie on and a bit of extra loving.

So that's all for today. She goes back to hydro-therapy tomorrow and a once over with Dr. Bob. From there we'll determine if additional hydro-therapy is warranted (which I'm sure she will benefit from). I'll post another update tomorrow.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/24/2008 10:42 AM

Update 3/24/08: Things are smelling much better around the house this morning. Journee's diarrhea subsided around 6:00p.m. last night and she had a normal bowel movement this morning. She is relaxing more and more when I help her express her bladder and I'm hopeful that soon I will be able to help her get started and she will finish on her own without me applying pressure. She is starting to move her right leg a bit, and it is getting quite strong. The left is significantly weaker though. When I set her rear down, she is putting her right foot upright about 50% of the time now, so she has shown a bit of improvement over the weekend. I also noticed when I was walking her into the vet this morning (her rear legs in a sling) that the right leg was moving slightly with each step, rather than just hanging limp like before.

She is at the clinic for her hydro-therapy today, and I will meet with Dr. Bob at 5:50 p.m. and today we'll decide if we are going to continue the hydro-therapy, which I think is beneficial for her, if for no other reason that to get her out and about each day. I'll post another update tomorrow.

Thanks again for everything and continuing to read these updates.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/25/2008 10:05 AM

Update 3/25/08: I met with Dr. Bob last night and he said that he saw some small improvement in Journee since he last saw her on Thursday. He recommended continuing the hydrotherapy, since she is gaining in strength and he thinks her mobility will benefit from it. So I went ahead and purchased the hydro package (12 visits) and will continue taking her 4 days a week until my money runs out (eck!!!) or she recovers enough that we feel she doesn't need it any more. He wants to assess her again next Monday.

Journee was very happy when she woke up this morning and wagged her tail the whole way outside. Once out there, we walked around and around and she sniffed the air and looked so happy. She then stopped and looked up and me so I could help her express her bladder, then she pooped and wagged her tail all the way back into the house. She is such a happy dog, even given her disability, and it does my heart good to know that she is not getting down about her predicament.

I've pretty much resigned myself to the fact that I'm going to have to get Journee a cart, since her recovery is going to take much longer than I'd prefer, but I'm still convinced she will regain use of her legs enough to walk, even is just for short distances. She is able to stand for longer and longer periods of time, and was actually able to lower herself slowly into a sitting position yesterday.

Well that's the update for today. No major breakthroughs or improvements but she is heading in the right direction. I pick her up from the clinic after work. Watch for the next update tomorrow morning.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  JaamaWhpts

Sent: 3/25/2008 6:45 PM

Update 3/25/08 #2: Lately I haven't been posting 2 updates in the same day but tonight is update worthy. She peed on her own a bit tonight... all over my Stone Mountain handbag... but she peed on her own a bit tonight!!! I also got her started again and she was able to keep the stream going for a second or two. So it appears she's figuring this all out, or she's healing enough to allow herself to control things. Either way, I praised her over and over for peeing on my handbag. Now I just need to invest in some Murphy's Oil Soap to clean it, either that or take it to the shoe repair for cleaning... hehehe.

Thanks all for the suggestions for slings, etc. I'm not going to buy the cart just yet, but want to be prepared to purchase it if and/or when it is warranted.

I leave for vacation a week from tomorrow, and Journee will be spending my vacation at Dr. Bob's spa and swim resort... hehehe. I'll be gone 6 days so hopefully she'll make good progress while I'm gone, but we have a week before I leave so anything is possible as determined as she is. It's going to kill me to leave her right now, but airline tickets have already been purchased, hotel reservations have been made, and the rental car has been rented, and my mother will be traveling with me, so to cancel now would impact more than just me. I also trust Dr. Bob and his excellent team of doctors and technicians, so I know Journee will be well cared for.

Well enough for now. I'll post another update tomorrow. Thanks again all.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess "PP" Journee

From:  JaamaWhpts

Sent: 3/27/2008 9:53 AM

Update 3/27/08: Well not much new to tell. Journee is getting stronger but still not walking, or even trying just yet. She's still going for her hydrotherapy 4 days a week and will continue for the next couple of weeks at least. Everyone at Dr. Bob's spa and swim resort are happy to see Journee each morning and all know her by name now, which makes her feel really special. She beams when people recognize her... it's so cute.

She graduated last night from the make-shift sling I threw together, to a custom made harness I designed last night. She was pulling out of the sling and I needed a better way to keep her under control. That's all for now, I'll post another update in a day or two. Thanks again all for your support and prayers for Journee.

