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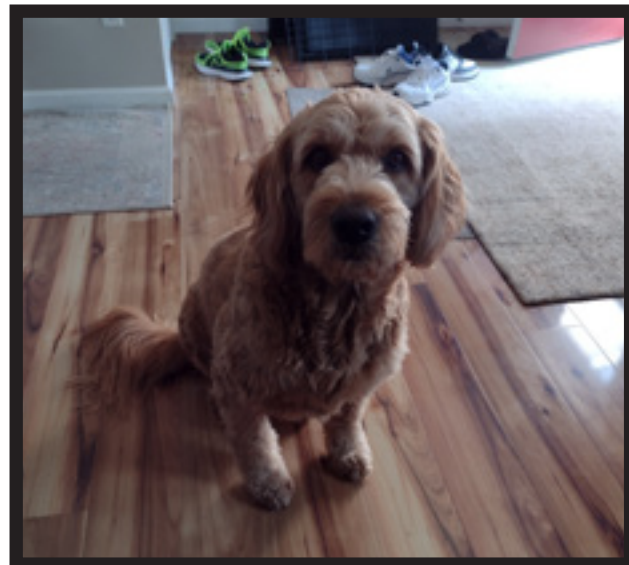
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PUBLISHER'S VIEW

Hello everyone. It is no secret that our dogs become part of the family. In many cases, one of our kids. This is so very true for our dog, Jackson.

Jackson is getting big. He just turned 5 this past April. He has brought us a lot of joy. We purchased him from Fetch Puppies in Dayton. He is a very cute playful dog, that has become a part of our family. He is a mini golden doodle, but a very big boy for his breed weighing in at a very healthy 70 pounds. His coat is soft, dander free, and a perfect addition to our family. He is loving, but he is shy.

His distinct barks, when he sees different things are awesome. He has a different bark for a lot of different animals or friends walking by. For instance, today he saw a deer down the road out the window, and he started barking, as to say. "look, down the road, there are deer", woof woof woof. Woof Woof. In a



higher, louder pitch, and more frequent barks, this wasn't just any animal; it was deer.

He has a very distinct bark when he sees his friend Barley walking by. It is a more playful excited chirp, with a lot of tail wags and eagerness to get out the door. Barley is a female terrier neighbor, and they have been friends for 5 years.

Jackson wants to eat all the time. He has a ferocious appetite, and we definitely spoil him, with small pieces of good steak, chicken, salmon, and squash. He eats a regular, two feedings a day, with chicken and carrots in his breakfast kibble as a supplement. His health is above average, but with the little legs for a big dog, he sometimes experiences joint pain. During these times he doesn't like to walk up and down the stairs or jump up with you to cuddle.

He is a momma's boy for sure. His life consists of following Shannon around everywhere she goes, all day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. I mean, for real, they are attached at the hip. He is most definitely her best buddy, and he has pledged his allegiance to protect her, until something scares him, like a blanket brushing against him when he walks by the couch, totally revealing his true colors, a big baby.

Above is a recent pic of Jackson, coming over laying down and just giving me a look. He is not the biggest fan of eye contact, but when he does look at you, he has a sweet glow in his eyes. You can just look at the pic and know he is a lover and not a fighter. That's my boy!!!!!!

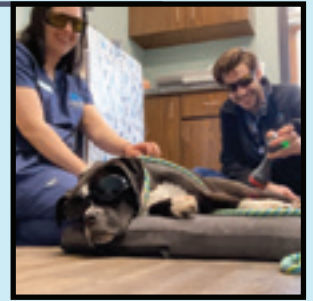
If you have a fur pal, and would like to share with me, and our readers, I would love to see your pics and hear your stories. Send them directly to me, title the subject line, "Friends of the Publisher", to: matt@natipets.com. Thank you, and until next time, enjoy the Spring weather, Publisher, Matt Tackett.

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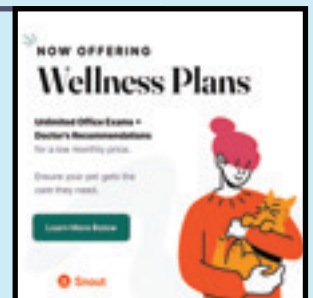
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ABOUT THE COVER

Great Danes are frequently one of the largest dogs you'll see about town. Along with the Irish Wolfhound, it's one of the largest breeds of dogs in the world, and they were originally bred in Germany to hunt wild boar. Although these dogs were specifically bred to have a mild temperament, they were often used to guard and protect families and estates. Their size alone can intimidate almost anyone, but there's no reason to be scared of these giant dogs. They really do live up to their nicknames of "gentle giant." They bond closely with their people and their calm, sweet nature provides joy and companionship. Obedience training and socialization are essential for this breed, as their large size will make them difficult to handle if they're not trained, and daily exercise is crucial to their well-being.



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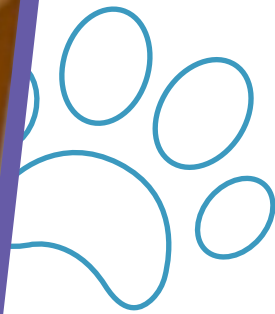
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LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

POOCH & PURR GROOMING STUDIO IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE TRIM AT A TIME

By Sharon Boyles

If you're looking for a small pet grooming studio with a big heart, you'll find it at the Pooch and Purr! Pooch and Purr is a full-service pet salon in downtown Cincinnati (with free parking nearby!), and they offer expert grooming and bathing for dogs and cats, as well as other related services, such as nail trims and ear plucking. But what really makes Pooch & Purr something special is owner Stephanie Wilson's dedicated and loving approach to her work and her clients.

An active member of the National Dog Groomers Association of America, the National Cat Grooming Institute of America, and a competition show groomer, Stephanie is a certified professional who discovered her love of grooming during college, while working at a small pet store that had a dog grooming service. "I started assisting with grooming there," Stephanie

says. "Later, I decided to attend Live Oaks and take an adult education class to refresh my skills. Continuing education is important to me." She's been grooming since 2016, and in June, 2024, she opened Pooch & Purr.

What sets Pooch & Purr apart? A gentle approach, personalized care, and attention to detail. Stephanie is passionate about her work. "I love making the connections," she shares. "I love helping animals who haven't had a great grooming experience and building a new bond with them." With loving care and attention, she has been able to successfully groom pets who once needed to be medicated in order to survive a trim. She points out that grooming is asking a lot of an animal companion. They're in a strange environment and their body is being manipulated in ways they're probably not used to. With this in

mind, Pooch and Purr goes to great lengths to ensure your pet's comfort and safety, with the focus on making every trim a fun and stress-free experience.

