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(P. 7)

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COVER DOG

Named after Darla from the film "The Little Rascals," our Fall/Winter 2021 Cover Dog "is the sweetest dog, more like a human with her all knowing eyes," according to owner Meaghan Goodloe. She always wants to be petted. ALWAYS! "She demands attention by pawing or nosing or laying on her back showing off her belly with a little toothy smile," explains Goodloe.

"Darla loves meeting new people! She always feels her best after getting a groom. Her pink ears only aid in her endeavor for more pets," confirms Goodloe who has tried a few other colors on her but believes *she's a pink girl through and through.*

"I think the best thing about Darla being a Goldendoodle is her coat because it is so much fun to groom. I love being able to practice my creative skills on her."



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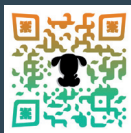
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EDITOR'S PAW

My *Heart* Aches For You

Dear FETCH Friends,

This is by far the hardest piece I have written. My heart hurts beyond measure. On April 16, 2021, I made the hardest decision I've ever had to make. I chose to let my best friend go. I still struggle with knowing if I made the right decision for her. She was and is my heart dog. I've had two thus far in my life, but this one was the hardest to let go. For months I've been in a very dark place filled with guilt, sadness, anger and disgust. I had the most vague vets at the time I made my decision, and when you are in grief, you aren't thinking right. You need the right person to help you through a very difficult time, and if that person isn't present, a nightmare can occur. Sometimes vets misdiagnose them; sometimes they overlook issues because they are too busy, and with COVID it's become even harder to see a vet when you need one. And you need a good one! I have learned that you should always get a second and third opinion before letting someone you love go. But at the time, you feel you are making the best decision with the information you have, right?

Every single moment, I wish I could take back the decision I made for Sophy, but I can't. I just pray. That she didn't suffer. That she would forgive me for saying goodbye. That she wanted to go before it got too bad for her. My heart is broken, and nothing fills this void. This issue is dedicated to her. And also to all of the dogs YOU have lost along the way. This is the "Heart Dog" Issue. This is the issue where people are encouraged to pour their hearts out about their soul mates, to grieve their loss, to celebrate their dogs' lives and so much more.

I hope you find something in here that touches your heart and soul the way Sophy did mine.

Here's To You Sophy...I love and miss you more than you will ever know,

N. Putz





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BREED PROFILE

DARE I
SAY DOODLE...

Goldendoodle

The Cure for the Common Dog



BY NASTASSIA PUTZ, PUBLISHER
PHOTO BY BRIT MATYAS

STATS:

Dog Breed Group: Hybrid Dogs

Height: 20 to 24 inches tall at the shoulder

Weight: 50 to 90 pounds

Life Span: 10 to 15 years

The pros of owning a Goldendoodle are endless, so let's start with the cons. "The only con of owning a Doodle for me is the hype surrounding them. I don't believe in mass breeding mixes and calling them "designer breeds", then charging thousands of dollars for them," declares dog owner Meaghan Goodloe. Meaghan stumbled into her relationship with LaDarla Stacy Boch Boch or Darla for short. This girl came struggling into Meaghan's life needing a haircut but strutted out with so much more—her forever home.

Historically...

Hybrid dogs like Darla have been around for hundreds of years. However, they became trendy with mass media and celebrities in the late 20th century. The Goldendoodle, in particular, was widely bred in the 1990s.

The very first person to attempt this pairing of dogs was Charles Dickens' granddaughter Monica Dickens in 1969. This dog was bred from a Poodle and a Golden Retriever in hopes of developing a dog with the positive attributes of both. And as it was back in 1969, they are still not considered a breed on their own. However, many dog owners have a special place in their hearts for these hybrids as they do combine the best traits of their parent breeds. The fun-loving and gentle Golden Retriever meets the active, light-to-nonshedding Poodle. Both breeds are intelligent, trainable and faithful. What more could you ask for in a dog?

Secretly...

Goodloe fell in love with Darla (previously named Stacy) after she groomed her. She was in desperate need of a good grooming, according to Goodloe, and her owner at the time admitted to needing to find Darla a better home. Luckily, this sweet girl's new home was standing right there with a pair of shears!

"None of my friends and family saw this coming," admits Meaghan. "I had always been a cat lady." It only took Darla a few minutes to officially win her new owner over. That is the magic of man's best friend.

Genetically...

It is hard to decipher how much of each breed is really inherited by any one of these dogs. Sometimes the look of the dog may lean more towards one of the breeds, but the personality traits are quite blended. They have one of three types of hair: straight, wavy or curly. And their coat

can vary in color. Because of the Poodle component of them, they are considered hypoallergenic, yet people can still be allergic to their dander or saliva.

Physically, they are susceptible to illnesses or conditions like any other dog, especially hip issues. Mentally, they are not good watch dogs. They rarely bark, they are super friendly, and they need constant contact with their people as they can suffer from separation anxiety. Emotionally, they are great family dogs and support animals. They drool affection along with many other traits that make them highly trainable and a good match for first-time dog owners.

Besides companions, Goldendoodles are used as service dogs, guide dogs, therapy dogs and sniffer dogs—sniffing out potential threats for their owners. These dogs thrive best in residences with adequate space whether it's in the city or country. Apartment living is not ideal nor is a kennel or being kept outside. This dog prefers to be close to his or her family. They are great with children and other animals.

Unfortunately...

These dogs can cost a lot of money. People sometimes will pay more for a designer breed than they will for a pure-bred. It's ridiculous to think about this, especially when individuals can find these hybrid dogs (or similar) sitting in shelters or rescues all over. Ultimately, the breeding of any dog plays a huge role in the continuation of homeless dogs—so please adopt first!

Goldendoodles need a lot of socialization. Owners should consider taking theirs to training classes. They also require 30 minutes of daily exercise. So be prepared to take Fido for walks or romps in the park. Other great places to socialize are stores that allow pets, outdoor patios or doggy playdates with friends.

Destructive behavior: If left alone for long periods of time, Doodles can develop separation anxiety leading to undesirable behaviors.

Like with all dogs, responsible ownership is key to their success. It is the owner's job to protect their four-legged companion from dangers lurking around every corner. This is a lifetime investment. So don't drop the ball.

HEART DOGS

Our LOVE

is unconditional



BY CHERESE COBB, FREELANCER

Heart dogs are like human soul mates. Most of us have had at least one that's our whole world. Some of us form an instant bond with our heart dogs and feel like they've been a part of our lives forever. But this special human-canine relationship can be shaky in the very beginning.

Jerry McGuire was wrong; heart dogs don't complete us. They inspire us to complete ourselves, and that's not always a joyful process. Sometimes we're like two puzzle pieces with jagged edges trying to figure out where we fit in. Sometimes it looks like we're never going to click. But soon after sliding, twisting and flipping the pieces around, we find that we complete each other.

American writer Thom Jones once said, "Dogs have a way of finding the people who need them and filling an emptiness we didn't even know we had." Heart dogs mirror us in some ways, but they also fill in our missing blanks and help us understand the puzzle of life.

Heart dogs aren't afraid to let their guard down. They don't feel one way but act another. Heart dogs don't keep secrets. They stick with us through the tough times and know our flaws. But they love us anyway. When our heart dogs are with us, we feel safe, calm and happy. Long story short: the universal love they give us is the best kind of love we'll ever experience because it's bigger than ourselves.