Mary @ Jaama

P.S. I don't think that Dr. Bob's people will have the time to update you, but if I'm able to get onto a computer I'll post updates that I get via phone. I'm gonna miss her bunches while I'm gone, and even was trying to figure out a way to take her with me, but alas shipping her via airline is absolutely out of the question for obvious reasons.

From:  JaamaWhpts

Sent: 3/27/2008 7:11 PM

EXCITING UPDATE 3/27/08: The veterinary technician who took Journee out to potty this afternoon ran up to me when she saw I was there to pick up Journee and she was so excited she could have exploded. She said she was watching for me so she could tell me that Journee took 3 small steps with her right rear leg, leaving her left rear leg planted in the same place but turning in a circle. She said as soon as she was done with Journee she ran to find Dr. Bob this afternoon and they all had a celebration over Journee's accomplishment. How great is that!!! 3 small steps today, hopefully will turn into 4 small steps tomorrow, but the fact that she moved her leg in a

walking motion is definitely cause for celebration. Today is exactly 2 weeks post injury.

So with this breakthrough, on the advice of Dr. Bob, we're now going to kick the hydro-therapy up to 5 days a week and keep her as mobile as we can, to help strengthen her hind quarters and encourage her to move both hind legs. I just had to share this with you all.

Mary @ Jaama
and the determined Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 3/28/2008 8:34 PM

If I hadn't seen it myself, I wouldn't have believed it, but JOURNEE WALKED 4 STEPS TONIGHT!!! After getting home from the clinic, I took her harness off and sat her in the grass out front to suck up some fresh air and I walked back to get something out of the car and she started to follow me. When I turned back to make sure she was o.k., I couldn't believe my eyes... there was Journee placing each leg under her body and propelling herself forward.

It was sort of a half crouched in the rear thing, but it qualified as walking in my eyes, since she lifted her body up with each step. The best part was, it was entirely unassisted and totally under her own control and each leg was moving independent of the other!!! She looked so happy, but I don't think she was half as happy as I was. How great is that!!!

Today was 15 days post injury, and it's hard to believe she's come from very little if any hope of recovery to this point, and in such a short time. Miracles do happen, and the Whippet prayer network is a powerful thing. Thank you again all for your continued thoughts and prayers.

Mary @ Jaama
and determined Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/30/2008 7:46 AM

Update 3/30/08: The news just keeps getting better and better. Journee can stand for minutes now, if I put her feet under her. She is also trying to walk upright, unlike the funny little bobbing walk she did 2 days ago. I'm going to wrap her paws now, so she doesn't skin the tops of her feet as she pulls them forward, but she is only standing on the tops of her feet about 50% of the time now. I'm still not convinced she has much feeling in her legs from the hocks down, since she doesn't react much when I pinch the webbing between her toes, but with the progress she is making, hopefully that will improve over time as well.

I'm still assisting her with emptying her bladder and I noticed today that she is gaining weight, since my small hands had a hard time wrapping around her mid-section. So this morning for breakfast she got less, which earned me an evil eye from her, but the last thing she needs right now is extra weight to carry around.

That's it for today. Thanks again and I'll post another update tomorrow evening after meeting with Dr. Bob. This past week has shown significant improvement and I'm sure he will be very pleased.

Mary @ Jaama
and the determined Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 3/30/2008 7:08 PM

Update 3/30/08 7:00 p.m.: Well Ms. Journee is now banished from the front yard, unless she is on leash... yes, I said on leash. I got her up on her feet and she took off at a brisk pace walking like a

drunken sailor straight for the street. My heart almost stopped, since a car was approaching. I hollered at her and she turned to look at me and toppled over, which was a good thing. She shocked me as to how much control she had over her very wobbly hind legs, and she took about 15-20 steps at a rather fast pace.

I ran out to her and turned her around to head back toward the house and she then took off again. I just burst out laughing at her, she looked so darned drunk. So in all she took about 30-40 steps total tonight and then I had to help her back into the house because she was exhausted. Right now she is sleeping like a baby with a satisfied look on her face. I really wonder what tomorrow will bring... hehehe.

Miracles do happen!!!

Mary @ Jaama
and speed-demon Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 4/1/2008 10:19 AM

Update 4/1/08: This will probably be my last update until I return from PUERTO RICO!!! While I'm going to miss my girl terribly, I need the time away right now to regroup and relax. So on to the update for today...

I met with Dr. Bob last night and when he walked in the room his first words were "I think we're going to win this one." Then he went on to confirm that she has made significant improvement over the past 7 days and he anticipates that she will be "walking" by the time I return from vacation. I told him that I hope she will also be peeing totally on her own too... hehehe. He confirmed my suspicion that her lack of motivation to potty on her own is in her head and she'll figure it out eventually. So they are going to work on that while I'm gone.

