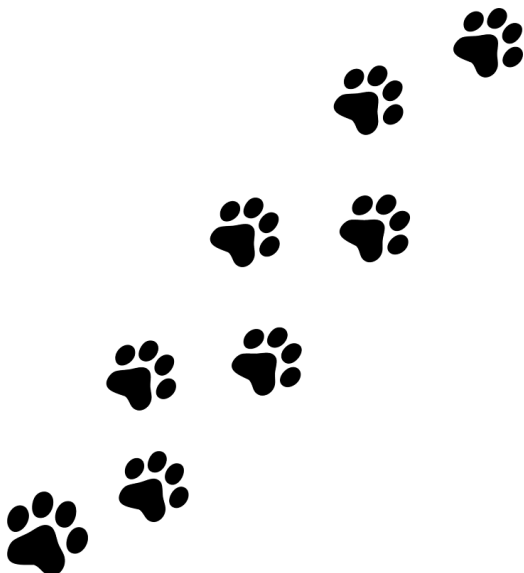


Adopting Copernicus



Written by Heidi Sloan,
2018 Teacher on the Trail™
As told by Christine Work

Adopting Copernicus



Yip yip! A new litter of puppies was born! Their owner, Vern Halter, named them after scientists, and took care of them as they learned to walk on wobbly legs. When they were little, they liked to run, jump, and play in their water bowls, but when they got older, it was time to work! Vern Halter is a musher in Alaska. A musher raises dogs to pull sleds across ice and snow, and Vern couldn't wait for the day when Copernicus and his siblings could join his team to pull his sled.



Mushers like Vern and his musher friend Cindy must train their puppies to pull the sleds quickly and safely. Copernicus, his brothers, and sisters needed to learn how to do this important job. Everyday, they went for long walk through the woods. Vern and Cindy taught them to come when called, and soon they were ready to put on a harness and run with calm, older dogs. These bigger dogs helped them learn which way to go.

Copernicus worked hard and his muscles grew stronger and stronger, but there was a problem. He loved Vern and Cindy and obeyed their commands, but he didn't love pulling the sleds as much as the other dogs. When it was time to harness a team of sled dogs to pull a sled, Copernicus wouldn't jump and yip like the other dogs. Vern and Cindy wondered what to do. They didn't want Copernicus to have a job he wasn't excited about!



A teacher named Mrs. Work had always wanted a sled dog. Each year, she taught her students about Alaska and sled dogs. One day, she was reading her computer and saw that Cindy had started looking for a family to adopt Copernicus! Mrs. Work and her family decided they would LOVE to have Copernicus join their family. So, Cindy took the dog to the airport, petted him, and gave him a big hug. He left Alaska in a big airplane and flew to Ohio, where the family welcomed him as their pet!



Copernicus is now a happy housedog! He loves to swim in the pond, eat new foods, and give lots of licks to the Work family!