

## PETS

# Montreal dog's incredible journey from Kamloops ends with backyard birthday party

BY KATHERINE LALANCETTE

MONTREAL — After a year-long absence and a mysterious trek across the country, Pollux is finally home with her family in Montreal.

The black-Lab cross, found in B.C. last week, was flown into Trudeau airport in Montreal Thursday night, where she was greeted by her ecstatic owners and a slew of cameras.

After going missing from her Montreal home in June 2010 and resurfacing in Kamloops, Pollux has become a celebrity.

"It was crazy! We were afraid she'd be stressed out [by all the media] but everything went really well," said Isabelle Robitaille, the dog's owner.

Robitaille's kids, Antoyne, Lily-Ann and Morgane, were so excited to be reunited with their pet, they begged their parents to let them go to the airport, even though it was past their bed time. The family got back home in the wee hours of the morning but the children were up bright and early to play with Pollux.

"For them, it's a second Christmas," said Robitaille, as Pollux barked excitedly in the background. "They woke up and got their present: their dog. My son spent 45 minutes just petting her. He was so happy."

Named after a French cartoon pup (known as Dougal in English), Pollux disappeared more than a year ago after escaping through a gate that hadn't been closed properly. Last Saturday, a shocked Robitaille got news her dog was safe and sound in a Kamloops shelter. A microchip implanted in the dog's ear allowed the SPCA to trace the owner.

"I've become the biggest microchip crusader," Robitaille said. "The moral of this story is get your dogs



Isabelle Robitaille and her family in Montreal have been reunited with their lost dog, Pollux.

chipped."

As for how Pollux ended up in B.C. in the first place, for the moment only the dog knows the answer.

On Thursday, Robitaille got a chance to thank Deb Chaplain, the B.C. woman who found Pollux and kept her in her home for three weeks until the SPCA had room for her.

"Right now, Pollux is wearing an orange bandana that was in the envelope I received [Thursday] night with all the papers. It was a gift from Deb Chaplain's kids," Robitaille said.

The family plans to celebrate Pollux's return with a backyard party just in time for her ninth birthday next month. Friends' dogs will be cordially invited to join Pollux in dining on barbecued steaks and playing with the children.

"We're not people who usually celebrate our pets' birthdays or dress them up or anything like that, but this year we're making an exception," Robitaille said.