So when I drop Journee off tomorrow morning, she will be spending 6 straight days at Dr. Bob's spa and swim resort where she will receive hydrotherapy, physical therapy, and a daily massage. Almost sounds better than my Puerto Rico plans.  All the staff at the clinic know Journee by name, and I'm sure she will get extra special treatment.

Her walking is improving and she seems to be getting more stable on her feet. She is now able to change direction without falling over, and while she's still dragging the tops of her feet part of the time, that seems to be improving as well. Her front quarters are getting VERY muscled, and I've started calling her Journee Swartzenegger. So that's it for now. Hopefully I have a lot of improvement to share one week from today. Thank you again for your continued prayers and thoughts.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 4/7/2008 8:32 PM

Update 4/7/08: I'm back from Puerto Rico and picked Journee up from Dr. Bob's about 5:30 p.m. tonight and all I can say is WOW!!!! She can now walk all over the place (wobbly but fairly under control), and when she falls over, she can now pick herself back up. The therapist said that today for the first time she was walking on the treadmill in the hydrotherapy pool... how great is that!?!?

I took her outside to potty and she was able to pee with only slight pressure from me, and then I let her walk to the car by herself. It sure felt wonderful to see her so happy to be mobile again. She is now sleeping soundly on an afghan on the living room floor and looks so peaceful. She lost about 2 lbs. while I was gone, which is both good and bad... good because she has less weight to carry around, but bad because she looks so darned skinny. No problem though, she is a good eater and I'm sure she will put the weight back on in no time.

She goes back in the morning for more hydrotherapy. I'm sure leaving her tomorrow will earn me a very evil look. ;-) I'm now off to snuggle with my girl and watch TV. I'll post another update tomorrow.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 4/9/2008 9:42 AM

Update 4/9/08: I decided to let Journee stay home from therapy yesterday and today. I just don't think that her head is in the right place right now, with her being so upset that I boarded her for 6 days and didn't come to visit. She did start to eat better last night, and has been drinking better too, so I think by tomorrow she can return to therapy and benefit from it. She is so thin, and it concerns me to see her this way. She was obviously very upset with being left for so long... I have to wonder if she thought I had abandoned her.

Last night I fell asleep with Journee on the living room floor and when I woke up she had her head nestled against my neck and was making these cute little snorty noises with each breath. I hated to wake her up, since she was sleeping so soundly, but it was 1:00 a.m. and I had to go to bed. I put her up in her crate and by the time I got up this morning her food from last night was gone and she seemed in much better spirits.

On a side note, I think she peed on her own in the yard last night. I sent her outside by herself to walk around a bit and I checked her bladder before I put her out and it was 1/2 full and when she came back in 15 minutes later, it was empty. So I'd say that is a good sign.

Thanks again all for your continued thoughts and prayers.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 4/10/2008 9:45 AM

Update 4/10/08 - Today is 4 Weeks Post Injury:

Journee ate and drank very well yesterday and has already started to put back on the weight she lost while I was gone, so she's looking more and more like herself again. This morning while I was getting ready to leave she was toddling around the dog room cleaning up the kibble between and behind the crates and when I went out there to get her, I couldn't find her and she was not making a sound. I had a brief moment of panic, when I reminded myself that she couldn't have gone too far, so I started looking under and around stuff and I found her wedged between a crate and the wall and unable to back up to get out. I had a good laugh over that one, since her hind legs still only work in one direction (forward), so I helped her out and she stood there wagging her tail at me, happy to be free again... hehehe... she's so funny sometimes.

Journee went to Dr. Bob's this morning for hydrotherapy and she didn't fight me too much. She walked into the clinic under her own power using her back legs remarkably well and walked all the way to the back room, where I had to pick her up because of the slippery concrete floors. I put her in the large cage with her name on it and she just stood there in the cage throwing evil

eyes my way. I promised her I'd be back later, and I only wished she could understand what I was saying to her, since I saw the look of panic in her eyes. Her hydrotherapy is paid up through tomorrow and I've been thinking about discontinuing hydrotherapy after tomorrow and opting for PT at home from here out. I'll be curious to hear what Dr. Bob thinks about that.

Well that's all for today. I'm really thinking she's going to win this fight now.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee the WALKING Miracle!!!

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#)

Sent: 4/11/2008 10:31 AM

Update 4/11/08: Well I decided that today will be Journee's last visit to Dr. Bob's Spa and Swim Resort for her hydrotherapy. She has graduated to walking now and I feel that she will benefit as much from walking around the neighborhood and yard as she has been from the pool. I'm so grateful they worked her through the roughest times and were able to help her with her mobility, but it's time I take over now.

