

# All you need is love

*Pets offer companionship, loyalty and unconditional love – what more do you need?*

By Sofia Rojas

Pets come in all different shapes and sizes. When we hear the word pet, people automatically associate the term with household animals such as cats and dogs, but whether it's a small bird, a goat or chickens, pets can become an important element in a person's life. It's common to see people with pets acknowledge that they are members of the family. Pets evoke emotions and feelings for many types of people and sometimes contribute and affect us more than any human could. Studies show that pets can be used to relieve loneliness, reduce stress in young and old, fulfill one's need for affection, and are

a great way to keep busy. "Pets are great for all different types of lifestyles," said Bobbie Morrison, a graduate of Loyalist College and office assistant at the Foster Park Pet Hospital in Belleville. "They have needs like a child, so it gives a lot of people a good excuse to get up in the morning. They are a great source of comfort and company. Also if you're a couple starting out, it's a great way to prepare for a family. For those who have children already, pets are also a way to teach responsibility and interaction," said Morrison. Whether it's a service dog or farm animal, the relationship between owner and pet is often valuable because of emotional or physical improvements to their lifestyle.



Photo by Gail Paquette

John Spitters, news director for Quinte Broadcasting, relaxes with his newspaper after a brisk walk with his 2 1/2-year-old kleine munsterlander. He says Binkee is polite, smart, happy, active, and his best friend.



Photo by Kayleen Preston

(Above) Florence "Flo" Woods shares her room with her cat Peddie at the Richmond Retirement Residence. Woods got Peddie from the Humane Society and was told he was abused. Although she has had him for six years, he did not allow her to rub his belly until two years ago.



Photo by Myriam Lublink

Elsie Mugford, 28, from Trenton has had Geeko, the leopard gecko, for 10 years. Mugford says, "I always wanted a gecko when I was younger because I thought they were so cool looking."



Photo by Jason Prupas



Photo by Patrick Callbeck

Peter and Sandra Aker cuddle with their 13- year-old golden retriever, Jessie, in the back of their car in downtown Belleville. "She is our first dog. She dictates our life, but we wouldn't have it any other way."

Left) Brooke Cailles ,22, poses for a portrait in her home with her parrot, Oliver, on Jan. 22, 2013 in Belleville. Brooke owns of 12 animals, including seven lizards and a donkey. "Everybody says I have too many, but they are my passion, so what can I say, here I am."



Photo by Marta Iwanek

Danette Smith plays with her five-year-old golden retriever, Santo, at East Zwick's Centennial Park. "I think dogs offer so much interaction and he makes me go out and walk." She says even on days when she doesn't want to go out, she has to and after, she always feels good.