

# Plainwell dog wins talent contest

CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

Toula is a smart dog who knows how to please.

Need a tissue? Thirsty for a soda? Forget to flush the toilet? No problem, she can take care of it.

## BUZZ

Those talents earned the 3-year-old rescued border collie from Plainwell the title of

“America’s Most Talented Pet,” and a spot in a national print advertising campaign.

Toula beat out more than 600 dogs and gained the most online votes to win the “Petco Stars” competition.

“I’m so proud of her. I started crying when I found out,” owner Christine Mahaney said.

“It’s not just that America voted for her, it’s more about having people recognize what you can do with a dog, especially a rescue dog,” she said.

The competition began with in-store contests in July, which led to 100 dogs being chosen to submit 60-second videos, 12 of which were posted online for voting, said Petco spokeswoman Rachel McLennan.

Toula’s video features her fetching slippers, a tissue, a pillow, a soda, opening the refrigerator and the trash can, and flushing the toilet.

The win has earned Mahaney and her husband, Billy Stout, a trip to Los Angeles. McLennan said a crew will head to Michigan to shoot photos of Toula for print advertising that will appear around the holidays, or the first of the year.

For now, Toula is enjoying lots of hugs and



Photo • Chronicle News Service

Toula has many talents, including flushing the toilet. She was named America’s most talented pet and will be featured in new Petco advertisements.

the company of her “brother,” Cole, a 3-year-old border collie, and Annie, an 8-year-old beagle-terrier mix.

So do they feel left out?

Not at all, Mahaney says.

“They are enjoying riding on their sister’s tail,” she said. “They got very big juicy bones the night we found out (Toula won).”

What about Toula? Is all the attention going to her head?

“She’s taking it in stride,” Mahaney reports. “I think she’s ready to start making some public appearances and showing people what she can do.”

Got a tip? Drop a line to The Buzz, P.O. Box 59, Muskegon MI 49443. Or send an e-mail to: the-buzz@muskegonchronicle.com. Please include your name and phone number.

**mlive**  
 .com  
 Michigan's Home on the Net

For more on this  
 story, go to  
[mlive.com/  
 chronicle/](http://mlive.com/chronicle/)