



Puppy & Love

*Modern medicine
has a new ally.
Dogs! Research is
demonstrating that
our furry friends
are good for the body,
mind and soul.*

BY SUE LONG

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RED FASHIONS COURTESY OF FESTOON

PHOTOGRAPHED ON LOCATION AT ROCK FORD

LUCKY DOG, A SHOW that airs Saturday mornings on CBS, stars trainer Brandon McMillan. On the show, McMillan rescues dogs from Los Angeles-area shelters and pairs them with new owners. Two pairings had health-related circumstances. Cameras followed a woman and her son, who had been diagnosed with ADHD, to a doctor's appointment. To the woman's surprise, instead of prescribing medication, the doctor suggested the family consider getting a dog. McMillan found the perfect candidate who would provide a calming effect for the boy.

Another pairing placed focus on the fact that dogs can sense when seizures are about to occur. The episode featured a little girl who suffered from epilepsy and received a new lease on life thanks to her new dog (McMillan now works with Magnolia Paws for Compassion, an organization that trains dogs to work with those with epileptic and seizure disorders).

Research is providing evidence that dogs are good for our health. Infants whose homes have dogs have stronger immune systems and are 31% healthier in their first year than are their peers who don't grow up with dogs. College students are benefitting from programs in which shelters bring dogs onto campus during exam time. Interacting with the visitors has proven to be a stress reliever, for both the students and the dogs. Training dogs for new families or therapy situations has brought a sense of calm, responsibility and fulfillment to prisoners who are participating in programs such as Prison Pups. And, of course, dogs have been dispensing TLC at retirement communities and nursing homes for years.

Now, dogs are helping to improve the lives of America's veterans, notably those dealing with PTSD and TIB. A&E recently profiled the program, *Paws & Stripes*, a New Mexico-based organization that is headed by Lindsey and Jim Stanek and entails matching vets with shelter dogs.

THE GOOD NEWS IS that you don't need a super dog to enjoy the health benefits they deliver. As Cesar Millan so often coaches, mastering the walk will deliver both mental and physical benefits (for both dogs and humans). Walking a dog for 30 minutes a day can help control weight, combat high blood pressure, improve mood, boost energy, enhance sleep and improve stamina.

Research is also providing evidence that dogs are having a positive effect on reducing the risk of heart disease. In a study of 5,200 adults, dog owners walked more and engaged in more physical activity than did those who didn't have dogs. In fact, the dog owners were 54% more likely to get the recommended level of physical activity. A study conducted by the National Institute of Health demonstrated that the one-year survival rate for heart attacks was higher among dog owners – 97% vs. 72% (non-dog owners). Dogs also have an unproven ability to reduce blood pressure and stress levels – there's just something so calming about stroking a dog.

Finally, dogs make us more sociable. Yes, we may know our neighbors as "Molly's dad" or "Eddie's mom," but walks through the neighborhood promote conversations. And, we can't forget the hottest place to meet people: the dog park!

Katie Errigo & Booker



Katie's oversized red sweater with black accents is from Z; the long-sleeved T is from Comfy USA.

The Complete Canine Center, 99 Elmwood Ave., Landisville. 898-2565 or Thecompletecaninecenter.com

KATIE HAS LOVED ANIMALS all her life. "I always wanted a dog," she reports. Her dream came true on the final day of middle school. Two weeks earlier, she had selected a Sheltie. "My dad picked me up at school, and we went and got Harry and took him home," she says of the dog she came to adore. "We enrolled in obedience classes and took lessons in conformation handling," she recalls. "Then, we discovered agility."

Katie and Harry loved agility. "I'm a very competitive person, so agility is a good outlet for me. It's also a lot of fun, and you get good exercise through working with your dog," she notes. Oftentimes, Katie was the youngest on the course. (As Katie explains, former soccer moms are the mainstays of the sport.) Katie and Harry competed in trials that took them all over the Mid-Atlantic region, including the Shetland Sheepdog Nationals, which were held in Virginia Beach the year Katie and Harry participated. "My dad drove me like a million miles," she reports, referring to both agility trials and horse shows. "I have the most supportive parents who have helped me achieve my dreams," she says of Chip and Judy Errigo.