If you're lucky, you're currently sharing your life with a heart dog. If you're less than lucky, you'll remember a heart dog that isn't physically with you. Whether your heart dog passed away 10 days or 10 years ago, or you didn't realize he was "the one" until after he was gone. Losing your heart dog is stomach-wrenching. Though your heart dog will always be with you because they taught you how to connect to your true self without asking for anything in return.



Oatsie, My Love

BY KRISTIN CATALANO, FREELANCER

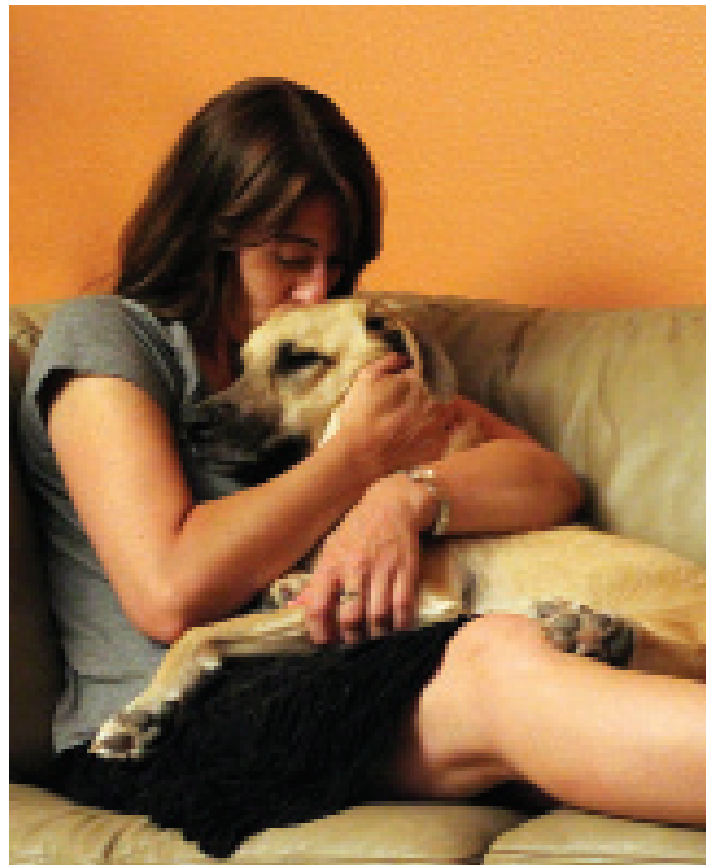
Ten months have passed since my soulmate has left me. I don't believe in anything anymore. I don't trust anyone anymore. I feel as alone as I did the day of his diagnosis. Even more so now that he is gone.

Otis was my first dog. I never even planned on getting a dog. He came into my life because a privacy fence that I put up in my yard offended my neighbors. I remedied the situation by getting a 12-week-old puppy. It sounds ridiculous, but it's true. The first week was filled with sleep deprivation and Google searches on "puppy training." By the second week, Otis and I were joined at the heart.

The Bond

Wherever I went, Otis went. And if Otis wasn't invited, I would show up very briefly or not at all. As one of my friends put it, "Otis got to experience more in his life than most children." He went on three road trips where he saw half of the country with his head out the window, ate cheeseburgers, stayed in fancy hotels, got to swim in the Atlantic Ocean and ran free on sandy beaches. I took him to friends' houses, restaurant patios, coffee shops, bars and festivals. His wagging tail would swirl around in a circle while he would do a two-step walk-dance followed by a gymnastics routine each time he encountered a person in his path. He just couldn't believe that everywhere he went, people were always throwing a party—just for him!

It's hard to say if Otis liked people or dogs more. He would lie down and wait to say hello to doggy strangers on walks and would play "chase me, chase me, catch me if you can, my name is Otis" when his friends came over. When I would dog sit or foster, Otis was so patient and kind always offering up his beds and toys and even his bones to our guests. And when we were alone



together, we did the simple things—multiple walks, "treat game," sniffing and swimming at our lake cottage in the summer and sniffing and exploring in the snow at the Seminary Woods in the winter.

My dad always told me that Otis never took his eyes off of me. Ever since he was a puppy, he would follow me with his eyes. When I was on the computer, I would get startled when I'd turn and see him just staring at me. He would just appear, staring at me, like a ghost. When I'd leave the house, he would watch me out of the window like an abandoned child. When I left him at a friend's house, he would watch me drive away with a look of horror. Otis's eyes always looked so familiar to me like I knew him from somewhere...but I could never figure out how. I thought maybe his eyes looked like a famous person like Barack Obama or George Clooney, but they weren't. They were just his. And I knew them. I remember one of my cousins telling me that Otis would live a very long time because of the deep bond we shared. I believed her. But it was a lie.

The Diagnosis

Ten years. That's all I got. Ten years. What did I do wrong? Was he absorbing the stress from my unhealthy relationships? Did he die to get me unstuck—to get

me to move on with my life? I don't understand. Why do most people get 14 years or even longer? He didn't have hip problems, eyesight issues or bad hearing. He wasn't overweight. He was spry and limber. He was a 5-year-old dog in a 10-year-old dog's body. I gave him vitamins. I avoided unhealthy treats. I bought him the best food. I avoided pesticides. I sparingly gave him flea and tick medicines. I brushed his teeth. He got plenty of exercise. I let him be himself. I never forced him to do anything he didn't want to do (besides a bath and the vet). If I treated people the way that I treated Otis, with zero judgment and total acceptance of who they were, everyone in the world would want to be my best friend. I remember having a thought once, as we ventured out of the house together, that I would never feel guilty about how I cared for Otis. Now, all I feel is guilt.

In March, Otis started using his front legs to get up more...but my friend said her dog was the same age and was also having joint issues. In April, Otis threw-up once, was acting scared and his gums were pale. But then a few hours later, he was totally fine and eating and playing. In May, Otis had a limp for a half a day. When the vet checked him out she said his joints looked great. And what about the time even way before that in October when his legs were shaky and he laid down after playing chase at the dog park? But the vet said it was probably just a pinched nerve that resolved itself. "Humans get those too," she told me.

On July 10, I made a same day appointment for Otis to go to the vet because he didn't get up for breakfast. That was extremely abnormal for him. For two weeks, he was intermittently acting lethargic, was breathing heavy at times and was sometimes being finicky about his food. But I had just changed his food, there was a heat wave in Milwaukee and he drank the lake water when I took him swimming. Everyone I told chalked it up to the 100-degree weather or swimming in the lake because their dogs were also panting from the heat or got sick after swimming.

That morning, before I took Otis to the vet, I took him for a little walk. We got three houses down when a neighbor dog darted out onto the sidewalk and attacked him. This was the second time this same dog attacked Otis. This time the injury was more than just a puncture wound. It was a deep bite wound that needed



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stitches. These were strict COVID times, and I couldn't go inside the vet office with Otis. I tried explaining over the phone to the vet what was going on with him for the past couple weeks, but the vet was more concerned about the dog bite and just gave him an antibiotic. He said the antibiotic "should clear up anything else that was going on with him." I wasn't satisfied with that answer because Otis was also running a 104-degree fever, so I requested a blood panel and a fecal exam. The fecal test was clear of parasites, but the vet didn't take the time to evaluate the blood panel, and he didn't take the time to feel on Otis's abdomen. All he told me was that Otis was anemic and "let's just wait and see if the antibiotic clears everything up." Otis was so sick over that weekend. I stayed up with him putting a cold washcloth on his paws, trying to bring his fever down.

