



## PET OF THE MONTH — UNLEASHED

“**E**veryone knows an ant can’t move a rubber tree plant...” unless, that particular ant shares the same feisty philosophy on life as the chili-pepper-sized Chihuahua pictured here. For Zelda, it’s all about mind over matter, and some knee-slapping pitter-patter.

It didn’t take long to figure out that she is wise beyond her years...I mean months. Zelda is just shy of 6-months-old. And despite the obvious roadblocks challenging her every move, our little Mexican jumping bean refuses to stop jumping for joy. After meeting her, I now know the secret to her bouncy outlook — plenty of mini-siestas in between fiestas and a daily dose of solar energy. Whenever Zelda’s batteries start running low, the energizer puppy curls up on the floor where the sun’s shining the brightest and snoozes until she’s fully recharged and ready to do the Mambo.

But, there’s something that sets Zelda apart from all the other solar-powered puppies. For one thing, Zelda is probably the cutest puppy I’ve ever seen. But the real difference is that Zelda is permanently paralyzed from the tummy down.

It happened when she was six-weeks-old. She and 11 other Chi puppies were the latest products of a backyard breeder. Although it’s unknown what exactly happened, the consensus is she was either stepped on or dropped by one of her handlers. At least, the mistakes ended there. Instead of discarding their damaged goods, the breeder made a phone call — one that would save little Zelda’s life.

Canadian Chihuahua Rescue & Transport (CCRT) is a network of volunteers dedicated to rescuing and re-homing Chihuahuas since 1999. When they received the call about Zelda, there was no question they’d help. After all, dogs like Zelda are the reason CCRT exists.

Once released to the rescue group, Zelda attended some important appointments. First

stop was CCRT’s veterinarian. But, the news was grim. The vet didn’t think she’d survive. The damage appeared too extensive for Zelda to ever regain use of her hind legs.

But Zelda’s foster mom, Dianne, happens to be as feisty as her foster pup. Together, they were determined to move that rubber tree plant! Next stop was the neurologist who agreed the severity of the injury suggested it was not correctable through surgery. And yet, there was hope. If Zelda could develop her muscles by learning the ‘spinal walk’, she’d have a chance.

Within weeks, Zelda had the spinal walk down pat, proving her disability wasn’t about to disable her. Reliant on involuntary reflex action, Zelda can walk upright on supportive surfaces like the grass at her local doggy park and the carpet at home. When she encounters a slippery floor, she still gets around by dragging her back-end along with her. All it takes is a Chihuahua’s stubborn nature and, although Zelda doesn’t like to admit it, Dianne’s bathtub physiotherapy sessions are helping, too. Zelda would much rather play with her yellow ducky on dry land but, every day she puts her toys aside and bravely endures her swimming lessons.

Before I kissed the incredible Zelda goodbye that day, she performed a little impromptu pitter patter concert in my honour. Her hind legs may lack musical genius, but those front legs managed to bang out the best drum solo on a wood floor that I’ve ever heard.

Take it from one very inspirational Chihuahua — if life hands you onions, make Fajitas and stop complaining!

Zelda is a six-month-old smooth-coated Chihuahua in the care of Canadian Chihuahua Rescue & Transport ([www.ccrt.net](http://www.ccrt.net), [info@ccrt.net](mailto:info@ccrt.net), 1-877-783-7333). She’s not much bigger than an ant, but she’s got high hopes for the future. Could you be what she’s hoping for? As long as you’re the rubber-tree-toting type, she’s sure to love you!

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