No one would have guessed the young girl zipping around the agility course had been born with a congenital heart defect. "I had to have my mitral valve repaired when I was three," Katie reports. The surgery, performed at Hershey Medical Center, was groundbreaking in its day. "It was the first time valves were being repaired and not replaced in children," she explains. She continues to see her cardiologist every two years. "I just had an appointment and was told my heart is the best it has ever looked." She attributes the glowing diagnosis to always being on the move and a steady diet of fruit and vegetables.

AFTER REACHING the top level of AKC Excellent, Katie noticed a change in Harry. "Intuition told me something was wrong," she explains. Katie and her parents took Harry to the vet, who delivered a cancer diagnosis. "That was on a Thursday. He did exploratory surgery on Monday. Harry died on the table," says Katie, who regrets not being able to say goodbye to her beloved companion. "He was only seven years old."

Katie sought solace in Hummer, a Sheltie she had acquired to serve as Harry's companion. She tried to interest Hummer in agility, but the motivation just wasn't there. "Hummer is happy being a couch potato," Katie notes. Booker, who is Katie's first rescue, was a college graduation gift. She hopes to return to the agility circuit with Booker as her partner.

After graduating from Linden Hall, Katie enrolled at Millersville University, where she majored in business management. Throughout high school and college, her love of

animals prompted her to work for various kennels and grooming businesses. She also taught classes in agility.

WANTING TO UTILIZE her degree, Katie joined the mortgage division of a bank. She maintained contact with Holly Scott, with whom she worked at a kennel, and her mother, Vernetta Julian, who operated a mobile grooming business. Vernetta's goal was to expand her business. The three came up with the concept of a full-service business that would offer day care, boarding, grooming (on-site and mobile), classes and more. Its name would be The Complete Canine Center.

There was a minor problem. Despite doing their homework and devising a business plan, commercial realtors dismissed them. "Thank goodness for Kristine Lundquist," Katie says of the residential realtor from Berkshire Hathaway who befriended them. "She was awesome. She went out of her way to show us locations throughout the county," Katie says.

Kristine unearthed a building in Landisville that once was home to a machine shop. "It was quite rough, but we saw potential in the space," Katie reports. To save money, the new owners did the demo work themselves, as well as painted and installed astro turf. Contractor Larry Zeiset and Sycamore Builders created the specified spaces in the 5,500-square-foot building that provides them with room to grow. The Complete Canine Center opened in December 2013. "It was a tough winter," Katie says. "Opening in the industry's slow season, we had many challenges to overcome."

THANKS TO "amazing clients," the center is thriving. Clients who utilize day care primarily hail from the Hempfield area, Manheim Township, Lititz, Mount Joy and Manheim. Classes attract students from all over the county. Pet parents tend to utilize the day-care center on a regular basis. "People feel bad about leaving their dogs alone all day," Katie says. "They can come here and play with their friends and receive some training. We love the dogs that come here. They all have their own personalities." Canine birthday parties have become popular, and the center also hosts Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's parties for its clients.

While their clients are loved, pampered and yes, spoiled, the center's owners are cognizant of the fact that so many dogs are homeless. In response, they support rescue groups and other pet-related causes such as The Pet Pantry. During the holidays, clients made contributions to the "Giving Tree" that was displayed in the lobby. "We feel fortunate to have the support we've received in the past year," says Katie. "It's our way of giving back."



The Dog Whisperer, Cesar Millan, is bringing his live show to the American Music Theatre on April 18. Cesar will share his philosophy on making the human-canine connection a healthier and happier one. Junior will be along, as well. Show time is 8 p.m. Visit AMTshows.com or call 800-648-4102 for tickets.