So much needless suffering.

On Monday morning, when I was able to get a copy of the blood test, I sent it to my friend who is a vet. She said that the results pointed to internal bleeding and that I should bring him to see her right away. She felt something on palpation, so she did an ultrasound. She found a grapefruit-sized mass attached to Otis's spleen. The dog attack ruptured the tumor, and he was bleeding internally. The following morning, Otis had the mass removed. I prayed and prayed and prayed that it would be benign. But God didn't listen. Does the power of prayer really work? If I would have blasted Otis's disease on social media and asked everyone to pray for him, would he still be alive? I've seen people do that. Does it really work? Is that what I did wrong?

The Silent Killer

Hemangiosarcoma is a cancer of the blood vessels, and because the symptoms are never obvious, it is also called "the silent killer." I call it the silent killer because it crept into my heart and stole the love of my life. The survival rate for hemangiosarcoma with surgery alone is 1-3 months. With chemotherapy it is 5-7 months. Only 10 percent of dogs will survive for one year. I wanted to try oral chemotherapy, but I had to wait three weeks for an appointment with an oncologist, and within that time frame of frantic internet searches, I got sucked into hemangiosarcoma support groups on Facebook. At the time, I felt blessed to find these groups, since veterinarians view hemangiosarcoma as a death sentence. I didn't have anyone supportive in my personal life to help me navigate.

I was soon brainwashed into believing that chemo doesn't work...but herbs and supplements and an immunotherapy vaccine might. When I hear my thoughts, it sounds like I am pushing blame, but I was so overwhelmed with vulnerability and desperation. I lost 20 lbs. within a few weeks, and my body would physically shake when sitting perfectly still. My mind was like a pendulum. I would go from staring at the computer searching for a cure for Otis's cancer to staring at Otis to make sure he was still breathing. Back and forth. I was obsessed. I was a zombie. I was unable to figure out anything on my own. All I wanted was for someone to say, "Kristin. Let me help you. Let's look at all of this medical information together, read everything we can and come up with a plan." And that's what a bunch of strangers on irresponsible Facebook

pages did. I listened to bad advice because nobody else was speaking.

Two weeks before Otis passed away, he had a clear ultrasound. No sign of cancer anywhere. The day before he passed away, an ultrasound showed that his liver was covered in tumors. He was bleeding to death internally. I tried so hard to save him. I was on the phone with the Facebook people who were telling me to try other remedies. It's asinine looking back. He couldn't breathe. He had no oxygen. I couldn't let him suffer like that. I begged my vet to come over in the middle of the night to help him pass. He died in my arms. I was not able to hold it together. He was so scared, and I couldn't be strong for him. Three months and one day after getting his spleen removed, Otis was gone. It was like we both died on October 15, 2020.

The Present

I am a shell of a person now. My soul has left with his. And yet, I am told to move on. I am told to move forward and to just get over it. I am trying and failing miserably. I cried for six months non-stop. I discovered that biting down on the insides of my cheeks until I tasted blood helped to hold back the tears when I was in public. I hit "pause" on certain friendships and relationships. I came to realize that the type of friends that I wanted and needed were those who knew how to "listen" rather than those who preferred to tell me what to do, tell me what to feel, flood my inbox with pictures of their living dogs, or tell me that they understood what I was going through. But how could they? What nobody seemed to understand was that I didn't have children. I didn't have a husband. All I had was Otis. When I say that he was my everything, I truly mean that. He was my everything. A lot of people talk about how their dog was their heart dog or soul mate, but it's not the same. It's not even close to what I had with Otis.

I tried coping creatively. I wrote a screenplay, I started a novel, I even created a meditation so that I could talk with Otis. And it did help, but my environment was tormenting me. I couldn't be in my house surrounded by Otis anymore when he wasn't there. Everything was a reminder. I couldn't live a few houses away from the dog that attacked Otis and see him happily walking past my window with his owner. It gave me PTSD.

I had to remove myself from what was once “ours.” In a matter of two weeks, I made a decision to leave. I moved across the country, I got a new job, I rented out my house, and I broke up with my boyfriend. I even got a puppy to see if what everyone said is true. “Just get another dog and that will ease the pain.” But, if anything, it made it worse because I am unable to love him the same.

Someone told me once that we have chapters in our life, to keep on moving through, and I’ll find love again. But I am trying and it’s not working. The only thing that will fix this hole is having Otis back. And with that, I wait. I wait to see those familiar eyes. If reincarnation is real, then I will see him again.

“Goodnight Oatsie. Mama loves you the most.” Is what I said to Otis every night before bed. I would press my forehead against his and say, “Sleep good. Have lots of dreams about squirrels and other fun things, OK? I’ll see you tomorrow. I love you.” I’d end our ritual

by giving him a bunch of kisses and then asking him for a kiss in return. I wrote that identical message on his urn. I still say the same thing to him every night before bed. Only now, I can’t feel his kisses.

I always thought the phrase “life is short” was odd. It’s not short. It’s long. And it’s excruciatingly long when you have to live it without your best friend.

4 Signs That Your Dog Is Your Soul Mate

BY CHERESE COBB, FREELANCER

Dogs are man’s best friends. But c’mon, let’s just admit it, they’re an extension of our hearts. If we’re down in the dumps, they lift our spirits by gazing into our eyes and cuddling with us on the couch. In other words, heart dogs just get us. Here are four signs your dog is your soul mate.

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You Fell in Love With Your Dog at First Sight

Did you have an instant connection with your pup? According to a March 2019 survey from Agria Pet Insurance, 76 percent of people say they fell in love with their dog at first sight, but only 49 percent could say the same about their significant other. "We live in a time where statistically our relationships with our dogs are likely to last longer than our marriages," writes Carolyn Menteith, behaviorist and trainer for Agria Pet Insurance. "So we should select our canine companions with as much care as we would a life partner to ensure it's a match made in heaven."

Your Dog Can Predict Your Behavior

Most dogs can sense what you're feeling by reading your facial expressions, body posture and hand gestures. A 2017 study in "Animal Cognition" also found that dogs can smell your emotions and adopt them as their own. According to British biologist Rupert Sheldrake, canine soul mates can make predictions based "on a telepathic influence from their owner." Case in point, they know when you're coming home even if you arrive at a random time on foot or in a different car.

Your Dog Loves You at Your Worst

If you aren't in the doghouse after taking your pooch to the "dog park" (ahem...the vet) or refusing to share your snacks, that's true friendship. If your dog howls along to your off-key rendition of "White Christmas" or doesn't give you the side-eye when you're chilling in your pizza-stained snuggie, you're soul mates.

Your Dog is Your Family

According to a 2020 survey by the American Veterinary Medical Association, 80 percent of people view their pets as family members. Half share their beds with their canine companions, and 56 percent of owners want emails, photos and texts about their dogs when they're away from home. If the first question you always ask is "Are dogs allowed here?" or you feel completely lost without your own welcome home committee, your pup is probably your other half.



Dooney, My Heart

(Anonymous)

For months I scrolled through different rescue websites looking for another dog to join our family when I came across the picture of Dooney. Dooney was listed as a St. Bernard, Shepherd, Lab Mix, and I just instantly fell in love with her! I remember applying to the rescue and praying that it would be approved. There was just something about her; her picture, her eyes, I don't know, but I knew she was meant to be my dog.