"We're not a loud, crazy place," Stephanie explains. "Our grooming is always done one on one, and I read body language, so I know when a pet is scared or in pain, and I can work to calm them down. It's really important to be respecting the communication an animal is trying to give you, instead of assuming they're being difficult on purpose. Knowing the why behind the what is important."

Stephanie adds that client communication is key to successful grooming. "There can be a divide between groomers and pet owners, because of communication breakdown issues. Ultimately, we always want to do what is best for your pet, so if you're not happy about a trim or are having issues, communicate that. Be really clear about what you mean when you ask for something, and it often helps to bring a picture with you."

Pet grooming is currently an unregulated business in Ohio, so in 2020, Stephanie co-founded the Ohio Professional Pet Groomers Association, a 501c(6) nonprofit business league for continuing education. OPPGA also keeps an eye on the status of grooming legislation and offers their services to legislators so they have access to verified resources for information and a professional entity supporting positive change.

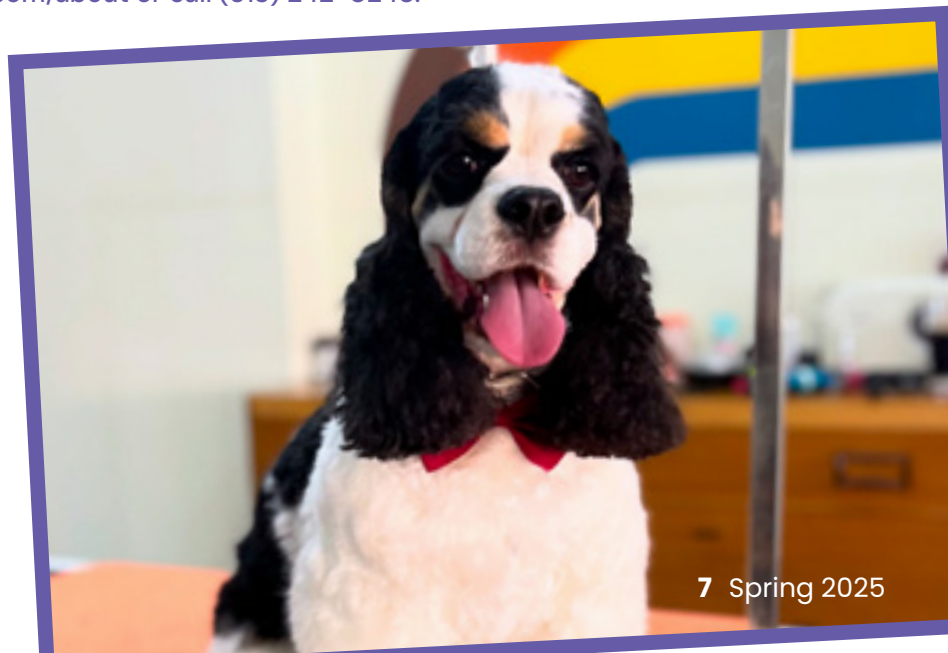
Stephanie's plans for Pooch and Purr's future include adding one or two staff members in the next year or so, and continuing to make a positive impact on their small part of Cincinnati. Beyond the studio, Stephanie enjoys hanging out with her five dogs: a rescue greyhound, an Italian greyhound, a Maltese, a wire fox, and a Kerry blue terrier. "Without grooming, I would not have met my circle of friends," she says. "It's been great to meet all of the people I've met. If it wasn't for dogs, I wouldn't have as much as I have right now."

Interested in booking a trim or requesting an online quote from Pooch & Purr? Visit <https://www.pooch-and-purr.com/about> or call (513) 242-0248.

If you'd like your business to be featured in our Local Spotlight, contact us at pets@natipets.com. We'd love to hear from you!



I love helping animals who haven't had a great grooming experience and building a new bond with them.



BETTER CARE FOR YOUR BETTA

By: Sonya Stone



Many people think that caring for a betta fish is simple. Drop him or her into a fishbowl, and you're pretty much done. But to ensure that your friend has a long and happy life, proper care needs to extend far beyond the fish bowl.

Betta fish, also known as Siamese fighting fish, are favorites among freshwater aquarists because of their beautiful colors, graceful movement, and strong personalities. Anyone who has ever had a betta knows that this is a small fish with a big attitude! Male bettas are very territorial, and for this reason it's important that they be housed either alone or with a female betta. If you plan on keeping a male and female betta together, do some research first. Female bettas can be housed together (this is called a sorority), and you'll need to have at least five fish, so they don't start harassing each other.

It's a common misconception that bettas are content in novelty tanks, nano tanks, or fishbowls. It might look cute and Zen to have a fish in a tiny bowl, but the cramped living space actually causes your fish a lot of stress. Bettas enjoy having territory to patrol and enough space to swim around and explore. Some bettas kept in a small habitat will become anxious or jump out of the bowl in an attempt to find more room. This doesn't end well for anyone, so please keep your

betta happy in a five- or ten-gallon tank. Bettas love greenery in their tank because it emulates their natural habitat and provides them with places to hide, nap, and hang out. You can aquascape your tank with either live aquatic plants or silk plants. Avoid anything with sharp edges, such as plastic plants or certain décor. Bettas have delicate fins, and it's easy for them to be torn. You can also put live plants, such as pothos, along the top of the tank and allow the roots to trail in the water to help oxygenate and filter the water. Try to keep the leaves out of the water and make sure the surface of the tank isn't completely covered with greenery, because bettas are labyrinth breathers and take oxygen directly from the air.

If it's too cold (or hot) for you, it's probably too cold or hot for your betta. Bettas prefer a stable temperature in the 78-degree range, so buy a good tank heater for winter, and if the summer heat is giving your betta the blues, float a small bag of ice at the top of the tank or place a small fan so it blows over the top of the water. Check the tank temperature frequently to make sure it's not dropping too rapidly.

Bettas are typically eager to eat, and it's fun to watch them snapping up their meals. Because they are carnivores, be sure to offer a quality, high-protein food, such as Fluval Bug Bites. Most pet store betta food is made from plants, which are difficult for a betta to digest. You can supplement their diet with freeze-dried or frozen bloodworms, frozen brine shrimp, mosquito larvae, or daphnia. Bettas are wired to keep eating as long as there's food around, so be sure to avoid the common mistake of overfeeding. Give your fish 2-3 pellets once or twice a day, and treats, such as bloodworms, once or twice a week.

Caring for a betta isn't hard, but it does require dedication and attention. With an understanding of proper care, you can ensure that your betta has a long and happy life.