HAWA HAILS FROM the North Shore in Massachusetts. Franklin & Marshall College brought the psychology major to Lancaster. During Hawa's sophomore year, tragedy struck. Her mother died. The Ghana native, who was once a stewardess for Pan-Am, had suffered a debilitating stroke. Complications led to her death. She was only 49 years old. "I had to go home and pack up the house," Hawa explains.

Hawa returned to Lancaster and finished the school year. During her junior year, a fascination with photography prompted her to enroll in a studio art program. Her creative efforts were later rewarded with a first-place finish in 2013's *Expanded Visions* exhibit (Lancaster Summer Arts Festival). *XXC*, which was taken from the series, *The Last Frame*, represented her film experimentations. A year later, she earned second place for *Step One: Introduce Yourself*, which came out of her *How to be the Life of the Party* series.

After her junior year, Hawa had to make some decisions. Paying for school became impossible. She didn't feel compelled to return to Massachusetts. New York? Maybe. In Hawa's mind, Lancaster had become home. "I had a great group of friends here," she says. "I viewed them as my family."

With the realization that Lancaster was her future, Hawa began exploring her options. In order to support herself, she worked at area restaurants and at Coe Camera Shop.

HAVING EXPLORED Lancaster's art scene convinced Hawa that something was afoot. "I liken what's happening here to what put New Hope on the map," she says. "Artists are building a legacy here. Anything that comes out of Lancaster is worth something." Realizing that "Lancaster is very much on its way" to becoming an art center, in 2010 she launched *The Discerning Eye*, a blog that covered Lancaster's art scene. The following she developed convinced her that "Lancaster was ready" for what its artists have to offer. She also began curating shows at retail sites such as Seasons and the now-closed Roaring Brook Market. Pop-up shows also became her realm. Art had become her passion.

Her life was changing in other ways. Through one of her restaurant jobs she met her husband, Greg Good. "Nothing

would be possible without him," she says. "He believes in me." Greg supported her dream of expanding the local art scene by opening an art enclave she envisioned as being an "incubator" for new talent.

She explains a path that was forged through her psychology classes and involvement in the art scene ultimately led to the Discerning Eye Center for the Arts, which makes its home on West New Street. Open since fall, the center enables member artists to share studio space, exhibit their work and literally "takeover" the space and help to plan scheduling during a designated month. She views the center as being a place where artists can receive support in a "realistic and tangible manner." She also hopes that DECA can help expand the art scene beyond the downtown area and bring it into Lancaster's neighborhoods, as well as encourage youth participation. "The ideas are endless," she says, noting that in addition to art, the center has hosted music, films and First Saturday events.

Hawa is especially eager to help younger artists, women artists and unsung artists gain a foothold and grow in confidence. "Support is everything," she says and points to Clinton Reckart as an example. The collage artist, who often took part in the Center's Sip & Snip events, doubted his ability until a famous collage artist bought one of his pieces. Now, he will be having a show at DECA in February. In March, PCAD's senior class will be exhibiting their work at the Center.

HAWA AND GREG have become city dwellers and live in a house that dates to 1792. A year ago, they welcomed a dog to the family. "I hadn't thought about getting a dog, but I had a friend who moved to Philadelphia and was working at the animal control center," Hawa explains. "She was always posting photos of animals that needed homes."

A pitbull-Lab mix caught Hawa's eye. But, she didn't act on it fast enough, and the dog was moved to a shelter in the Allentown area. Hawa was able to track her down. Despite a medical issue (her back legs were injured due to being kept in too small a cage) and an aloof nature, Hawa adopted her. "She's doing good now," Hawa says of two-year-old Mulan. "I think that's a perfect name," she says, referring to the warrior princess of Chinese lore who was made famous in a Disney film. "She can be a bit of a diva, but I love her and she loves me back. She motivates me to exercise. And, she's my protector. If we're walking down the street, people cross to the other side!"