She joined our family about 6 months before we had to say our final goodbye to our older Lab. He was with us for 12 years through countless moves, devastating losses and many happy moments. While I loved him dearly and still miss him, the bond I have with my Dooney is different. She seems to be in tune or in sync with me. I don't know how to explain it. It wasn't until a little over a year ago that I heard the term "Heart Dog" and learned what it meant. Then it all made sense; I finally understood the connection I have with Dooney.

Dooney watched over me while I was recovering from a concussion a little over a year ago and hardly left my side. At times I feel like our roles are reversed and she is the caregiver. She has helped me in so many ways and seems to know what I need, usually before I even do. Whether it's her cheering me up or calming me with her presence, she makes me feel complete in a way that no one, human or dog, ever has before.

Perhaps it's my circumstances that make me feel that way. It is a unique bond that unless you have opened your heart and experienced, would be difficult to understand.

I've had many dogs prior to Dooney, and I hope there will be many more to come in the future. While every dog is different and special, there is definitely something unique about my Dooney and the relationship we have.

CELEBRATING YOUR PET'S LIFE

THE FINAL FAREWELL:

11

Beautiful Ways to Honor Your Deceased Pet



BY CHERESE COBB, FREELANCER

Whether your companion animal suddenly passes away or you've had time to brace yourself, nothing can truly prepare you to lose the pet that you love. Every animal's life is important, and each family chooses to celebrate it differently. Some pet owners throw euthanasia or celebration of life parties. Others put their pet's photos in a scrapbook or light a memorial candle. Still, some turn their pet's ashes into a vinyl record or diamond. From the commonplace to the unusual, here are 11 beautiful ways to honor your deceased pet.

Editor's Note: Worthy Reads

- The Loss of a Pet: A Guide to Coping with the Grieving Process When a Pet Dies by Wallace Sife, PhD
- Surviving the Heartbreak of Choosing Death for Your Pet by Linda M. Peterson

1. Plan Your Pet's Last Moments

Euthanasia can be painful and difficult for you, your family and your pet. But turning it into a spiritual send-off can make it easier. "I've had families that hosted euthanasia parties, complete with family and friends dressed formally, drinking cocktails and eating gourmet food. I've done euthanasias outside on a beautiful day, under the pet's favorite tree, or on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan," says Elisa Horsch, D.M.V., founder of Ozaukee Home Vet LLC. "I've had families that have sobbed uncontrollably the entire time, and I've had families that shared funny stories and laughed joyfully through their tears. I've read Bible passages and poems, played all sorts of music, lit candles, and sang songs with owners as we prepared for euthanasia."

2. Take Last Day Photos

Hire a professional photographer to take photos of your pet at the end of their life. "Cats mostly want to be snuggled or loved. If they still have an appetite, giving them their favorite food is a nice thing to do. If dogs are still mobile, take them on their favorite walk, then spoil them with their favorite human food. A lot of pet owners go through the McDonald's drive-through and get cheeseburgers and ice cream cones. Others make a full steak dinner," Horsch says. "If they're not mobile or don't have an appetite, have their favorite people gather around and share favorite memories. Dogs are extremely intuitive and will understand the beautiful feelings that accompany recognition of a life well-lived." Photos of your last happy moments together can be used to create a memorial video, scrapbook or quilt.

3. Start New Traditions

On your pet's adoption anniversary, bake birthday cake treats and take them to a local animal shelter. On their death anniversary, light a memorial candle, or write a personalized message on a balloon or paper lantern. During the holiday season, write a pet-related memory on each ring of a paper garland. Then read one each day as you countdown to Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa.

4. Have An Item of Jewelry Made

Several companies can turn your pet's ashes into a lab-created diamond by extracting carbon and heating it to 2,500°F. In most cases, you can choose the cut, color and size. The memorial diamond can be incorporated into rings, necklaces or earrings. Likewise, Precious Metal Prints will let you take an impression of your pet's nose and will turn it into a handcrafted necklace.

5. Create a Memorial Garden

Planting flowers or trees with special meanings in your garden to signify your pet's life is a heart-warming daily reminder of the happy times you shared. Whether your pet lounged in a sunny spot in the yard or cooled off under a particular bush, choose a significant spot to plant something new. Instead of a traditional headstone, you can also use an animal-shaped statue, garden marker or birdbath.

6. Rescue Another Animal

When it comes to adopting another pet, there's no right or wrong answer. "I know people who've gotten a pet the next day or committed to adopting another pet. Still, others have decided that they were going to move out of their house because they couldn't be there anymore," says Mental Health Therapist Amanda Fellerer, M.S., LPC-IT. The new pet isn't a replacement. Every companion animal is different, so you're not disrespecting the honor of your deceased pet by getting another one. "Grief is love with no place to go, so you're just refocusing your love. In my own personal experience, the new pet has often brought up stories of the one that we lost, and sometimes, that's a very helpful part of the grieving process."

7. Donate Your Time to an Animal Shelter

Volunteering at a local animal shelter and giving your love to homeless dogs and cats is a healthy way to mourn the loss of your deceased pet. If you volunteer at an animal rescue organization, you may be able to help with administrative or creative tasks like photography, web design, accounting or writing. You can also help with cleaning, socializing or walking the animals. Other options include donating pet supplies, giving an honorary gift, sponsoring an animal or starting a memorial fundraiser.

8. Get a Pet Memorial Tattoo

Tattoo artists can create memorial tattoos by mixing less than a tablespoon of your pet's ashes into the ink. Whether you choose to get a life-size paw print or a symbol that represents what your pet meant to you, it's a lovely way to keep their legacy alive.

9. Have Your Pet's Ashes Pressed Into a Record

And Vinyly is a U.K.-based company that will press one tablespoon of your pet's ashes into a 7- or 12-inch vinyl record. It can also paint the sleeve with your four-legged friend's cremated remains. Side A and Side B hold

18-22 minutes of audio, so you can recite the personalized poem that you wrote for your pet or record your Spotify pet playlist.

10. Turn Your Pet's Hair Into a Keepsake Clothing Item

Crafters can knit your companion animal's hair into keepsake sweaters, gloves, and purses. If your dog or cat has a short, coarse coat or if you haven't been able to collect several ounces of fur during grooming, they can blend it with alpaca or wool. Already know how to knit? Etsy sellers (like SimplyHandspunYarn and PetHair2KnitWear) will process your pet's fur into yarn for you, so you make your own snuggly momentos.

11. Turn Your Pet's Ashes Into Fireworks

Some companies, like Angels Flight, will turn your pet's ashes into fireworks. Every memorial fireworks display is designed to your specific requirements whether you want to personalize each firework with a brief farewell message or choreograph it to your favorite songs. If you choose self-fire fireworks and apply for a fireworks permit, you can also have your own memorial fireworks display at home or your pet's favorite location.

How to Handle Your Pet's Remains

Deciding how to handle your pet's remains is a difficult decision. It depends on your financial situation, your religious beliefs and how you want your beloved animal to be remembered. Here are some of your options:

Cremation

There are three types of cremation: individual, semi-private and group. In an individual cremation, your pet is placed in the oven alone. It makes sure the ashes you get back aren't mixed with the remains of other pets. During a semi-private cremation, your pet is placed into its own cremation tray and incinerated with 4-6 other animals at the same time. Because there's a shared space above the animals, the ashes of other pets might be mingled with yours. In group cremation, pets from different families are cremated together and then scattered on private cemetery grounds or taken to the local landfill.