When I got up this morning, Journee popped up and was standing in her crate waiting to go outside and I opened the door and she walked out and down the 2 steps to the back door without falling. I was very impressed to say the least. She went outside and walked around a while and she found a spot deserving of receiving her "water" and she squatted too fast and fell over. So she picked herself up and came to the door for me to help her pee. I relented and helped her express her bladder, for which she was very grateful. Maybe tomorrow her legs will squat soundly and she'll be able to manage what she has been trying to do for a week or so, and go pee totally unassisted. This one act will bring her so much joy I'm sure and I think I'll be celebrating with her.

So I have an appointment at 5:20 p.m. with the vet to go over her progress and future treatment plan. I'll post another update tomorrow with the outcome of this meeting.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee, the WALKING Miracle!!!

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 4/18/2008 11:26 AM

Update 4/18/08 - 5 Weeks Post Injury: Journee had a follow-up appointment with Dr. Bob last night and all is looking good. He wanted to see her walk and he was grinning from ear to ear watching her move each leg on her own and propelling herself forward. She didn't want to show him how good she could walk though, which made us both laugh. I think she's playing some sort of head game with both of us. He gave her a once over and said that she doesn't appear to be exhibiting any pain in her back, and he said to cut her prednisone back to every other day and to discontinue the robaxin (muscle relaxer), but to call him if she has a backward slide after discontinuing that medicine.

I told him about how I've dubbed her my "gerbil" for the way she poops everywhere and how I'm waiting for the day when she goes outside and passes one huge bowel movement and quits leaving gerbil turds in her blankets each day. He said that should improve over time, and I only can pray it does, since her bedding is regularly soiled and my new washing machine and dryer are getting a work-out... thank god for warrantees, I might need them. ;-)

Dr. Bob then asked about how her peeing is going and I told him that she still won't go without my

assistance. He looked at me with a grin and said there is no excuse for that. He then turned to Journee, looked her in the eyes and said "there is no excuse for you not to pee, you need to start going on your own." We both had a good laugh over that one.

So on the mobility front, Journee continues to show improvement. She still is walking like a drunken sailor at times, and tips over frequently, but the speed at which she is getting around is increasing exponentially and she scared the crap out of me last night when I called her in and she ran from the back 40 with legs flying everywhere. I clenched my teeth hard and hollered at her to slow down, but she just kept running and grinning from ear to ear. She's such a goof sometimes.

I'm starting to think that she will not make a full recovery, with such a grave injury how could she?!?, but she is getting around well enough and seems to be enjoying her life as much as she used to, and the only thing she is longing for, which is still not possible, is the interaction with her "pack", but with the rambunctious youngsters I have that would be suicide for her right now. Maybe that is what we can work towards over the next 5 weeks, but in the meantime she will just have to be content to mosey around the yard with her friends Tia and Finn and be happy with that.

Thank you again for all your thoughts and prayers. I'll post another update next week, unless she has a big breakthrough in the meantime.

Mary @ Jaama
and the Walking Miracle Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 4/29/2008 1:09 PM

Well this coming Thursday is the 7 week anniversary of Journee's injury. She still is not peeing on her own, and still pooping like a gerbil (the turds just fall out when they are ready to), so that continues to be problematic and I'm about at my wits end with her lack of effort to potty on her own. I'm convinced this is a learned behavior now, and it will take time and retraining to get her back to where she was pre-accident. This morning I felt her bladder and it was only about 1/2 full, so I refused to offer her assistance. I'll continue to do this until she makes an effort a least. It scares the crap out of me to think she could overflow and wet herself, or get a kidney infection or damage, but everything is pointing at the fact she should be able to do this on her own but just chooses not to. I'll give it a couple of days and pray she gets the idea it's her responsibility to relieve herself now.

On the mobility front, she is getting stronger and steadier on her feet each day. She actually got a little hopping/running motion going this morning with her hind legs and front legs working in unison. I'm so proud of the progress she is making. Her left leg, which is by far the weaker leg is starting to build some muscling now, and she is able to support her weight entirely on her left leg now, as evidenced this morning when her right rear foot got cold and she held it up. The fact that she felt the cold in both her hind feet is equally encouraging regarding the return of sensation in her rear feet. She has banged up her hocks pretty good, and I'm forever washing and nursing scrapes, but even that is getting better as she gains more stability. Surprisingly, she has not torn open the tops of her feet/knuckles by dragging and walking on them, but instead she has formed a few small calluses to protect her knuckles.