Exercise is part of Hawa's healthy-living strategy. "My mom's death was a wake-up call," she remarks. "She had high blood pressure. For a while I completely avoided salt." In addition to walking Mulan, Hawa enjoys running, hiking, yoga and dancing. She relies on natural remedies and makes an effort to eat well. "Between our schedules, that can be difficult," she notes.

Despite not earning a college degree, Hawa maintains that life is filled with educational experiences. "I had a tough ride, but you do what you need to do to survive and succeed," she says. "And, you learn along the way. Working with artists has been educational. The best part of my business has been seeing all the young artists come out of the woodwork." And, she's continuing with her own artistic expression: Her photographs *Step 1: How to be the Life of a Party* and *XXA* and *XXC* (both from the series *The Last Frame*) are on exhibit at the Women's Center at F&M.

Heart Disease and African-American Women

According to the American Heart Association, heart disease and stroke disproportionately affects African-American women. The statistics speak for themselves:

Cardiovascular diseases kill nearly 50,000 African-American women on an annual basis.

Of African-American women over the age of 20, 49% have heart diseases.

Only 1 in 5 African-American women believes she is personally at risk for heart disease.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is one of the greatest health risks that African-American women face. In fact, more than 40% of non-Hispanic black women have high blood pressure. Known as the "silent killer" because it is relatively symptom-free, high blood pressure can be controlled/reduced through making lifestyle changes.

Hawa Lassanah & Mulan



Hawa's reversible black/red cape and infinity scarf are from Top It Off.

Discerning Eye Center for the Arts is located at 12 W. New St. in Lancaster. Visit DECA-PA.com.

Wendy Reitzel & Stormy



Wendy's two-button, flyaway cardigan is from Willow.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, Wendy was going through her near-daily exercise regimen of riding a stationary bike and lifting weights at her gym. Suddenly, she felt pain at the back of her neck. She explained it away and pushed through her workout. Afterward, she stopped at the grocery store. The pain reoccurred and worsened. Wendy thought she might be having a heart attack and went to the aisle where pain meds are located, opened a bottle of aspirin and took some. "I didn't know what to think," she recalls. "I wasn't having the typical symptoms you associate with a heart attack."

She then drove herself to the ER. A stress test was ordered. When she began to run, the pain returned. Tests determined she had a 99.95% blockage of the LAD (left anterior descending) coronary artery or, as she calls it, "the widow maker." According to Wendy, she was "literally days away from a massive heart attack." She was only 39 years old.

She was surprised, yet she wasn't. Her mother, father and brother all had heart disease. In fact, her mother died in surgery after suffering a heart attack. Her father has undergone seven bypasses. Her brother has had two heart attacks. "Everyone smoked," she notes. Wendy tried to dodge the bullet by being a non-smoker and staying active.

Following surgery, Wendy went back to her busy life. She was working for a large printing company as an account rep. She thrived on the adrenalin rushes that came with the job that required her to be on call 24/7. She was also a mom (two children, two step-children and now, four grandchildren). Then, a dog joined the household. Her husband, John Reitzel, said he'd like to get a dog for his children. "I had not had a dog in 25 years, so this was new territory," Wendy explains.

IN ORDER TO become a dog person, Wendy began doing her homework. "I'd sneak off to the Humane League now and again to see what they had," she continues. During one visit, she spied a newly arrived litter of Lab-mix puppies and immediately called John. (He was surprised to learn where she was calling from.) They selected a female and named her Emily. Everyone fell in love with Emily, especially Wendy. "I called her my 'heart dog,'" she says.

Thinking her heart issues were behind her, Wendy added more to her plate. She continued to work full-time. She began running half-marathons. She and John had purchased a house in Columbia and were renovating it themselves. "We'd work all day and then come here evenings and weekends. I was tired!" she recalls.

During walks, she tired easily and then that pain in the neck returned. She called her cardiologist. A heart catheterization revealed three blockages, the worst of which measured 70%. Open-heart surgery was on her agenda. She wanted to spend time with her family prior to surgery and was settling in with John and one of their grandsons to watch the 2012 Super Bowl when she began to experience odd sensations. She told John they had better head for the ER. She had open-heart surgery the following day.

