

Emailed By: Jennifer Durham on January 3rd 2007

From: J Durham
Sent: Wednesday, January 03, 2007 6:54 PM
To: Rita
Subject: Re: Keystone Experience...

Thank you for your activism! I would love to see "kennels" like Patti's and others exposed on Oprah!

You are more than welcome to use my stories and my pictures. I wish there was more I could have done.

My vet called the Department of Agriculture the other day and made a report on Keystone for another patient. I never made a report because I didn't know I could, nor did I really have any idea at the time how much responsibility should have been taken by Keystone for my dogs.

And yes, Patti did blame her vet for the start of the Parvo outbreak. She told me that herself. She said she was taking the puppies to her vet for treatment, but now I wonder if she simply did away with all those poor sick pups herself. I don't know why she'd tell me she lost so many if she really didn't.

Anyway, I appreciate your kind response, and feel free to use my story and pictures however you like. (So long as you don't misrepresent my message, which I don't think you would, but it helps to say this in writing...I'm sure you know what I mean.) Anyway, in a weird way it helped to know that my puppies died not from anything I could have possibly ever prevented, but maybe someone else--like Patti and Ian--could have.

Good luck. I'll check out some of the blogs, and see if you don't make it to Oprah!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Durham

From: J Durham
Sent: Saturday, December 30, 2006 11:06 PM
To: Rita
Subject: Keystone Experience...

Rita,

It was only recently that my vet told me about your website. I wish I had seen this two years ago when my husband bought me my first mini baby. We too were both impressed by the website capabilities of Keystone Kennel and were even referred to Patti and Ian by a family member that has a wonderfully healthy dachshund from them.

So, finding it difficult to find a breeder's website easier to understand and work through, we settled on Keystone. Nugget was our first baby. Our first dog for Joey and myself, and she was my Christmas present in 2004. We loved her dearly. She was never diagnosed with anything serious as a puppy, but looking back she was an unusually ill dog. She had random bouts with chest infections, colds, and one time was even hospitalized at our vet from a terrible infection that caused her to vomit and dehydrate quickly. All of this occurred within the first 6-8 months of her life, but never owning a puppy before, we just felt she was abnormally prone to sickness like any human baby might be its first few months of life. Her health soon improved, and she was our perfectly healthy, well-trained obedient child. I can't express how much Joey and I both loved her!

It wasn't long until we decided she needed a new friend to keep her company, so we returned to Keystone for a second puppy. Toby (whom we have no pictures of) was an all black mini whom we brought home right before Memorial Day of 2005. Within 24 hours of bringing him home, he was vomiting and spewing diarrhea all over the floors of our newly built home. Being Memorial Day weekend, we had no choice but to rush him to the ER Vet in Cobb County. They told me immediately that he had Parvo and because of his small size treatment would be extensive and most likely not beneficial. Toby had only been a part of our lives for two days, and already I was faced with the decision of having to put him down.

We contacted Patti immediately, and she had us bring Toby back to her for treatment at her vet, telling us that her kennel had been experiencing a breakout of Parvo over the weekend. She was very kind and sympathetic, never giving us a problem and even offered to pay the \$150 we had accrued at the emergency vet in just two hours. Again, it never occurred to me just how serious a Parvo outbreak actually was and what that said about her kennel. She has never been anything but kind, cooperative, and sympathetic toward Joey and myself. Driving Toby back to Keystone was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. I knew as we were driving that I was watching that little boy die in my arms. The pain in his eyes and the suffering in his breathing was almost too much for me to bear. Joey and I both felt devastated leaving him at Keystone. As I suspected, we never saw him again, and we were informed later on that week that he had to be euthanized along with at least 35 other puppies from the kennel that had contracted Parvo. Patti sounded devastated as well. She said 35 sounded about right, but they had really lost track. Again, this was just in May of 2005.

That being said, Patti and Ian agreed to replace our departed puppy for one of equal value plus an extra \$150 dollars for our vet expenses. Again, it never occurred to me to try and get the money back. The idea of buying a more expensive dog for free (basically) was appealing. The catch was Parvo is such a horrible virus that it can remain in your house for up to a year even after extensive Clorox cleanings. So, getting a new puppy who had not had all of their vaccinations was out of the question. We opted for Samson, our long-haired little boy pictured below. He was four months old at the time, and he had received an extra booster for the Parvo virus. We felt he was a good healthy choice since he had survived the virus taking the lives of several of his brothers and sisters. So far, he has been the healthiest, happiest puppy we could have hoped for, and he and Nugget were best friends.

Life was good until September of 2006. Our little Nugget suddenly came down with a rare disease that attacks the lymph nodes causing them to leak into the lung cavity, basically drowning our little girl in her own fluid. Not much is known about this disease, and after spending \$1500 at the ER vet again, there wasn't much choice we had but to put her down. I couldn't watch her suffocate in her own bed. I drove her to our vet as she panted heavily in our car. Not quite two years old, our vet said she really had no idea how sick she was, hence the reason for her tail-wagging and face-licking. It's a relief to put a dog out of their misery. It's torture to put one down who doesn't know they're miserable yet. I'm crying even as I write this. Nugget cannot be replaced in our hearts. Joey still can't talk about her without choking up.

Now, I'm not saying Keystone was the cause of this unknown disease, but I'm sure Nugget's earlier health issues in life did not help her cause. I kept Patti informed via email during the entire horrible ordeal, and she was very sympathetic, always wanting to know what the doctors were telling us, so she could make sure there wasn't anything she could do to prevent it from happening with other dogs. But as I said, not enough is known about this disease to know if it's genetic or not. I wouldn't be surprised if in the future it is linked to poor care early on in life or is a breeding disorder after reading all your stories.

Finally learning our lesson and feeling like survival rate of puppies from Keystone at this point was 1 in 3, we opted for another breeder on Lookout Mountain in TN for our little girl Lila. Surprisingly, this breeder did not have kind words to say about Keystone, and she brought up Patti's name, not me! It was then I realized that Keystone was most likely not the reputable place they appear to be online. I pray this story along with the others will deter people from having to experience all the pain we have been through with our babies.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story. It feels good to think that this story may stop one more person from making the same mistakes we did. Maybe the story of Nugget's and Toby's deaths will keep others from having to deal with these kinds of losses. I appreciate the thoroughness of your website and the professionalism with which you present yourself.

May you be blessed in your efforts!

**Sincerely,
Jennifer Durham**