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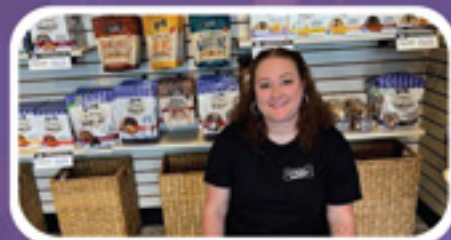
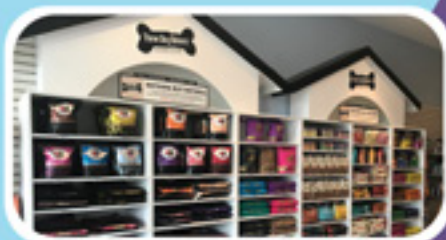
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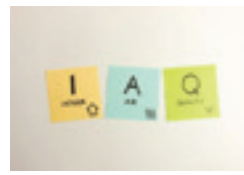
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LOST THE RACE...WON OUR HEARTS! GREYHOUND ADOPTION OF GREATER CINCINNATI

By Sharon Boyles

For 23 years, Greyhound Adoption of Greater Cincinnati (GAGC) has been finding greyt homes for retired racing greyhounds. Founded in 2002 by three families, President Brenda Pennix has adopted 11 greyhounds during that time, and currently has three greyhounds and a whippet. "When we started, if we placed one dog a month, we'd be happy," Brenda says "We find homes for about 100 retired racers a year now, and in one year 130 greyhounds found their forever homes."

GAGC's primary goal is to provide service and support to their present and future Cincinnati/Dayton area adopters. The organization cultivates a strong focus on being small and doing things right, and although they aren't able to offer homes to an unlimited number of greyhounds, the intention is to make a difference in the lives of the ones they place. Besides finding loving homes for retired racers, GAGC also works to educate the public about greyhounds and share the love through visits to local schools and nursing homes.

Why are greyhounds retired from racing? Just like racehorses, a greyhound's career has a lifespan, which is typically 2-5 years. The mandatory retirement age is five. Sometimes, if a young racer doesn't run fast enough or performs poorly in the maiden races, they aren't selected to race at the tracks, and they

become eligible for adoption.

When a dog retires, GAGC is notified and picks the dog up from the track. The trainers give GAGC the medical records and NGA certificates, along with a little bit of history about each dog. "I personally go to the track and enjoy seeing them race and seeing them in their kennel environment," Brenda says. "They are treated well and loved by their handlers. We then give them to our foster families who evaluate and learn their

personalities. When someone submits an application, we do several interviews to help determine which one of our dogs would fit best with that family."

GAGC has a strict adoption policy and will only adopt out to families who live in a house and those households with children over age 10. Potential adopters must fill out an application, after which there is a phone interview. Brenda suggests that anyone interested in adopting a greyhound should first do their research, because she has a lot of questions for

anyone wishing to adopt! The potential family will then do a meet and greet to see if there is a match. If there is, then a home meet and greet with the dog is scheduled so Brenda and Kathy can evaluate the house and yard and talk some more about what it's like to have a greyhound in the family. If everything works out, the adoption is done on the spot. The adoption process can take 2-3 weeks. There's a lot that goes into finding the right fit!



"We're a nonprofit organization, and no one is paid," Brenda says. "But my payday is when I find a good home for a dog."

Greyhounds take retirement very seriously "They're 45 mile-an-hour couch potatoes," Brenda laughs. "They can beat a horse off the line because they are sprinters, but they choose not to." She points out that the dogs are treated very well at the track. There are only two remaining dog tracks in the USA. "Our organization would be very sad if all tracks closed and there would no longer be racers available who make GREYT pets," Brenda says.



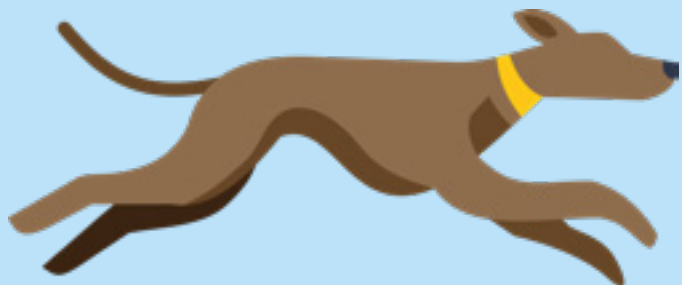
there is no doggy odor, but it's also important to keep them warm in the winter, and coats are necessary for long walks. Brenda jokes that having one greyhound in the family might just lead to another. "Greyhounds are like potato chips," she says "You can't have just one!"

All GAGC dogs are tested to make sure they are truly cat safe and won't chase Fluffy, and they are also checked by a vet for heartworm or other issues. All dogs are also spayed/neutered, vaccinated, wormed, and groomed, and each dog receives a dental exam and cleaning.

"Finding homes for these greyt dogs takes a TEAM effort," Brenda says. "And all of our members support our mission to find the best home possible for every retired racer we get!"

Anyone considering adopting a greyhound should know that they are special-needs dogs, but they also have a lot of interesting qualities. "They are unique and different from any other breed," Brenda explains "Everything about a greyhound is different, their bodies are built for speed, they tend to have enlarged hearts because they are athletes, they have only one layer of hair, and their backbone is similar to a cat's, giving them a flexible spine for speed." Even though they all have different personalities, they all need routine and stability. As a pet, greyhounds are laid back, clean and relatively easy to care for. They have only one layer of hair, which is a plus because

GAGC is planning two Meet and Greet Picnics this year, and everyone is welcome! Both are at Keehner Park in West Chester, and the dates are May 17 and September 27. For more information about these events or about GAGC, visit <https://www.cincigreyhounds.org/>



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Local Vet Answered his Calling - Animal Care

Dr. Shawn Wharrey was born and raised just north of Pittsburgh, PA. He attended Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, PA where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology. He then moved to Columbus, OH where he earned his DVM from The Ohio State University in 2017. After spending a year in general practice, Dr. Wharrey decided to dedicate his career to emergency medicine and critical care, where he has worked in a 24hr facility ever since. Dr. Wharrey has a special interest in canine and feline internal medicine, companion exotic animals and surgery. One of his favorite parts of emergency medicine is being able to care for pets when they need it most. Since starting at VEG in 2022, Dr. Wharrey has loved being able to keep people and their pets together no matter what the situation. When away from the hospital, Dr. Wharrey prioritizes time with his family in which he is a father of 2 children. His family has many pets including 2 dogs, 4 cats, 2 horses and a pony.