The Reitzels decided that change was in order. Wendy left her job. "We decided to make a lifestyle change and live

very simply," she says. She also altered her view of exercise and decided to take a more balanced approach.

EARLY IN 2013, Emily became ill. Her kidneys were shutting down and there was nothing that could be done. She was 13. Wendy held her during the euthanasia process. Overcome by grief, Wendy vowed she'd never have another dog.

As the saying goes, time heals all wounds. A year ago, the Reitzels decided to welcome another dog into their lives. Wendy started the process by visiting local shelters and completing a profile on Petfinder.com. Through Petfinder they found Stormy, a puppy who was being fostered by Elizabethtown-based 2nd Chance 4 Life Rescue. "We bonded right away," Wendy reports. "We don't view her as a dog. She's part of the family. Everyone knows her in the neighborhood."

Stormy is now an integral part of Wendy's new exercise regimen. "She keeps me motivated," Wendy notes. "We walk two to three miles a day." For her birthday, Wendy received an unusual gift: A DNA test for Stormy to determine her lineage. The test results determined she's a mix of boxer, Lab, shih tzu and Maltese. "She has a great temperament," Wendy adds.

Wendy says she has discovered a whole new world outside of the workplace. She's become a gardener and has been steadily transforming her backyard. She's also becoming better acquainted with Columbia and is part of a group that is reviving the town's Garden Tour (June 10). She's also involved with Puggle Me Home, a nationwide transport system that shuttles adopted animals to their new homes. And, she's helping a friend with her new restaurant in Landisville, Miss Callie's.

Wendy has also become active with the American Heart Association and seizes every opportunity to discuss heart disease with other women. Last May, she was one of the speakers at the Lancaster chapter's Go Red Luncheon. "Life is a journey," she theorizes. "You have to accept where it takes you. Right now, life is good."

Women's Heart Disease Risk Factors

Women face six major risk factors for heart disease. Oftentimes, these risk factors can be prevented, controlled or treated with diet, exercise and medications. The risk factors are as follows:

- ♥ High blood pressure
- ♥ High cholesterol
- ♥ Tobacco smoke
- ♥ Physical inactivity
- ♥ Obesity/overweight
- ♥ Diabetes

Risk factors that cannot be controlled include:

- ♥ Age is 55+
- ♥ Postmenopausal
- ♥ Personal history of cardiovascular disease



IN 2010, SAMANTHA was training to become a federal air marshal. During her physical, her EKG registered an abnormality. A subsequent visit to a urologist prompted the doctor to say he detected a heart murmur. None of it made sense. Samantha exercised on an almost daily basis. Heart disease did not run in her family.

The news continued to worsen. A small hole was discovered in one of Samantha's valves. Then, the news became dire. Several more holes had developed and the original had grown larger. Samantha was scheduled to undergo open-heart surgery at the University of Pennsylvania, where a mechanical valve would be inserted. "The mention of open-heart surgery came as a complete shock," she says.

Post-surgery, Samantha got back to her life. Realizing the air-marshal program was no longer viable, the former adult-probation officer – she hails from a family dedicated to law enforcement – decided to put her master's degree in education to use and became a therapist.

She also met her fiancé, Jerry Fulton, through mutual friends. When it became obvious they both wanted more than a long-distance relationship, the Pittsburgh native moved to Lancaster. He's now a manager at Stauffers of Kissel Hill's Lititz location. But, before Samantha could make a commitment to Jerry, he had to gain the trust of another family member: Guinness, Samantha's beloved bulldog, who is now six years old.

Pre-Guinness, Samantha had no intention of getting a dog. Her sister, Theresa Stauffer, happened to be Guinness' unofficial foster mom. "She asked if she could bring the dog to my house so that I could just meet him," Samantha recalls. It's hard not to fall in love with a four-month-old bulldog. "Just look at that face," Samantha says, as she shows off Guinness' "baby" pictures.

