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Paws up for Pets: Top dogs take a political spin for Share-A-Pet fundraiser

Posted by [Mary Kate Leming](#) on September 28, 2016 at 5:52pm

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Peaches, Claire and Bob Spielman's Yorkshire terrier, will be a star in the Paw-ittical Party on Nov. 5. Photo provided

By Arden Moore

Three days before Americans cast their votes and a new president is elected, the political process will be going to the dogs in Palm Beach — in a good way.

On Nov. 5, the America's Top Dog Model Paw-litical Party will take place at Via Amore, 256 Worth Ave., in Palm Beach. The event kicks off at 2 p.m. and will benefit Share-A-Pet of Fort Lauderdale, a national pet therapy organization that trains, certifies and insures pets to offer therapy in hospitals, nursing homes, children's centers and schools.

"Guests will enjoy a paw-litical themed event featuring America's Top Dog Model 2017 calendar launch, a people and pet fashion show, music, drawings and a doggy buffet," says Jo Jo Harder, creator of America's Top Dog Model and a Boca Raton resident.

Sounds like much more fun than attending a politician's pricey fundraising dinner, right?

The stars of this event are a pair of adorable dogs named Pearl and Peaches, who exemplify welcoming qualities to be admired by anyone from any political party. Pearl will be officially crowned America's Top Dog Model 2016 at this event, while Peaches will be honored as America's Top Dog Model 2017 calendar cover dog. The event will also honor 11 other finalists from all over the country.

Pearl is a puppy mill survivor who was rescued at age 6 and for the past two years has enjoyed being loved by her owner, Cheryl Bauer of Lantana. In true canine Cinderella fashion, this Pomeranian has blossomed.

"When I first saw Pearl, I was surprised at how beautiful her coat was," recalls Bauer. "After she had been rescued, her foster parent loved to brush her fur. Yes, she looked so beautiful, but emotionally she was so scarred and scared. She cowered when approached, ran away to her safe spot and trembled when I picked her up."

Bauer admits she was nervous that she didn't possess the skills needed to rehabilitate a puppy mill survivor, but with the help of professional dog trainers, she has been able to make Pearl feel not only safe but also confident.

"Every day, we work on her rehabilitation, training and socialization skills," she says. "Pearl's progress is phenomenal. It is our hope that Pearl's story will educate the public about puppy mills and educate local, state and federal lawmakers in order to change laws regarding puppy mills and commercial breeding facilities."

As for Peaches, she is a Yorkshire terrier gotten as a puppy by Claire and Bob Spielman of Lake Worth from a reputable breeder from Tampa. She employs her canine charm and savvy obedience talents as a therapy dog. She successfully completed the therapy training through Share-A-Pet and now regularly visits children at Palm Beach Children's Hospital at St. Mary's Medical Center as well as seniors at the NuVista facility.

"She has been called the smile maker because every time she walks into a patient's room, they can't help but smile," Claire Spielman says. "She loves children, and we felt her being a therapy dog was a good way to give back to the community in a positive way."

When I asked what qualities Peaches would like to see in our next president, Spielman replied, "The next president should have compassion and love for not only people and our country, but for all animals. Peaches would love to see all puppy mills abolished. She wants honesty in our elected offices. Dogs never lie!"

As for Pearl? Bauer said, "I wish our new president would demonstrate some of Pearl's kind, gentle spirit, have an open mind and help make our world a safer, kinder place."

When it comes to celebrating the power of pets, Pearl and Peaches definitely have my vote.

Event Details

To learn how you can support this event benefiting Share-A-Pet, visit www.americastopdogmodel.com or call 212-2441.

*Arden Moore, founder of www.FourLeggedLife.com, is an animal behavior consultant, editor, author, professional speaker and master certified pet first aid instructor. Each week, she hosts the popular *Oh Behave!* show on www.PetLifeRadio.com. Learn more by visiting www.fourleggedlife.com.*