After spending the afternoon with Dr. Warrey, it was apparent that he not only loves animals, but loves life, and the people he is surrounded by everyday at work. His passion shines through, and truly makes him very special. Thank you Dr Shawn, for being awesome. If you know anyone who is truly special, goes over and beyond, and needs recognized, reach out to me, Matt Tackett, Publisher, Matt@NatiPets.Com

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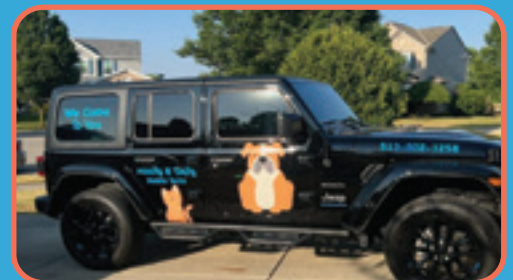
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From Stray to Star: The Remarkable Recovery of French Fry

By Jennifer Martinez

In March 2025, a severely emaciated dog was found wandering the streets of Price Hill, Ohio. The frail pup, later named French Fry, was rescued by a kindhearted individual and taken to Cincinnati Animal CARE, the county's open-intake shelter. The dog's condition was critical—his ribs visible, his energy low, and his future uncertain.

"He was strikingly thin," said Lisa Colina, community support manager at the shelter. "We see a lot of tough cases, but French Fry's condition really stayed with us." The shelter's medical team sprang into action, initiating a carefully planned refeeding regimen. For animals as malnourished as French Fry, recovery must be approached with great caution. Overfeeding too quickly can cause serious complications, including organ failure. The team focused on slow, steady nutrition and close monitoring to ensure his safety and comfort.

Despite his physical weakness, French Fry showed signs of sweetness and resilience. As the days passed, his eyes began to brighten and his tail began to wag. Once his condition stabilized, he was ready for a foster home—a safe space to rest, heal, and rediscover what it meant to feel secure.

That's when Patty Todd and her husband, Jessie James, stepped in. Together, they fostered French Fry for a week, combining their love of animals with a deep commitment to community care. Patty, co-owner of the mobile pet grooming service Nails & Tails,

and Jessie, owner of JJ's Towing Services, are both known locally not only for their businesses but also for their shared passion for animal welfare. Through JJ's Towing, the couple regularly supports local shelters and rescue efforts—using their platform to give back to those who can't speak for themselves.

During his stay with Patty and Jessie, French Fry gained more than weight—he gained trust. "He has definitely blossomed and he has done so well," Patty said, watching the once-fragile dog learn how to enjoy life again. With calm care and affection, French Fry began to thrive.

Soon after, French Fry was adopted into a loving forever home, where he continues to grow stronger each day. His transformation—from a neglected stray to a healthy, joyful companion—represents the powerful impact of teamwork, compassion, and community-driven rescue work.

Today, French Fry is thriving in his new home, surrounded by warmth, care, and the love he always deserved. His journey has inspired many in the Cincinnati area and beyond, shining a light on the incredible work of organizations like Cincinnati Animal CARE and the devoted individuals—like Patty and Jessie—who step up when it matters most. French Fry's story is not just about survival; it's about what's possible when people choose kindness, and when second chances are given with open hearts.



Photo by Bonnie Phillips Photography

Affordable Emergency-Level Pet Care, Without the Chaos: How AcutePet Urgent Care Is Rethinking the Veterinary ER

When a pet suddenly gets sick or injured, panic often sets in – especially when the only option is a crowded emergency hospital with long wait times and overwhelming costs. AcutePet Urgent Care was created to change that experience entirely.

With clinics open from 10 AM to 10 PM every day of the week, AcutePet offers emergency-level care in a calm, urgent care setting. Urgent care is not about replacing primary care veterinarians, or emergency hospitals that are open overnight – it's about offering pet families an accessible, affordable way to get same-day care when they need it.

From limping or vomiting to sudden injuries or times you're concerned about your pet's health, AcutePet clinics have been conveniently placed in Beavercreek and West Chester, Ohio, and Bellevue, Kentucky, where they're equipped to handle a wide range of emergencies. Pet owners can book online, walk-in, or call their closest AcutePet location to help determine next steps towards care.

Each location is staffed by experienced, compassionate veterinary teams, with medical care guided by Dr. John Anastasio, a board-certified veterinary critical care specialist and AcutePet's Chief Medical Officer. As CMO, Dr. Anastasio ensures that AcutePet provides not only prompt care, but also the high-quality medical expertise needed for even the most complex cases.

"At AcutePet, we've created something truly special – emergency-level care that's high-quality, calm, and centered on both pets and the people who love them," said Dr. John Anastasio, Chief Medical Officer. "This model was built to ease stress, not add to it – and that's something we take seriously in every patient we treat."

AcutePet Urgent Care was started by two veterinarians – Drs. Doug Hoffman and David Sachs – who've spent their careers in emergency and specialty medicine and recognized that access to affordable, emergency care was limited. As Co-Founders and Co-CEOs, they committed to providing a better way: one that protected access to affordable, quality care.

"Too many pet parents are stuck without options when their pet needs help fast. At the same time, veterinary professionals are overwhelmed and overworked," said Dr. Hoffman. "We knew there was a way to serve both – and we built AcutePet to fill that gap."

What sets AcutePet apart isn't just the high-quality medicine – it's the model behind it. Care is delivered in a calmer, more supportive setting. Pricing is built with today's economy in mind, making it more accessible and affordable for families when they need it most. And behind the scenes, veterinary teams are supported with systems that make the work more sustainable – both emotionally and operationally.

"We're here for both the families who love their pets and the professionals who care for them," said Dr. David Sachs, Co-Founder and Co-CEO. "When our teams feel valued, pet owners feel it – and leave not just cared for, but truly grateful."

AcutePet has created a space where urgent situations are met with calm, experienced hands, and compassionate hearts. And in moments that can feel overwhelming, that can make all the difference. As AcutePet continues to grow, one thing stays constant: its commitment to restoring pet health, reducing stress on pet owners, and keeping care affordable and easy to access, one visit at a time.



Photo by Bonnie Phillips Photography



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We understand the stress having a sick pet causes. If you're concerned, we're here. At AcutePet, we provide same-day emergency veterinary care for dogs and cats - without the long wait or emergency room price tag.

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Bellevue, KY 41073
Phone: (859) 407-4315

5 of the Best Reptiles to Keep as Pets

By Urbanreptiles.com

If you're anything like most people visiting this blog, you're probably sick of hearing about pet cats and dogs. Whether you're allergic to animal hair or want a pet that's a little easier to care for, one of these pet reptiles is a perfect alternative.