You can't argue with that. Guinness was adorable. According to Samantha, she had her hands full. Guinness was a bad puppy and was always creating havoc. And, he has his issues. "He's sensitive to grass, so I have to rub him down with medicated creams. And, he has food issues, too. And, he scratched his cornea ..." recounts Samantha. "No one else could love him as much as I do." You might say that Guinness tolerates Jerry's presence in their lives. "It took a while for him to warm up to Jerry," Samantha admits.

The couple thought that another dog might provide Guinness with companionship. They learned of a litter in need of homes near Williamsport. Gabby's adoption probably qualifies as a rescue. "The house was out in the sticks. The puppies were kept in a cage outside and it was cold. They were shivering," Samantha

remembers. Gabby, who is a boxer and lab mix (and maybe a little dalmation, too) joined the family almost two years ago. Her only issue is separation anxiety, and they are working through that. Gabby is also rambunctious, but Samantha has found an outlet for that through taking her on runs. "Gabby has become Samantha's dog," Jerry reports.

SAMANTHA SAYS SHE'LL always be indebted to Guinness. "He's gotten me through the worst things in life," she professes. You see, heart disease wasn't quite finished with Samantha. Eight months post-surgery, she was easing back into her exercise routine and was at the Lititz Rec one afternoon when an odd feeling came over her. "I was a mile into my two-mile run on the treadmill and I thought to myself, 'Something isn't right.' I was so tired. All I wanted to do was go home and sleep." She called Jerry, who was on the road. He in turn called Theresa's husband and asked him to check on Samantha. Theresa learned of the matter and insisted that Samantha go to the ER. Paramedics from Warwick EMS and the Lititz Borough Police rushed to her aid.

A physician on duty in the hospital's ER diagnosed her condition as a massive heart attack due to a fully blocked artery. Emergency surgery revealed white blood platelets were the culprit. "The replacement valve was functioning properly and my blood thinner was doing its job," Samantha notes. "A heart attack is the last thing you think about," she says. "You tend to think of everything else." She spent a week in the ICU and had to wear a life vest with a built-in defibrillator. A three-month stint in a cardiac-rehab program followed.

SAMANTHA SAYS LIFE is now good. She and Jerry are steadily making home improvements at their house in Lititz. They enjoy their dogs. She is steadily coming off the meds she was required to take. And, a wedding is being planned for September. Still, no one can explain why a 30-year-old woman became a victim of heart disease. "The stars aligned," Jerry philosophizes.

Samantha is of the opinion that "everything happens for a reason" and theorizes that had she become an air marshal, "I probably wouldn't have met Jerry or gotten Gabby. I've learned to relax. Before, my life was centered around work and taking classes. Now, I love spending time with my family, especially my sisters." She's also become involved with the American Heart Association and takes pride in having participated in the Heart Walk for the past two years. "Why me?" is not in her vocabulary. Instead, she prefers to concentrate on the "many positive things that have happened."

Heart Attack Warning Signs

- ♥ **Chest Discomfort** – most heart attacks involve some discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or comes and goes. The sensations are described as uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness and pain.
- ♥ **Upper Body Discomfort** – symptoms (mild discomfort to pain) may exhibit themselves in such areas as the arms, the back, the neck, the jaw or the stomach.
- ♥ **Shortness of Breath** – this sensation could occur with or without chest discomfort.
- ♥ **Other Indications** – breaking into a cold sweat, experiencing nausea or becoming lightheaded are also signs of a heart attack. Women have also reported feeling unusually tired prior to their heart attacks.



Samantha Mintz & Guinness



Samantha's woven jacket is from CMC and is made in the USA.

All the red fashions are courtesy of Festoon,
202 N. Duke St. (The Firehouse) and
1183 Erbs Quarry Rd. (Brighton Village Shoppes)
Shopfestoon.com