

# Little Leo

## underdog to Superdog



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# **DEDICATION**

**When we got our precious Leo, we thought it was an isolated case of a puppy being born with a cleft lip and palate. We had no idea that there were so many puppies born with a cleft lip and/or palate. We quickly learned that they are just like us. They are different and they are beautiful. This book is dedicated to animal rescues that try to save these puppies and give them the love and care they need to grow and thrive and ultimately find wonderful homes.**

**The rescues give pups a chance at life. They can take the most frail puppy and turn them into a loving, strong and secure dog that has the ability to make a difference in the lives of the families who adopt them.**

**Often these special needs newborn puppies are euthanized at the recommendation of vets because people do not know that they can have a great life or where to go for help. The rescues aim to save as many puppies as they can.**

**High-risk puppies, such as those born with congenital defects, are much more demanding and difficult to raise. They require hours upon hours of attentive care and a vast variety of supplies. Some of these supplies include, but are not limited to: formula, feeding tubes, oxygen, syringes, antibiotics, and medications. On top of supplies, veterinary care is needed. From weekly check-ups to emergency care, they ensure the puppies receive the veterinary attention needed.**

**Rescues also help facilitate, coordinate, and transport dogs that require care.**

**The people who run these rescues are selfless, dedicated, loving, devoted and compassionate.**

**Thank you to the transporters and foster caregivers. Because of you, these dogs have been given a chance to find a forever home.**

**Thank you for what you do. It's people like you who make the world go round!**

# ANIMAL RESCUES

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!

DONATE

FOSTER

VOLUNTEER

Every animal should be given the opportunity to survive and thrive.

Through your donations, rescues are able to maintain supplies, provide food, shelter, rehabilitation, and medical care for animals in need. Your donation goes directly towards day-to-day operations, and ongoing vet bills.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW ANIMAL RESCUES



# **INTRODUCTION**

## **THE STORY OF LEO**

**My name is Leo. I am a French Bulldog that was born with a cleft lip and palate.**

**I was just a newborn pup when the vet said that I should be put down because of being born with a cleft lip and palate. Puppies like me are usually put down because we need constant feedings and special care.**

**But Darla, the woman who was there when I was born, didn't give up on me. She made sure I was tube fed every 2 hours and gave me around the clock care. I am forever grateful to Darla for making sure I survived.**

**When I was 8 weeks old, I found my forever home. I weighed only 2 pounds. My owners, Patty and Colleen, told me it was love at first sight when they saw me. They named me Leo. Little Leo because I was so small.**

**Patty and Colleen made sure I ate every 3-4 hours around the clock, had a nice warm bed, and made sure that I was thriving. Most of all, they provided me with unconditional love.**

**When I was four months old, I had surgery on my lip and palate. The surgery helped me so I could eat and breathe easier.**

**I now weigh over 20 pounds. I went from being an underdog to a superdog.**

**You see, Patty was born with a cleft lip and palate. Just like me. When she saw my face, Patty reached out to the dog breeder, Darla, and explained how very special I was.**

**I thought I was the only puppy to be born with a cleft lip and palate. But, many puppies are born looking just like me. We are different and we are beautiful. Dogs like me need to be given a chance to live and to find a forever home. Life is not about being perfect in someone else's eyes.**

**That's enough about me.**

**My name is Leo!**

**La La La Leo!**

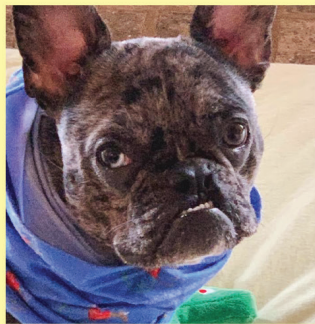
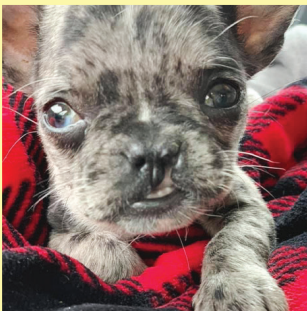
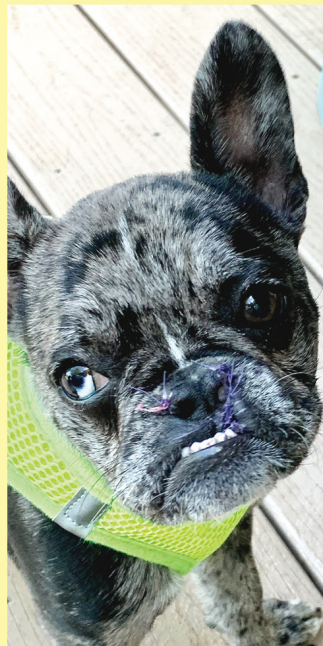
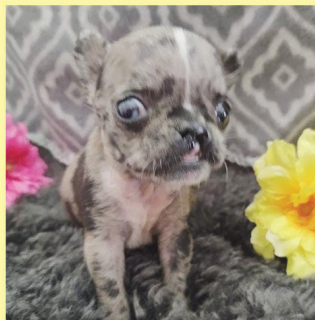
**And, I'm thankful to be alive!**