Aquamation

Aquamation (sometimes referred to as water cremation) is a gentle and eco-friendly way to handle your pet's remains. It uses 90 percent less energy than cre-

mation and has 1/10th of the carbon footprint. With aquamation, your pet's body is respectfully placed in a biodegradable bag and then lowered in a stainless steel cradle. Sodium, potassium hydroxide and 202°F water are used to speed up the natural way your pet's body breaks down. It results in powdery, white-to-tan ash that contains 20 percent more remains than cremation.

Home Burial

With a backyard pet burial, you avoid the cost of having a service provider make arrangements, and you're near your beloved pet so that you can visit and take care of the grave. If you decide an at-home burial is right for your family, wrap your pet in a pillowcase, t-shirt or small blanket. Avoid plastic containers because they slow down the natural decaying process. Dig a hole that's at least 3 feet deep in an area that doesn't flood or get soggy. Also, keep the gravesite far away from underground utility lines and natural water sources like ponds and streams. Pet burial isn't allowed in some Wisconsin counties, so it's best to check with local authorities and your homeowner's association before laying your pet to rest.

Cemetery Burial

Pet cemeteries let you honor your pets without worrying about what will happen to their graves if you have to move or pass away. They can help transport your pet's body from a veterinarian's office or your home to their facilities. Full-service pet cemeteries allow you to choose a plot, casket, vault and grave marker. They also offer memorials, visitations and graveside burials for an additional fee. Unlike human cemeteries, most pet cemeteries aren't deeded in perpetuity. That means your pet's gravesite can be closed or sold and used for other purposes.

Body Donation

It's possible to donate your pet's body to an Educational Memorial Program. Modeled after human cadaver donation programs, it accepts pets that have died from natural causes or were euthanized for medical reasons. They're used to study anatomy and in place of live animals during non-recovery surgeries. In non-recovery surgeries, animals are euthanized before recovering from anesthesia. Currently, four veterinary schools have Educational Memorial Programs: Oregon State University, Tufts University, Western University and the University of Pennsylvania.



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*Continued from page 19*

5 Ways To Heal After the Loss of a Pet

"People treat their pets differently, and that needs to be respected," Fellerer says. "They're so ingrained in our everyday routines that their loss can make a much bigger impact than anyone realizes." How do you cope with the loss of a pet? These five expert tips will help you work through your grief.

1. Take Time to Grieve

When we lose our pets, grief can strike us all at once. Or it may surface weeks, months or even years after our pets' deaths. Fellerer shared an analogy that explains how grief unfolds over time and why we still experience aftershocks when we hit milestones. Think of your life as a box. Your grief is a ball inside of it. At the bottom of the box, there's a pain button. In the beginning, the grief ball slams into the pain button every time you move the box. Over time, it shrinks and slams into the pain button less often, giving you more time to heal between hits. For most people, the grief ball never disappears. Every now and then, it pounds the pain button, and the loss can be as overwhelming as it was in the beginning.

2. Express Your Emotions

Shock, anger, guilt, bargaining, denial and depression are like bubbles in a glass of champagne or soda. If you let them float to the surface, they'll eventually pop and evaporate into thin air. If you bottle up your grief, you'll explode if you're shaken, and that, in turn, will impact you physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. But you'll also flatten more positive emotions like love, joy and peace.

3. Accept Feelings of Guilt

It's normal to feel guilty about your pet's death, but it's also important to keep in mind that death is a natural part of life. "Our pets can communicate with us in a sense, but we can never really know exactly how they're feeling," Fellerer says. You may ask yourself: "Did I euthanize my pet too late or too soon?" If you're having nagging thoughts like these, Horsch suggests telling yourself, "I loved my pet, and I did the best I could for him. His life was meaningful, and he'll be remembered."

4. Realize You Did the Best for Your Pet

"Euthanasia means 'good death'." Pets that are allowed to pass at home do so in their most comfortable environments surrounded by their family," Horsch says. "It's also easier on pet owners to be at home for euthanasia—it's private and quiet. Because pets are intuitive, if the people are more comfortable, so are the animals." Regardless of whether your pet is put to sleep or naturally dies at home, remind yourself that you did the best that you could for your four-legged friend with the information you had at the time.

5. Get the Right Kind of Support

There's no shame in pet grief. "In my experience, people want to talk about their pets. They want to remember the good times and need you to listen and truly care. They want to be reminded that they gave their pet a beautiful life," Horsch says. Need someone to lean on? Consider free pet loss support groups in the area and national pet loss hotlines like Cornell University's Pet Loss Support Hotline (607-253-3932) or Tufts University's Pet Loss Support Hotline (508-839-7966).

All Matters of the Heart

across

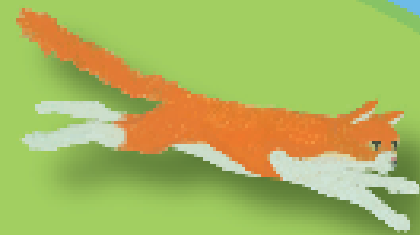
1. Dogs and their owners can _____ their heart rhythms.
10. Your dog might like a bear _____.
12. Average cousin.
13. Just the _____ of us.
14. Storybook villain.
15. Dogs in love will maintain _____ contact with you.
16. Connecting.
18. Almost; near.
19. Common link between modern and depart.
20. Your dog may seek _____ attention.
24. Shoo, cat!
27. Des Moines state (abbr).
28. Eve's partner.
30. A dog's heart beats 70-120 times per _____.
31. Your dog may lean against you to feel safe and _____.
36. Concerns for college kids (abbr).
38. Bit of wisdom.
39. What label and venue have in common.
40. Symbol for action.
42. Football pos.
43. You can't teach an _____ dog new tricks.
44. Utterances of hesitation.
46. Closure caption, shortened.
47. Dogs have the largest heart-to-_____ ratio.
48. Flintstone's pet.
49. _____ just so adorable!
51. Ruddy, rhym.
52. Your dog shows love by lying near your _____ socks and shoes.
56. Short for education.
58. _____ of the Wild.
60. Equal opportunity, shortened.
61. Utilize.
62. Renouncing.
63. Auctioneered, for short.
64. Breed size (abbr).
66. Uriers.
67. Your dog will show undying _____.

down

1. _____ in your bedroom shows they love you.
2. Goody, yipeel.
3. SSW opposite.
4. Symbol for corn.
5. Certain payment plan, for short.
6. Possess.
7. Silent yes.
8. Areas.
9. Particular whites.
10. because not _____ I am.
11. Your dog is so happy when you _____ from work.
17. Dog tags, for ex.
21. Ha! I'm _____!
22. Quaint novel.
23. Vein alternative.
25. Certain card on a pool stick.
26. Genuine, as in your dog's love.
29. Angry symbol.
30. _____'s best friend.
31. exists.
32. Skyward.
33. Empty the bowl.
34. They'll give you a big, wet, _____ kiss.
35. Nuzzles and _____.
37. Walk back and forth.
41. They'll bring their favorite _____ to you.
44. Opposite pre fix.
45. Dogs do _____ when dealing with loss.
46. You know it's love when your dog _____ on you often.
50. Dogs love it when you act _____.
53. Follows check or room.
54. Take charge.
55. Unconditional, for instance.
57. Where you might find a sun.
59. Proceeds Vegas.
61. PT craft.
65. Wanna _____ for a walk?