On a funny note, yesterday she sat her butt down into a small hole in the ground (more of a 2" deep divot really), and the poor thing couldn't get out. I stood in the house watching to see if she'd figure it out and she tried and tried with all her might and finally just gave up, so I came to her rescue. She was so happy I offered her assistance, she tried to jump up on me and actually

got her front legs about 2 inches off the ground. Now that her strength is returning in her hind quarters, it's entirely possible she will be able to accomplish this feat again someday. 7 weeks ago I never thought she'd be here today and 4 weeks ago I never thought she would be able to walk, but today I'm starting to think that anything is possible. Journee is one determined little dog.

Mary @ Jaama
and the Walking and Hopping Princess Journee

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 5/1/2008 9:37 AM

The past 3 days I've only expressed Journee's bladder for her once per day, figuring if she got uncomfortable enough, she'd get the message that she needed to figure out how to pee on her own. Well the last time I expressed her bladder was yesterday morning at about 7:00 a.m. and after she came in this morning, when I checked her before putting her up for the day, her bladder was EMPTY!!! Oh happy day. 😊 Now I'll just keep my fingers crossed she continues to potty on her own.

Today is exactly 7 weeks post injury.

Mary @ Jaama

From:  [JaamaWhpts](#) (Original Message)

Sent: 5/7/2008 11:19 AM

Tomorrow will be 8 weeks post injury and it appears that Ms. Journee has finally figured out how to pee totally unassisted on her own. I actually witnessed a "squirt" this morning, which brought great joy to my heart. She is also getting the gerbil turd problem under control more, and as long as she gets outside as soon as she feels the urge, she will now do her business outside. She is getting increasingly more stable on her feet and while she still has this funny stumbling style about her gait, she does pretty darned good for a dog who was totally paralyzed not that long ago.

Journee traveled with me to the Fairborn lure coursing trial this past weekend and she had the pleasure of meeting many of the Whippet World and Wonderful World of Whippet folks there. She lavished in the extra attention she got. She also showed an interest in the bunny, which is something she NEVER did before, even prior to getting hurt. Wouldn't you know, now that something is out of her reach, she now shows a desire to have it... hehehe.

So now that Journee is peeing and pooping on her own, I doubt there will be much to share that is update worthy, so this may be my last progress report for a while. Thank you all for your warm thoughts and prayers over this past 8 weeks, if it weren't for all of you, I would have lost it for sure. The power of Whippet prayer is a great thing and from the looks of things on these e-groups lately, there are other Whippets and their people who need the prayers more now. God bless you all and thank you again.

Mary @ Jaama
and the walking miracle Princess Journee.

From:  JaamaWhpts (Original Message)

Sent: 6/6/2008 11:46 AM

It's been 3 months since Journee slipped on the ice and injured her back. She has gone from paralysis for almost 2 weeks, then to only being able to stand for short periods of time, to walking a few steps by about 3 weeks post injury. Then 7 weeks post injury she peed for the first time unassisted, but she continued to have very little control over her bowels. So that is where the last update ended...

Well 3 months post injury, Journee has managed to jump up into the lazyboy 3 times now in the past 2 days, and she has reestablished her place as the co-alpha of the pack. She continues to pee on the move in little squirts here and there, and is still pooping like a gerbil (terds just fall out when they need to), but she has managed to have some small bowel movements under her own control outside, which is a sign of yet more improvement. She rarely falls down now, and when she does she gets up on her own. She still walks with this semi-stiff legged gait in the rear and kind of stumbles with her left hind leg every other step, but she has managed to find her own style of running, which is pretty funny to watch. When she runs her hind legs work together and bounce from side to side with each hop. She is nowhere near as fast as the other dogs, but she never was anyway, but she is no longer the last to the door when it's time to come in.

With each day, I'm starting to see more and more of the old Journee coming out, and she is regaining the confidence she had in her status in the pack. It is such a blessing to have such wonderful tempered dogs around her, since my biggest fear in letting her reestablish her place in the pack was that the dogs would "pack" on her due to her disability, but never once has that happened.

So that is where things stand on the Journee front. I'll post again in another month or so. Thanks all for continuing to read these updates.

Mary @ Jaama
and Princess Journee

So as I write this, today is July 24, 2008 and Journee continues to make slow improvement in her condition. She will never be the same as before her accident, but she has a quality of life and an exuberance for living that can be surpassed by none. She is back to being the queen of the pack, and now even manages to run, albeit slowly, but she is stable on her feet and is not easily knocked over when bumped by the youngsters and she is pain free. She is not the same Journee she once was, but she is MY Journee, and I am grateful every day for having her with me. Miracles do happen.