## **CLEFTS ~ NOT JUST FOR HUMANS!**

**Did you know animals can be born with a cleft lip and/or palate too?**

**Dogs and cats are the most prone to clefts and struggle with the same feeding issues a human baby would have. They, as well undergo cleft related surgeries most importantly to allow them to eat properly.**







# FOREWORD

**“We are different. And we are beautiful.” These are the words from Patricia Simon’s books, “Smile With Simon” and “Simon and the Buddy Branch.” Sometimes, I find myself singing these words to improve my self esteem, which can quickly toggle between, “I hate myself” to “I am super-sockin’ rockin’ awesome” in the matter of moments.**

**What I learned from Patricia’s characters like Simon, Buddy, and now, Leo, is that we all have lows. Thankfully, we do not have to stay there long. For Buddy, Leo, and even me, I find that it takes a community to love you into good self-esteem. The assurance and reassurance from friends is everything. At Children’s Craniofacial Association, we create and celebrate community in the way Patricia models in her stories.**

**Patricia Simon’s books touch the young girl in me that struggled with her appearance and being accepted by the other children. As a young girl with a repaired bilateral cleft lip and palate, the idea of a friend, like Patty, that would support and encourage me was life changing. Today, the story of Leo encourages kids with a craniofacial condition to allow the positive words of his community to build him up. Self-esteem rises, heart and mind open and Leo is able to see his differences as a good thing. The community turns Leo’s frown upside down and wins the hearts of all his readers in the process.**

**I sincerely hope you enjoy this book by my dear friend, Patricia. As a nurse, and now as a writer, she continues to help heal and transform us into better humans.**

**Kara Jackman**

**Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
Children’s Craniofacial Association**

**Children’s Craniofacial Association is a national, 501 © 3 nonprofit organization, headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Nationally and internationally, CCA addresses the medical, financial, psychosocial, emotional, and educational concerns relating to craniofacial conditions.**







La la la Leo

LEO

La la la Leo



That's my name





I have no shame





My lip might be split



But, I'm still a hit!



People think I'm cool  
Even though I drool







I run a little funny just  
like a baby bunny



I wear a badge of  
courage so I don't  
get discouraged



I try to be kind because  
our lives are intertwined



I eat lots of kibble

And yeah, my lip  
may dribble




I've got a big ol' tummy  
because everything is yummy





I've got the cutest face  
that you will embrace





He has an amazing coat  
with lots of spots like a jaguar.

He is beautiful!

Look how  
pretty  
his eyes  
are.