Reptiles can make wonderful and interesting pets, though you may be wondering what the best pet reptiles are. Luckily, this blog post covers just that!

Bearded dragon

In a list of the best reptiles to keep as pets, the bearded dragon couldn't be left out!

These calm and funky-looking chaps are great reptiles to keep as pets. They natively come from Australia but are bred as pets all across the world. They're quite easy to get hold of and aren't going to cost you an arm and a leg initially. They're one of the most popular pet reptiles, so we're sure you've heard of them before if you're reading this post.

Being native to Australia, bearded dragons need a good source of heat to bask in. They eat both insects and plants and move more towards a plant-based diet as they grow older.

Size: The average size of a bearded dragon depends on the species and gender, but usually falls between 15 and 25 inches.

Care: Bearded dragons are relatively hardy species and are easy to care for. They're a great pet for beginners as they are gentle, small and not too many special requirements. Check out our bearded dragon care guide for more info!

Life expectancy: It's not uncommon for a bearded dragon to live to the ripe old age of 10! This means you'll be feeding and caring for them for some time to come if you do go for a beardie.

Cost: bearded dragons aren't an expensive reptile to keep. They aren't very hard to breed so are normally readily available in most reptile shops or even online!

On top of this, the largest cost, depending on the cost of electricity where you live, is the heating. Beardies need a good heat source and that can add up during the years they live for.

Overall, bearded dragons make great pets and are beginner-friendly too. One that couldn't be forgotten! *explitatem fuga Rum inum am, natiumquam nes ullaut.*

Leopard gecko

Next on our list of the best pet reptiles is the leopard gecko. These cute little critters are sure to melt your heart and are beginner-friendly too!

Leopard geckos natively come from areas around India and Pakistan, where they live in warm and rocky environments. These geckos aren't a fan of vegetarianism and love to feed on things like crickets, mealworms and super worms.

Unlike many other species of gecko, leopard geckos don't possess the ability to climb on vertical surfaces. That being said, they can be quite the escape artist as I've witnessed first-hand in the past!

Size: Leopard geckos are relatively large when compared to most other geckos but are still quite small pet reptiles. They grow to be about 7-11 inches.

Care: Leopard geckos are easy to care for and a relatively hardy reptile. They are a very popular pet reptile and they are great for beginners due to the lack of special requirements needed for these pets.

Life expectancy: With a life expectancy of 6-10 years but some even make it to be 15 or even 20! As you can see, these geckos are going to be your friend for a long time. If they reach the 2-year mark in healthy fashion, they have a good chance of reaching a reasonable age.

Cost: Just as with the bearded dragon, these geckos aren't expensive to purchase. The largest cost is the heat lamp needed to keep your leo alive and healthy.

Another great addition to this list and certainly one to consider if it's your first time owning a reptile. They're extremely popular among both beginners as well as more experienced lizard owners and can be classed as one of the best pet lizards for sure

Russian tortoise

If you're looking for a good reptile to keep as a pet, then the Russian tortoise is a great option for you.

These tortoises are native to Central-Asia and are commonly kept as pets. My personal experience with tortoises is that the



hibernation period can be a little tense, but they are very rewarding reptiles to keep as pets.

They love eating fruits and vegetables. Vegetables are their staple food since they provide the highest level of nutrition and usually aren't too high in sugar.

Being reptiles, they are obviously cold-blooded. Russian tortoises do well at normal room temperatures, but a basking spot with overhead heat lamps help them to thermoregulate. They're actually surprisingly fast once they're fully warmed up!

Size: When it comes to size, Russian tortoise females are a little larger than males. They generally reach a size of about 8 to 10 inches.

Care: Russian tortoises aren't all too hard to care for, but they do come with their own challenges. As long as you do your research then you should be fine when caring for one.

Life expectancy: Russian tortoises can live to the ripe old age of 40! Yes, you read that right... It's a big decision to get a tortoise and a lot of people tend to go for older tortoises instead of youngsters for this exact reason.

Cost: As with most reptiles, heating is the most expensive cost when it comes to Russian tortoises. They cost about \$50 to \$100 to buy, and the total setup costs are around \$100-\$250 depending on the choices you make.

Red eared slider

From tortoises to turtles, the red eared slider is another great pet reptile! These turtles can walk on land just like tortoises, but they swim graciously too and love the water.

Not to be mistaken for the yummy parmesan slider, red eared sliders are native to Mexico and the south-east United States. They are extremely popular pets all over the world and it's more than likely that you've seen them in someone's house or pond before.

Red eared sliders eat mostly commercial turtle food in captivity, but they love to eat live insects like crickets, mealworms and a whole host of other water and land-based prey. They also eat vegetables and aquatic plants.

Size: These turtles can grow to 12 inches in length. That's around 30cm's! Once they reach that size, they need quite the tank too so be aware of this and make sure you have the space.

Care: Red eared sliders are also relatively easy to care for if you do your research. I guess this is true for most reptiles on this list.

Life expectancy: These turtles can reach the age of 20 years. This means you'll be caring for them and enjoying them way into the future!

Cost: Red eared sliders only cost about \$10 to \$40 in pet stores. The only extra cost they need compared to other reptiles is a water heating unit. This adds to the electricity bill and can really add up together with a basking light.

Ball python

Ball pythons are certainly one of the best reptiles to keep as pets

when it comes to snakes! They are an extremely popular snake species to keep too, being by far one of the top 2 most kept snakes, along with the corn snake.

Ball pythons are native to Sub-saharan Africa. They are one of the smallest of pythons in Africa and are extremely beautiful creatures to look at.

These snakes make great pets as they have a very docile temperament. Be careful though, snakes are great at finding escape routes out of their enclosure!

You should always make sure that your terrarium is "snake-proof" and there are no escape points for them to wriggle out of.

Because of their temperament, these snakes are easy to handle. They may feel kind of strange but, once they are used to you, they don't tend to cause any problems.

A ball pythons diet consists mainly of mice and rats. The sizes of the pray animal will vary depending on how old and large the python is.

Size: Ball pythons reach the size of roughly 2 to 5 feet, depending on if it's a male or a female, and on the genetics of the animal.

Care: Again, as long as you do the proper research before buying your pet ball python, they are easy pets to care for. More info on ball python care can be found [here](#).

Life expectancy: On average, these snakes live to be about 20-30 in captivity, but there have been cases where they surpass the 40 years. As with most reptiles, these animals are long-lived.