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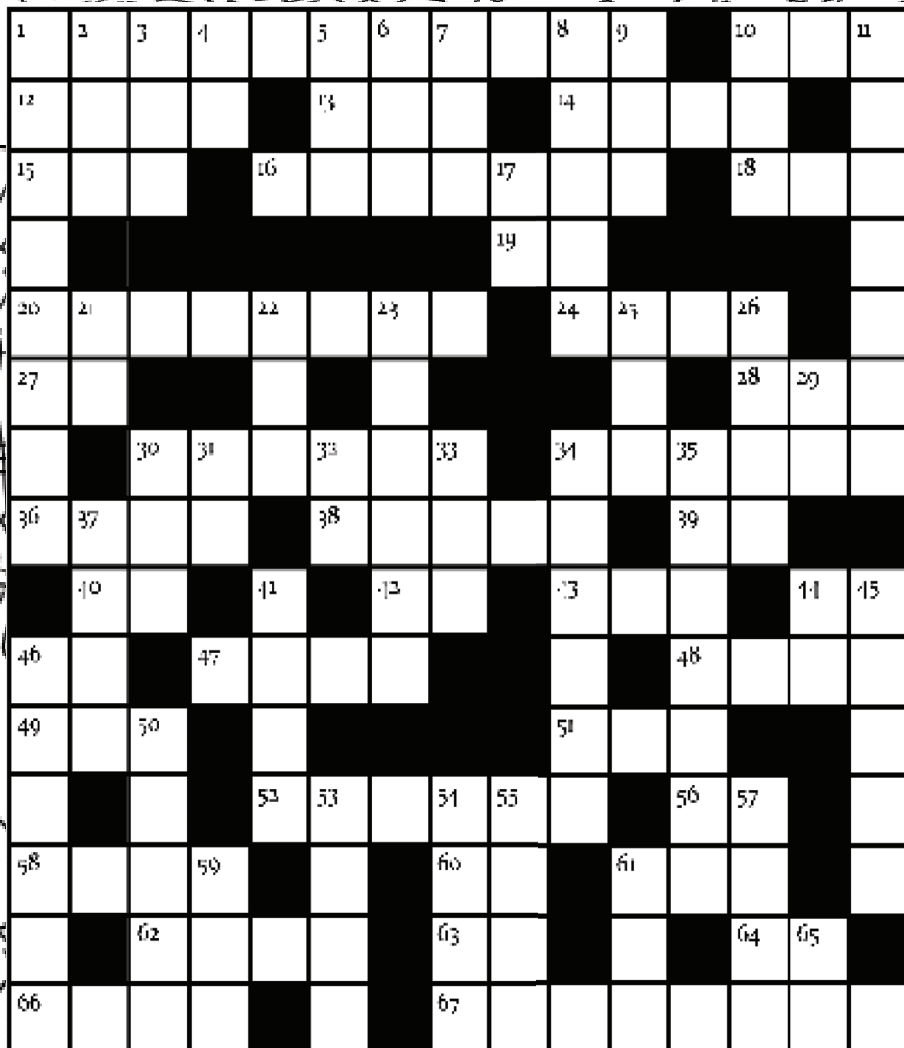


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HEALTH & HOUNDS

The **Heart** of the Matter



BY MICHELLE PELLETIER, FREELANCER

I think we can all agree that a dog's heart is the most forgiving. With unlimited and unconditional love, dogs embrace who we are no matter what.

That means we as pet parents have a great responsibility to keep the heart in the best possible shape. After all, they only get one.

There are all kinds of things to know about the heart as an organ and as a muscle. It's the hardest working part of the body, mechanically. It's the engine, and like all engines, they need to be tuned up, maintained and treated with care.

When was the last time you thought about what it takes to keep a heart really healthy? Yeah, me either. While there are volumes to be written on doggo heart health, how about we talk about the easiest things you can do from the comfort of your kitchen. First, let's look at the unlikely early symptom that may point to the need for that tune up.

As the engine, the heart has to function well so that all the other parts can play well together. How do we know if there is some underlying heart issue without running a battery of expensive tests? We read our dogs. Skin is the largest organ of the body and is very sensitive to changes in all other functions of the body. It's the first thing to show signs of distress. You get excessive shedding, lots of scratching, hot spots, yeasty folds, toe licking, ear infections and thick scaly dandruff. When this happens to our dogs the first thing we think to do is give them a bath. That may be a short-term solution, a patch, but it's your dog's version of a check engine light.

The heart is a muscle. Muscle is made up of proteins, and proteins are made up of amino acids. Those amino acids are the Legos that build all of the muscles in the entire body. Where do we find the most amino acids? Meat. We're back to our ongoing theme that even the smallest dog is still a tiny wolf.

If you've been with me before, you won't be surprised to hear me say we need to look at what your dog is eating and how we can tweak it in a very simple way to reduce the risk of all heart diseases.

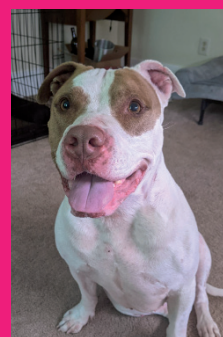
The number one contributing factor to canine heart disease is food. The number one killer of food is heat. With ALL kibble being extremely damaged in the extruding process, think Instant Pot meets Play-Doh fun factory. Between the heat and the friction, dog food can be cooked at up to 800 degrees. imagine what that would do to your TV dinner. The end result is food that is severely lacking usable amino

acids. This means your dog has to eat more to get what he needs. Even then, he still struggles to get the nutrients he needs. Enter your kitchen!

The latest study out of the University of Helsinki shows that if you removed just 20 percent of your dog's regular food, and replaced it with ANYTHING not cooked you can see a dramatic improvement in skin and coat, poop, energy level and mood in as little as two weeks. Often sooner! You don't even have to do it every day. A study out of Purdue University showed that adding ¼ cup of leafy greens to your dog's food three times a week could reduce the risk of cancer by 70 percent. I think that's amazing.

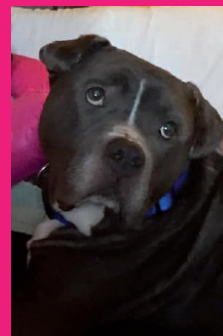
I hear you; you're saying your dog hates vegetables. I completely understand. And there are many work arounds.

If you picked up FETCH, you probably picked it up from a neighborhood pet supply business. These are the folks that have done all of the hard work for you. You can buy an entire array of fresh foods for your dog, and he'll never know it's good for him. Want the amazing antioxidants from leafy greens? Pick up a bottle of Primal Goat Milk with kale and quinoa. Want to truly protect your pet's heart? Grab a freeze-dried duck heart, beef heart or chicken heart and get right to the source. We have a saying that helps us remember what snacks to pick up when trying to support specific health concerns. "Like fixes like." Having joint problems? Feed them a knuckle. Having liver issues? Feed them liver. Worried about heart health? Pick up some freeze-dried hearts and a bottle of liquid greens. Shop your neighborhood pet stores freezers. You'd be surprised what you can find in there to build your dog a better bowl of heart health.



Our gal Opal, is older in age but not in spirit. She is very social and would do well with a calmer dog sibling. Though Opal may be past her days of long runs, she is looking to live her golden years in a quiet home where she can give and receive lots of snuggles. This affectionate little lady is 10 years old and 60 lbs.

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THE SCRATCHING POST

The 9 Lives Myth:

The Origins of the Cat's Immortality

BY CHERESE COBB, FREELANCER

Cats don't have nine lives, but they have a knack for dodging death by a whisker. With lightning-fast reflexes and liquid-like flexibility, they're more tenacious than most animals which might explain where the saying "cats have nine lives" comes from. But why is it the number nine? FETCH unravels the myth behind feline immortality, exploring its roots in Egypt, China and England.