Born  
A Hero

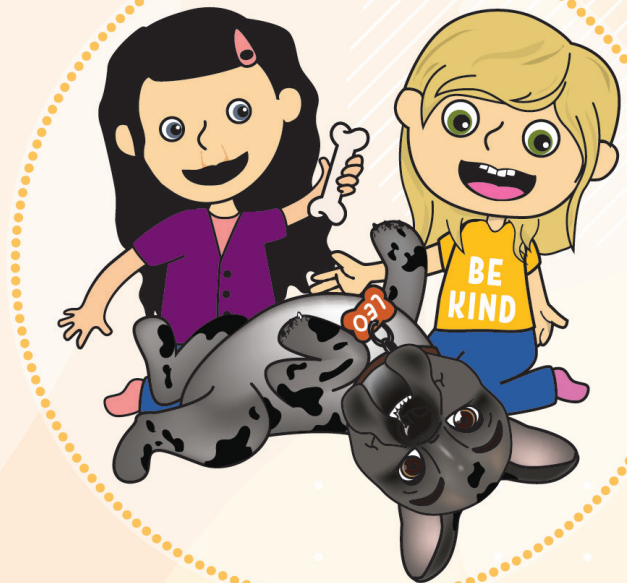
LEO



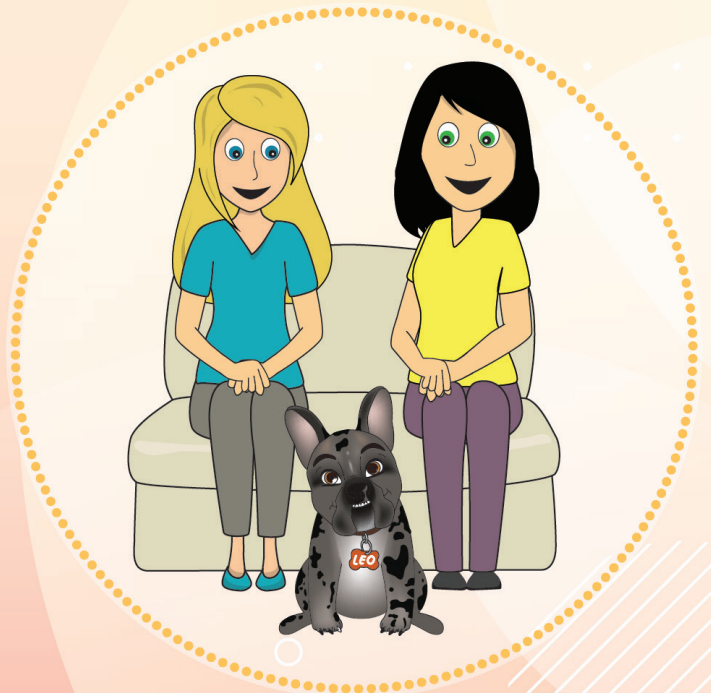
I'm your little buddy

I am not a  
fuddy duddy





I'll be your best friend





On that, you can depend





I've got the  
cutest snout

I shake it  
all about





Once upon a time,  
not so long ago







I was feeling bad



Just a little sad

But everyone who met me





Always loved to pet me

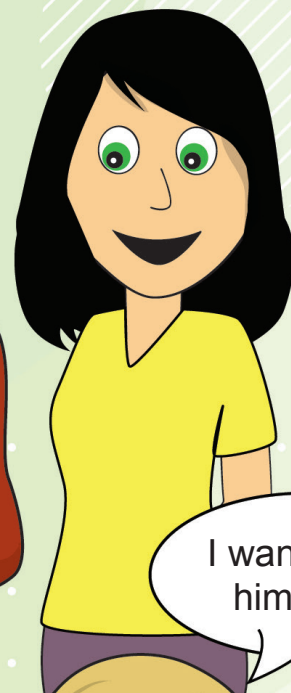
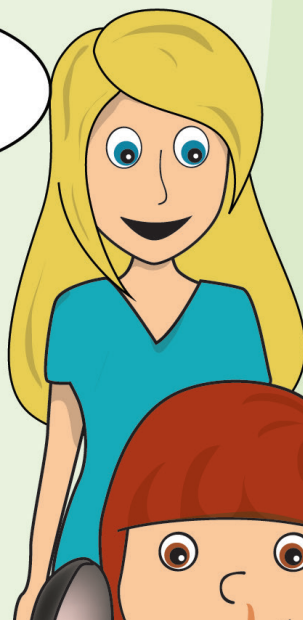


Can I hold him?



Me too, please!

He's so soft!



I want to pet him next!





And, now, I am so proud!

I jump and woof out loud!

We are different  
We are beautiful!

ruff! ruff!



My name is Leo

I am so happy I was born!



# Little Leo

La la la Leo

That's my name, I have no shame

My lip might be split But I'm still a hit  
People think I'm cool. Even though I drool  
I run a little funny, just like a baby bunny

I wear a badge of courage So I don't get discouraged  
I try to be kind because Our lives are intertwined

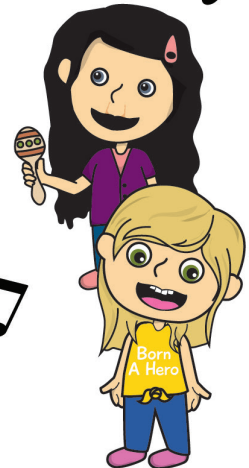
I eat lots of kibble and yeah my lip may dribble  
I've got a big ol' tummy because everything is yummy

La la la Leo

I've got the cutest face  
That you will embrace

I'm your little buddy, Not a fuddy duddy  
I'll be your best friend, On that you can depend  
I've got the cutest snout, I shake it all about

Once about a time not so long ago  
I was feeling bad just a little sad  
But everyone who met me always loved to pet me  
And now I am so proud, I jump and woof out loud





## Cleft Warriors - Rocco, Lentil and Mr. Ed Ducky

Rocco, “spokesdog” for Smile Train  
was born with a cleft.



**Rocco**

Lentil raises awareness for the cleft community  
and teaches kids to be proud of their clefts!



**Lentil**

**Mr. Ed Ducky**

“Ambassadog” for Children’s Craniofacial Association



**Mr. Ed Ducky**



**A child born with a cleft has the most beautiful smile,  
the brightest of eyes, the biggest of hearts, and the strength of a lion!  
A child born with a cleft faces many hurdles and needs love and support.  
The same sentiment holds true for these dogs born with cleft lip and/or palate.  
Let's raise awareness that animals are also born with clefts  
and they deserve to be given a fighting chance to live.  
These dogs help spread acceptance and awareness that being different is cool!**

**Lisa Wyzlic  
A Cleft Mommy's Bond of Friendship Founder**



## **FETCH MORE BOOKS BY PATRICIA SIMON**

**Smile with Simon**

**Simon and the Buddy Branch**

**Simon and Patty Go To Camp**

**Simon and the Bully**

**Simon Says Mask On Mask Off**

**Purchase books directly through**

**[www.smilewithsimon.org](http://www.smilewithsimon.org)**