Cost: Normal morphs sell for anything from \$30 to \$100, but there are extremely rare and popular morphs that sell for much higher prices. The price of the feeder animals is a bit higher than insectivores, but the heating costs are the same.

Owning a pet can mean an insect, a snake, a horse, or a bird, it doesn't always have to be a dog or a cat. As you can see, reptiles not only make great pets, but there is a wide variety to choose from.



Cincinnati Nature Center

Upcoming Events



CincyNature Summer Camp Registration Now Open!

CincyNature Camps provide a safe and inclusive environment for children to experience the natural world through hands-on activities. Each week, campers explore different habitats, make nature-inspired crafts, play endless games, and sing silly songs with their new friends. Our trained counselors will help instill a love for nature as they guide campers throughout the week. Fresh air, hands-on activities, close encounters with animals and plants, and increased knowledge of the natural world help build confidence, passion, and knowledge about the environment.

Foragers' Workshop—Tending the Forager's Garden at Long Branch Farm & Trails Sunday 5/18/25, 2:00pm – 6:00pm.

Learn how to utilize your land for foraging and grow your own native food plants while simultaneously benefiting wildlife. We'll showcase multiple options for capturing and preserving your harvest, and demonstrate a forager's basket-full of options for how to use them as we make and taste light food bites.

Garden Tour: Noteworthy Natives Saturday, 6/21/25, 9 am–5 pm.

Join us for Cincinnati's premier self-guided garden tour featuring a collection of magnificent gardens that incorporate native plants in unique and creative ways. Tickets on sale now!

Nature's Fireworks!

Join us for a leisurely hike as we learn about these delightful creatures and discover the magic of an evening firefly show. Check the Nature Center website for dates and times.

Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program

The mission of the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist program is to "promote awareness and citizen stewardship of Ohio's natural resources through science-based education and community service." The course is offered throughout the state, and Cincinnati Nature Center is the largest provider. Here, we offer four different formats—one is sure to fit your needs! Plan ahead and mark your calendars to register, because each cohort sells out quickly! Course runs **May 17–July 22, 2025.**

Family Music Picnic

This fun-for-all-ages celebration will feature a live, local musician and will be sure to have the whole family dancing. Check the Nature Center website for dates and times.

Nature-Based Mindful Eating 7/20/25, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm.

Nature provides us with clues as to how to eat, but we need to slow down and pay attention to our own internal senses. Hone your own body's nutritional wisdom and your connection to nature as we blend mindful exercises with natural history, food tasting, hands-on activities, and short walks to forage.

Music Under the Moon

Set against the idyllic backdrop of Cincinnati Nature Center's Krippendorf Lodge, the sun will set on the summer woods and give way to a lively night of music and dancing. Check the Nature Center website for dates and times.

Hoots and Hops 7/18/25, 6 pm.

Nature comes alive in the nighttime! This beloved summer event features local beer tastings, food bite samples from area restaurants and caterers, interactive activities, food trucks, live music, and so much more.

Native Plants 101 (Online, Self-Paced Course) Begins 8/4/25.

Bring life to your outdoor space while helping the natural world! In this practical, self-paced, online course, you'll discover the human and ecological benefits of planting native, learn about powerhouse native plants, and create a garden plan that fits your outdoor space (and personality!). From site assessment to plant choice and maintenance, this course will give you the tools you need to get started with native gardening in your backyard or community.

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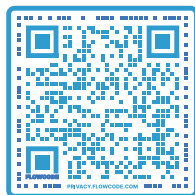
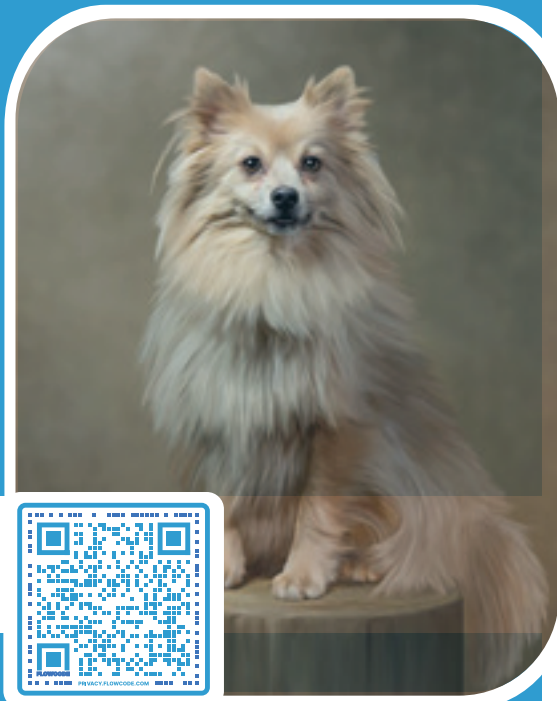
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IS YOUR PET SNEEZING AND WHEEZING?

By Talandor Elias

Pet allergies can show up in ways that are very similar to human allergies. Symptoms such as itchy skin or paw licking, red, inflamed, or infected skin, "booty scoots", ear infections or reddened ears, and respiratory issues, such as sneezing, coughing, or difficulty breathing all point a finger to pet allergies.

These can be caused by many of the same things that cause human allergies, too, such as pollen and other seasonal allergens, household plants that aren't pet-friendly, insect bites or stings, mold, certain foods, medications, dust mites, some fabrics and dyes, harsh chemicals, and smoke fumes. That's quite a list!

Luckily, there are a number of things you can do to help your pet feel better.

Insect Bites and Stings: Give your pet a flea & tick preventative on a regular basis, and during outdoor playtime, keep an eye out to make sure they aren't making friends (or enemies) with a bee or wasp. Some pets can develop anaphylaxis from a sting or bite, in which case a fast trip to an emergency clinic is in order.

Household Cleaning Products and Chemicals: Many cleaning products contain harsh chemicals, such as bleach and ammonia. Keep your pet out of the area where you're cleaning or working. Better yet, use natural cleaning products, such as vinegar and baking soda, or a commercial product, such as Seventh Generation, Ecos, Package Free, or Mrs. Meyers. You'll be doing the environment and yourself a favor, too!

Pollen and Seasonal Allergens: Reducing time outdoors is the best way to keep seasonal allergies at a minimum. If that's not possible, the next best thing is an over-the-counter antihistamine. Be sure to check with your vet before giving anything to your pet.

Pet Food Ingredients: Some pets can develop food allergies to certain ingredients, such as beef, chicken, dairy, and grains. If this is the case with your pet, you might notice some digestive upset, skin irritation, or ear infections. Talk to your vet about switching your pet's diet to a special diet or a hypoallergenic or limited-ingredient diet. Some pet owners also have success with making their own pet food. If you already know which foods your pet is allergic to, this can be a great option!