Ancient Egypt

Cats were associated with the Egyptian sun god Atum-Ra, and this might be where their nine lives began. The falcon-headed deity created Shu the god of air and Tefnut the goddess of moisture by sneezing them out of his nose. Then they produced the sky goddess Nut and the earth god Geb. In turn, they had four children: Osiris, Isis, Nephtys, and Set. These gods were called "the Nine" or the Ennead. Atum-Ra, who turned into a cat when he visited the underworld called Duat, represented nine lives in one creator.

While cats weren't worshipped as gods in ancient Egypt, they were believed to be the descendants of Bastet, the daughter of Atum-Ra and Isis. Bastet first appeared in Egyptian hieroglyphs as a lion-headed goddess but later transformed into a cat-headed woman. She also had the power to shapeshift into a domestic cat. Bastet was the patron goddess of firefighters because ancient Egyptians believed cats could draw fire behind them out of burning buildings. They also placed statues of cats in front of their homes to protect them from thieves, disease and evil spirits.

Bastet was also a war goddess known for her wrathful vengeance. Among the many ways ancient Egyptians could offend the feline deity was to harm one of her cats. Cats were so revered in ancient Egypt that royalty dressed them in gold jewelry and let them eat from their plates. Anyone who harmed a cat, even accidentally, was stoned to death. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the deceased cat's owners would shave off their eyebrows as a sign of deep mourning.

Ancient China

The nine lives theory may have also originated in ancient China. In Chinese mythology, the goddess Nu Kua, who's half-woman, half-dragon, created cats. Chinese dragons were a combination of nine different creatures. Its wingless body has a camel head, stag horns, bull ears, serpent neck, rabbit eyes, carp scales, clam belly, tiger paws and eagle claws. Nu Kua granted a cat named Li Shou the power

of speech and gave her the power to rule the world. But she was more interested in napping under cherry blossom trees and battling falling flowers with her paws. Li Shou nominated humans to be in charge of everything. Then the mother goddess Nu Kua took away the cat's ability to speak but gave her the ability to tell time. In mainland China, people still believe you can tell the time of day by looking into a cat's eyes.

The cat goddess Li Shou was also worshipped by ancient Chinese farmers. They made sacrifices to her in exchange for her pest control, favorable rainfall and successful crops. They also thought cats could detect ghosts and evil spirits. If they had black markings on their back, they were called "kimono cats" and were believed to be the reincarnation of their owner's ancestors.

Medieval England

In Medieval England, cats were associated with witches. In early 1553, English satirist William Baldwin wrote "witches are allowed to possess the body of their cat nine times." In 1546, author John Heywood published a book of proverbs, claiming that "the woman, like the cat, has nine lives".

Between 1591 and 1596, William Shakespeare wrote the tragic play Romeo and Juliet. In Act 3, Scene 1: Mercutio says to Tybalt, "Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives." An old proverb explains further: "A cat has nine lives. For three he plays, for three he strays, and for the last three he stays."

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MADDIE'S TIPS

HOW TO Help Kids Cope With the Death of a Pet



BY MANETTE KOHLER, DVM, FREELANCER

I'm Maddie's mom and stepping in to discuss a sensitive topic but one that is very important. This article is for parents and will offer resources and tips on how to help kids cope with the loss of a pet. 1 in 5 kids will experience the death of someone close to them by age 18 and, for many children, their first real experience with this kind of loss occurs when a pet dies.

Children view pets as valued and treasured members of the family and as confidantes and best friends resulting in very real pain when the pet dies. As parents, it is natural to want to protect our kids from grief, but coping with the painful reality of death is a very important life lesson. Learning how to navigate the grieving process will help kids cope with other important losses throughout their life.

How and When to Tell Kids the Pet has Died

- **Be Truthful:** According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, it is best to be honest when telling the child that a pet has died. Trying to protect children with vague or inaccurate explanations can create anxiety, confusion and mistrust. www.aacap.org

- **Be Age-Appropriate:** Gauge how much information to share based on the child's age and maturity level, and be careful not to tell your child more than they want to know. They will have questions, so these can guide the discussion. Answer simply but honestly using words and concepts they'll understand. Explanations based on the family's personal belief system or religion may be very helpful. According to the AACAP, children ages 3-5 see death as temporary or potentially reversible. They may need to be reminded that the pet will not wake up, and it might take them some time to truly accept that their pet is not coming back. Between 6 and 8, they begin to develop a more realistic understanding of the nature and consequences of death. Generally, by age 9, children can understand that death is final and permanent.

- Share the information with them privately in a comfortable, familiar place, and offer comfort with a soothing voice or holding their hand or putting an arm around them.

- If the pet has a long-term illness or is very old, consider talking to your child before the death of the pet to help them prepare mentally and emotionally. When the pet is sick or dying, talk to kids about their feelings and, if possible, let them say goodbye.

- What about euthanasia? This can be a sensitive subject, and how much information you share will depend on the child's age and maturity level. Experts agree that words like "put to sleep" should be avoided as this can be misleading, and the child may assume the pet will wake up again. It might be helpful to tell a young child that "Fido's body just won't work anymore because it is so old."

Dealing with Grief

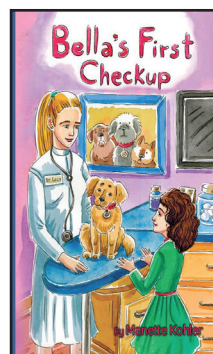
- Children need to know that grief is normal and that it is totally okay for them to feel very sad and to cry. Allow your child to see you grieve. Let them see that expressing your sadness and talking about it is a healthy thing to do. It is comforting to know that we're not alone in our grief.

- There are no right and wrong ways to deal with grief. Many emotions may be felt including anger, frustration, sadness, guilt and even regret. Different emotions may be felt on different days as we all navigate through grief, and it is important to teach our kids that it is okay to feel those feelings.

- Give kids time to not only remember their pet but to mourn in their own way. They may want to have a ceremony, draw a picture of their pet, write a poem or a story or pray.

- It may be helpful to tell the child that their pain will eventually go away but that they'll be able to cherish their memories forever. Putting together a scrapbook of happy memories can be a great family project. Kids might enjoy memorializing the pet by planting a tree in his/her memory.

- The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reminds us that short-term responses to grief are normal in children. They may have mood swings or temper tantrums or even act like the pet is their imaginary friend. Be on the look-out, however, for signs the child might need more support to navigate their grief. These signs may include withdrawing from friends or disinterest in school, loss of appetite or interest in daily activities, unexpected anger or crying weeks after the pet's death. If you see these signs or other concerning signs, please talk to a professional counselor



I am excited to announce the release of my children's book, "Bella's First checkup"!

