

## Paws Up for Pets

# In honor of Valentine's Day, pet owners share loving thoughts

Got pet? Then for you, every day has the potential to feel like Valentine's Day. Your dog, cat or other pet doesn't need to demonstrate its love for you with a Hallmark card or box of candy. The love your pet gives you is priceless and pure.

Don't take my word for it. That's the unanimous sentiment expressed by key pet people in Palm Beach County. I reached out to them to answer two questions:

- What are you doing to show how much your pet means to you on this Valentine's Day?

- What life lesson has your pet taught you that makes you a better person?

Everyone I asked responded quickly. Maybe some of their answers will inspire you with ways to make every day feel like Valentine's Day for your pet. Read on:

Jo Jo Harder, a Boca Raton fashion designer and creator of America's Top Dog Model, happily shares her home with Romeo, a 10-year-old greyhound.

"The best thing that I can do with Romeo to show my love is to spend lots of time with him. On Valentine's Day, I plan for us to take a long, spirited walk together around our favorite, Mizner Park. Romeo has taught me to live in the moment. If it weren't for Romeo, I would not appreciate the opportunity to get outside and take in the sights, smells and feeling of nature."

Karen J. Roberts, noted children's author and president of The Little Blue Dog Inc., lives in Wellington with her pack of canine rescues Louie, Ainsley, Tucker, Roxie, Cinnabon, Bailey and Macy.

"I believe on Valentine's Day, and every other day of the year, the very best thing we can give to our pets is our time. What they want most is to be with us, no matter what we are doing. Our pets are a mirror to ourselves. When my dogs are happy, peaceful, healthy and gathered by my side, I know I'm doing something right."

Paul Bates, who oversees the trap-neuter-vaccinate-release community cat program at the Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League in West Palm Beach, includes his five social-minded pets on the guest list for his annual celebration.

"I always have an open house for my friends to stop in and enjoy drinks and sweets after their Valentine's Day evening



out. My three dogs and two cats stay loose to mingle with the guests. They love people, so why would I exclude them?"

Bob and Eileen Burnell are owners-operators of the Sit Means Sit dog training program and pet first aid/CPR instructors. Here is what this Boynton Beach couple has to say about Kody, their 11-year-old Belgian Malinois:

"Kody has taught us that anyone can learn anything with patience, consistency and persistence. He will be pampered with a spa day and a steak for dinner on Valentine's Day."

Suzi Goldsmith, co-founder and executive director of the Tri-County Animal Rescue in Boca Raton, shares her home and heart with a pair of canine rescues named Missy and Misty.

"My two pups are treated like queens 365 days a year. However, on Valentine's Day I treat them to a special cake and ice cream made specifically for dogs. It gives me great pleasure to watch them have this fun pup treat. The life lessons that my pets have taught me have made me the person I am today. Compassion, understanding, consideration, joy, happiness and even health have been bestowed upon me through my dogs. Not just the rescues that I have today, but for the last 50 years. My life would not be complete without them."

Peter and Jennifer Klein, of Gulf Stream, were featured in this column last year after they worked with town officials to rescue a tiny kitten trapped in construction debris. That kitten was named Chief in honor of Police Chief Edward Allen. Chief is now frisky and enjoying life. Jennifer Klein writes:

"Something put this cat in our lives and we are very fortunate for that. When we rescued him, he weighed only 0.9 pounds, but he had enough lung power to cry out to escape the construction rubble he was buried in. Fortunately, he has no memory of this. Every day is happiness for him — from chasing dried cranberries, stealing blueberries from Peter's breakfast cereal or even climbing on his shoulders while he is working on his computer. Chief is a real treasure to us."

Katrina Gentry has the creative title of chief experience officer at the Very Important Paws, a dog resort in West Palm Beach. She shares her home with a pit bull named Hayes and an American bulldog named Gator.

"On Valentine's Day, I will

### Celebrate V-Day at Paws in the Park

If you are looking for a place to celebrate this holiday with your canine chum, consider attending Paws in the Park at West Palm Beach's Centennial Square. The event, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 11, will include a costume contest, pet photo booth, doggie fun zone plus demonstrations in pet first aid and even readings by a pet psychic. For more information, visit [www.pawsintheparksouthflorida.com](http://www.pawsintheparksouthflorida.com).

show my love by starting their day off with fun in day care, playing in the pool and ending the day with a nice, warm lavender massaging bath, car cleaning and "pawicure." Hayes has taught me one of the most valuable lessons in life — how to be a friend. No matter what I'm going through, she is there with her wet nose to kiss me, her energy to chase me or tons of hugs. Gator has taught me what

it means to persevere in life. He was attacked at 4 months of age by an alligator. When I adopted him, he still had drains and sutures all over his back ... but he remains the most free-spirited, happy-go-lucky boy you could ever meet."

Valentine candy can go stale. Heart-shaped candy can crack a tooth. So let's embrace the four-legged Valentine gift that keeps on giving 24/7: our pets.

It's certainly true for me and my Furry Fab 5 of Beaujeu, Kona, Casey, Mikey and Cleo. How do you plan to share this Valentine's Day with your pet? Please share with our readers at [www.thecoastalstar.com](http://www.thecoastalstar.com).

Arden Moore, founder of [FourLeggedLife.com](http://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 PetLifeRadio.com. Learn more at [www.ardenmoore.com](http://www.ardenmoore.com).

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