Smoke and Fumes: That incense and those candles you love might not love your pet! Smoke from tobacco, e-cigarettes, fires, incense, and candles, can irritate

your pet's respiratory system and cause an allergic reaction. Smokers should consider doing so outdoors and consider moderating your use of candles and incense if your pet is allergic or sensitive.

Medications: Just like their humans, pets can have any degree of allergic response to certain medications, including antibiotics, flea & tick preventives, and pain relievers. Keep a close eye on your pet for any problems after they start a new medication or treatment, and

after they are vaccinated.

Mold and Dust Mites: Mold spores in the air can trigger allergic reactions in pets, causing sneezing, coughing, and itchiness. The presence of dust mites can be managed by frequent vacuuming, laundering bedding and pet beds weekly, and using air purifiers with HEPA filters throughout your home.





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Introducing the Picket Protector:

The Ultimate Solution to Keeping Your Pup Safe and Secure

By Doug Hopper



In the spring of 2023, our lives—and our backyard—were forever changed by the arrival of our adorable dachshund, Cashew. What was meant to be a peaceful day in the yard quickly turned into an adventure of chaos when she slipped through the gaps in our fence and took off on a sprint down the street.

What happened next was nothing short of comical: Cashew dashed through the neighborhood, weaving through streets and woods, leaving us scrambling to catch her. While we eventually managed to corral her (after an exhausting chase), the reality hit us hard: how were we going to keep her safe in the future? That's when the idea for the Picket Protector was born.

Rather than spending thousands of dollars on a whole new fence, we decided to take matters into our own hands. Doug, with his engineering expertise, was determined to find a simple and cost-effective solution. Our first attempt was... well, less than glamorous. Picture a mix of zip ties, shoestrings, duct tape, and a pipe that looked like it was built for a circus act—but it worked! It stopped Cashew from escaping, and it got us thinking: there had to be a better way. So, after weeks of refining and perfecting, we designed the Picket Protector—a sleek, horizontal barrier that fits seamlessly onto a dog harness or vest to prevent dogs from slipping

through the fence pickets. No more expensive puppy fences with all of those extra vertical pickets, no more complicated setups. Just a straightforward, portable and reliable solution that ensures your pup stays safe and secure in your yard.

WHY THE PICKET PROTECTOR

- **Simple & Effective:** The design stops even the most determined escape artist, neutralizing all fence opening escape routes.
- **Affordable:** Save thousands of dollars on expensive fence upgrades. The Picket Protector is an affordable and fashionable way to fix your pup instead of your fence.
- **Easy to Install:** The Picket Protector is designed for quick installation and removal.
- **Durable & Reliable:** Crafted with high-quality materials, it's built to last—keeping your dog secure for years to come.



But we didn't stop there. As our business grew, so did our commitment to providing practical, year-round solutions for pet owners.

We expanded our product line to include cold-weather vests—perfect for pairing with the Picket Protector to ensure your pet stays safe and comfortable, no matter the season. Backed by our diverse experience—Karen's marketing expertise and Doug's 25 years as a civil engineer—we're proud to offer products we truly believe in. The Picket Protector is not just a product; it's a testament to what happens when passion, innovation, and a bit of humor come together.

At Picket Protector, we believe every dog deserves to enjoy the freedom of their own backyard—running, playing, and exploring without the worry of escape. That's why we created the Picket Protector: a simple, effective solution to keep your dog safe and secure while they have fun in the yard. And your reward? Peace of mind.

Protect your pup. Discover the Picket Protector today.

Doug Hopper is the Owner/Inventor of Picket Protector. If you're interested in finding out more about Picket Protector, contact Doug at (854) 458-2987 or email picketprotector@gmail.com. You can also check out their website at www.thepicketprotector.com.



Pets In Need of Greater Cincinnati Helping Pets and People

By Sharon Boyles

A skinny senior dog with a dry coat and rotten teeth roaming the streets of Hartwell was all the inspiration Barb Lichtenstein needed to become a volunteer with Pets In Need of Greater Cincinnati (PIN) thirteen years ago. "Our veterinarian discovered he had Cushing's Disease. He had likely been abandoned on the streets by someone who either couldn't or didn't want to spend money on his health care," Barb says. She was horrified to learn that this happens frequently. "I realized how fortunate I was to be able to afford full veterinary care and decided to get involved with a nonprofit veterinary clinic to help people of limited means take care of their pets."

At the time, the only nonprofit vet clinics around were limited to basic wellness care or spay/neuter. None could treat diseases. When Pets In Need opened their doors in 2012 as a full-service nonprofit veterinary clinic, it was not only unique in the Tri-state region but also one of the very first such clinics in the US!

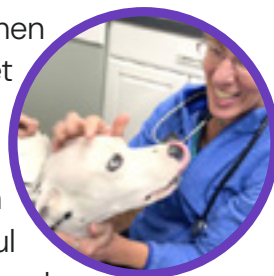
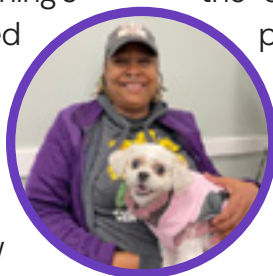
Barb is now the Chairman of the Board, but her work with the clinic began as a volunteer, signing people in, bringing out water and treats, and talking with people about their pets. "Our clients love and depend on their pets for companionship, and they are trying to do their best for their pets in difficult circumstances. They are so grateful to Pets In Need," she says.

Pets In Need offers a wide range of services for cats and dogs, including basic exams and vaccinations, treatment of infections and

allergies, and management of chronic diseases such as diabetes. Many diagnostic tests and blood work are done at the clinic. Partner Vet, Lewis Animal Hospital, performs X-rays at a discounted rate. (PIN pays part of the cost and the client pays the low fee.) PIN's in-house pharmacy dispenses prescription and non-prescription medications.

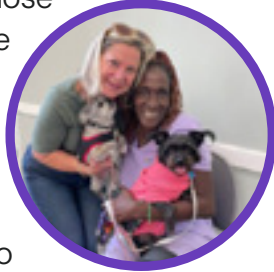
The clinic offers same-day surgery and dentals in its new two-room suite. Surgeries range from spay/neuter to mass removals, enucleations, and even amputations. Dentals can be anything from simple exams and cleaning to removal of teeth. With kindness and respect for pets and their people, the veterinarians and veterinarian assistants provide long-term palliative care to relieve pain and distress. When it's clear that it's time for a pet to cross the Rainbow Bridge, euthanasia is carried out with the utmost compassion and care, ensuring a peaceful experience for both the pet and their people. Financial assistance is available for individual cremation services, with the ashes returned to the family, along with a keepsake of their pet's paw print.