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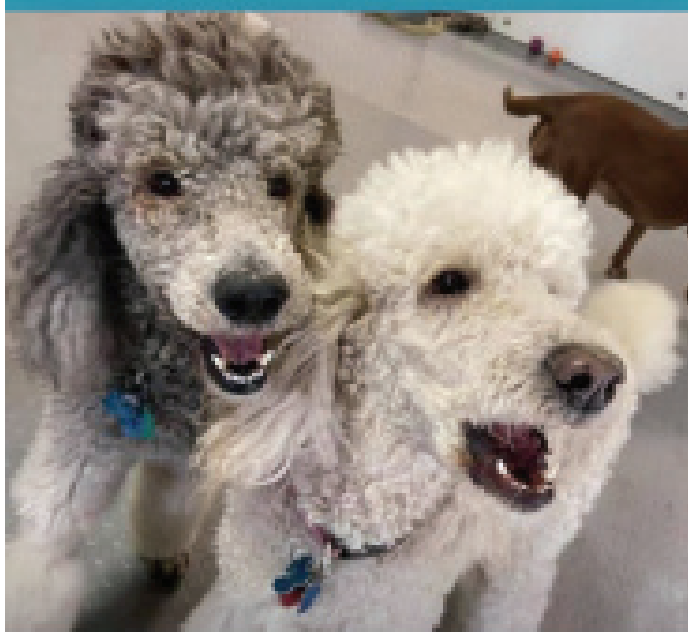
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Hank is a fun-loving, energetic, young guy who would really like to have a home to call his own – might this be yours or someone you know? Hank loves to spend time with his people (and meet new human friends)! He enjoys walks, would not mind a jogging partner, play time in the yard, toys, and treats. Hank's love of treats has been helping with basic training and he would love to continue this with his own person or family.



Jennifer Troppmann started out as an adopter roughly 6 years ago when Rescue Gang was just emerging. “It was a group of ‘kids’ with big ideas and dreams but little help,” says Troppmann. Today she is the Executive Director of Rescue Gang. Born and raised in West Allis, Wis., Troppmann went from adopter to a volunteer helping collect supplies and funds for medical treatments to ultimately running the entire operation.

“I learned all about rescue and the proper ways of doing all things rescue. I have made mistakes along the way, but I took them to heart and learned from them,” notes Troppmann. She networks with other local rescues and out-of-state rescues to establish a bridge of honest, hardworking, dedicated people who all just want to help save dogs.

“I quickly became the heart of Rescue Gang and strive to not only help dogs but to help others in rescue.”

When did Rescue Gang change Executive Directors?

In April 2020, Ryan Olson resigned as executive director of Rescue Gang. It wasn't a decision he came to lightly, but there was a constant struggle between his personal/private business and the rescue aspects. Ryan started a training business to help people with aggressive and reactive dogs. He was very public about his training, and it drew a lot of negative attention. It finally came to a point where Olson knew that his private training business was negatively effecting the reputation of the rescue, and it became obvious that lines had been drawn. To save the rescue from further damages caused by his personal training beliefs, he resigned.

Explain Rescue Gang when you took over?

I was left with a struggling/failing rescue, a ton of uncertainties and a lot of questions. I was never a very public person, so it was easy for me to be invisible while I struggled to figure things out. There were changes to be made, and I knew it was going to take time. Actions speak louder than words, so I knew that in order to shed the negative image I was left with, it was going to take hard work and time. I called a meeting with my most trusted volunteers, and we started making plans to reshape the rescue.

We were a team for the first time, and the first thing we decided: Rescue Gang was EVERYONE'S rescue. Rescue is about the DOGS so that was what we focused on. We started to help network with other rescues and transports to help move dogs in danger of euthanasia to safety. We helped raise funds and sent supplies to struggling rescues. We covered medical costs for dogs in need of treatment. We decided that Rescue Gang was much bigger than just “us” and “our dogs”, and the best way to make the biggest difference was to help wherever and whenever we could.

Where do the rescue dogs come from?

We work closely with a few small rescues in Texas. We don't discriminate against any dog breed, age, size or medical needs. If we can help them find a forever home, we will! Why Texas? We first went to Texas in 2017 right after hurricane Harvey. We rented a truck, loaded it with supplies and brought back as many shelter dogs as we could to open up kennels for the ones displaced during the hurricane. The shelters continued to ask for help, so we did what we could. But I couldn't figure out why they needed so much help. I started to read and research, and I learned that Texas has the highest euthanasia rates in the US with about 125,000 animals killed each year. Houston alone is estimated to have over a million stray animals. A MILLION! It became impossible for us to walk away from such a place of need. We know that we are never going to save them all, but we make a difference for the ones we can!

What do you need from the public?

We are always looking for more help, so if you are sitting there thinking “what can I do?” I beg you to consider fostering. As a foster you become the bridge from “Once upon a time” to their “happily ever after”. You are honestly saving two lives when you foster: the dog you take in and the one who was able to move into the open kennel. If you can't **Foster**, **Volunteer**. There are so many things that we need help with. **Donate**. We do not receive any kind of funding, so we rely on donations to help keep things running! **Educate**. Share stories, encourage people to spay/neuter their pets. **Adopt**. Your best friend is waiting for you! rescuegang.org



Who ever said opening a business during a pandemic couldn't be fun? Well, that's exactly what owners Leah Neuroth and Jeffrey Wilgus did. On May 28, 2021, they opened The Hounds & Tap located in Menomonee Falls. "Jeffrey & I dreamed about starting a business truly focused on dogs. We wanted to have a place that offered it all...daycare, boarding, grooming AND a place where we could meet up with friends, enjoy a drink and let our dogs play off-leash in a safe, fun and positive environment," says Neuroth. "Our mission continues to be connecting hounds and humans to make everyday a play day."

Describe your experiences with dogs prior?

Leah: I grew up with dogs and always viewed them as members of the family. In my teenage years I trained and showed Pembroke Welsh Corgis. I spent my weekends traveling the Midwest, responsible for the care and well-being of my dogs. After graduating college, I adopted a rescue dog, Kenny, from the Wisconsin Humane Society. The love and gratitude Kenny showed after a difficult start in life solidified my belief that animals truly enrich our lives. I live with my 4 dogs: Henry, George, Albert & Edward, and my cat, Fergus.

Jeffrey: Growing up, I was always around pets either in my house or when visiting family and learned at a young age to respect all animals. After moving to Wisconsin and attending my first rescue volunteer event, I saw firsthand the neglect

and suffering some dogs go through. Since that first experience I have continued to work at volunteer events in the Milwaukee area. I have witnessed moments when caring people reach out with love to calm a frightened dog and the moment the dog realizes they are safe. It was during these volunteer events that two dogs adopted me: Wynonna, a Husky/Shepherd Mix, and Waylon, a Catahoula Terrier Mix. Now every day is full of fun and adventures. I can't imagine my life without them.

What makes your business unique?

We like to consider ourselves a fantasyland for dogs! We have it all...from daycare, vacation boarding options and spa services to hanging out with other hounds and humans in our dog park and tavern. We wanted a place that like-minded humans could come together and enjoy themselves with their pups. Our customers can be confident that all dogs are up-to-date on their vaccinations and are human and hound-friendly.

Explain your current struggles opening a business during a pandemic?

The uncontrollable variables that are happening around us are the biggest struggles. The pandemic has changed how people live, communicate and interact with each other every day. Not only has this affected humans, but it has affected dogs as well. As we learn to engage with each other in a safe way, many of the challenges are the same for dogs as they are for people. The pro is how much people have bonded with their animals over the past year. Humans consider their hounds a part of the family. As we continue to re-enter the world, people don't want to leave their dogs behind. We provide a safe, clean, fun atmosphere for you and your dog to meet friends, family and other like-minded dog-loving people.

Anything else you would like to share?

We are a force-free, positive reinforcement facility. We use lots of treats and praise to encourage behaviors. You won't find tools like squirt bottles, prong collars, choke collars or e-collars in our facility. We go at each dog's own pace so that they can build confidence, be comfortable and have fun!



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