The clinic is conveniently located in Lockland, with access via Interstates 71, 75 and Ronald Reagan Highway. "We draw patients from the entire Tri-state region," Barb explains. "There are no geographic limits. The only qualification is that the people we serve are living at or under 200% of the federal poverty level or they qualify



as a special population living at a limited or fixed income.” Client copays are kept as low as possible, and payment plans can be worked out. PIN’s goal is to make care affordable.

The organization is led by Executive Director, Pam McKie, who succeeds Founder Ann R. Hill. Pam is an animal lover, as are all the people affiliated with PIN. She is currently devoted to her rescue cat, Buckeye, whose vision Pam restored. She is a trained social worker who understands the challenges clients face and can refer them to service agencies. Pam is also an excellent, well-respected business leader.



Staff includes a lead veterinarian plus three supporting veterinarians. One or two of them perform the clinic’s surgeries and dental procedures. A practice manager, a Registered Veterinary Technician, plus three veterinary assistants work alongside the veterinarians to provide extraordinary care to these vulnerable pets and their owners. As Pam says, “the entire staff is committed to being kind, compassionate, and respectful, not only to the dogs and cats served, but also their people.”

More than 3,000 pet owners are supported each year, and that number is growing. On average, Pets In Need receives 20+ phone calls a day from potential new clients, resulting in 20+ appointments scheduled for new clients weekly. “It’s a thrill and a huge relief to be able to help people,” Pam says. “We plan to expand our services and our hours of operation, if we can raise the money.”

PIN is grateful for the tremendous support from national grantors, PetSmart Charities, which will help PIN advance to the next level, and from Petco Love for veterinary supplies. PIN also greatly appreciates the generous support from local grantors like Kenneth A. Scott Foundation,

Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and Joanie Bernard Foundation. Pets In Need draws most of its support from private individuals and volunteers, as well as trusts and legacy gifts. “They keep the wheels turning every day and keep client fees affordable. We’ve got a great base right now, but we want to expand,” Pam explains.

Pets In Need has a few dreams in the making. “We want to be more accessible, and we’re looking at transportation and other resources that will enable those who are elderly, veterans, without shelter, or living with a disability get to our clinic,” Pam shares. “There are whole segments of the population who could use our services that we’d like to serve.”

Would you like to support Pets In Need? While financial contributions are our top priority, the clinic is always looking for donated items, such as towels, blankets, bedding, toys, current medicines, and prescription food. If you’d like to donate or volunteer, visit <https://pincincinnati.org/>.

If you’d like to visit the clinic, please email info@pincincinnati.org, and put Attn. P. McKie in the subject line. The address is 520 W. Wyoming Avenue, Cincinnati 45215, and the phone number is (513) 761-7387.



ELIOT SAMUEL LOVEBIRD NATIPETS LOCAL CELEBRITY

By Talandor Erias

"His quiet exterior belies a life of adventure," Stephanie says of her lovebird, Eliot. "After all, how many lovebirds have survived a fire, attempted murder, divorce, and still stay as sweet as pie?"

Not many birds have such a story to tell! Anderson Township residents Andrew and Stephanie have a lot to say about the life and times of their feathered friend!

Eliot is named for T.S. Eliot, and his full name is Eliot Samuel Lovebird. He's eleven years old, and his life of adventure includes moving six times, surviving an apartment fire, from which he "made it out just fine, except for being a little shellshocked", and the recent loss of his lady love, Skittles, even though she once tried to kill him.

Okay, tell us more!

"She went through this hormonal shift and decided she didn't want to be mated with him anymore," Stephanie explains. Skittles attacked Eliot one night and left him dazed and bleeding on the floor of their habitat. "We had to separate them for a while and then we tried to put them in their shared habitat again, but that didn't work very well. So, we got separate townhomes and put them next to each other. That way, they could talk and visit but not have to live together." It was an amicable divorce!

In his later years, Eliot's adventures continue. He's taken up new hobbies, like shredding paper tubes and checking out new toys. Even though he's not very interested in his native diet of fresh fruit and veggies, he's a big fan of Nutri-Berries and millet, and he will often demand treats by banging his water dish whenever someone is

nearby. "It's fun to see him still growing and changing," Stephanie says.

Stephanie and Andrew got Eliot and Skittles at a pet store while they were still living in Chicago. "We did a lot of research and thought that lovebirds would be a good fit for us, since we both work," Stephanie says. Eliot's stormy blue and gray coloring inspired his name because Andrew was reminded of the poem "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner", which Andrew thought was written by T.S. Eliot, but Stephanie, a true

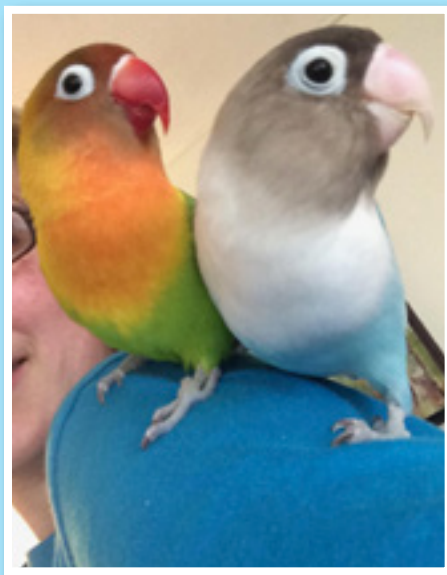
English major, recalled that it was actually written by Samuel Coleridge, and so Eliot was named for both poets.

"He has so much personality for such a wee bird," Stephanie says. "When Skittles and Eliot still lived together, we had a bird playground on top of their habitat. Skittles always wanted whatever Eliot had, and once, when Eliot wanted to explore a paper tube, Skittles decided that she was going to grab it. Eliot looked at her, looked at the tube and then kicked it over the

edge of the playground. It was a case of 'if I can't have it, nobody's going to have it!'" she laughs.

Lovebirds are intriguing pets, but Stephanie observes that their feathered friends "bonded more with each other than with us." However, both Andrew and Stephanie make it a point to socialize with Eliot and provide a healthy, enriching environment in which he feels safe. Eliot Samuel Lovebird is definitely living his best life!

Big or small, weird or wacky, if you'd like to see your pet featured as our Local Celebrity, contact Sharon at sharon@natipets.com





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