

Pets, Pets, and More Pets

Hello everyone, I'm JJ from the Florida Youth Council and I got to pick the topic this month! I chose "Pets and how they help you" because April 15th is National Pet Day! I have several pets, including mammals, reptiles, and a fish. I have a three-year-old cat, a 6-year-old leopard gecko, and a four-year-old gold fish. Having a pet is a big responsibility. With cats you need to play with them. Make sure they have enough water and food. Having a sensory disorder, I find the cat to be very calming and relaxing to pet. He seems to know when I'm upset and will let me pet him longer. For example, my grandpa died from Covid in January and my cat who is very independent and often does not want to snuggle when I want to, decided to comfort me and stay by my side in a time of sorrow.



My leopard gecko has a disability. She is unable to hunt for her food. I have to handfeed her the super worms or mealworms. She doesn't like eating crickets. I also have to put her water close to her for her to be able to drink it. I use a shallow container so she doesn't have to put her head in it. In order to hold her and for her to feel comfortable, I had to develop a bond with her so she knew I wouldn't drop her and that I wasn't a predator. She has very small claws that are used for gripping. She has bumps on her skin that feel soothing to me. She seems to like to be pet. I have to keep her warm because she's cold blooded.

I also have a goldfish. It's actually a feeder fish, that I kept as a pet. A feeder fish is used to feed bigger fish. So their lifespan is usually very short. As a pet the fish has lived much longer. She eats fish food and baby snails that are in the tank. I originally started with 10 snails, and boy did they multiply. I have around 50 snails in the tank at the moment. Originally, I had 3 goldfish (bait fish), but the other two didn't make it as long. I don't currently have any other pets, but in the past, I had a panther chameleon, a male leopard gecko, more fish, and hermit crabs. No dogs because my mom is allergic to them, but I think dogs are very cute.

I feel like my pets have brought me good company and helped to keep me happy during the pandemic. It's good to be responsible and have the company of a pet.

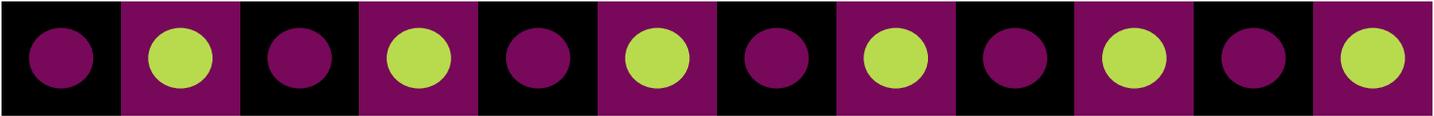
By JJ Humphrey

My Pets

Pets. A lot of people have them. I have had one for a good portion of my life, although three stand out, the first one being a dog I had for a good 13 years before she sadly passed away. She was great with the exception of being a little escape artist at times LOL, and her chewing everything in the early puppy-stage years. The other two are actually the two dogs I currently have. I got them when I married my wife last year. Yes, they were hers first but now they are ours and they are great. I like them and they like me and actually let me play with them. I say that because the previous dog I had at my mom's was just weird. When I'd try and pet her, she'd snap at me LOL. It got really old. This is a little about my pets.

By Derek Carraway





My Furry Children

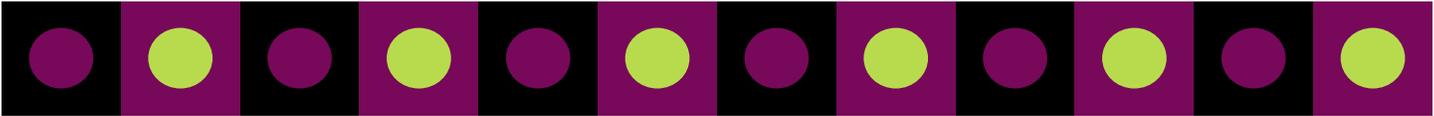
My kitties are the light of my life. I got them when they were about 2 months old. It was the beginning of the quarantine lockdown. We had lost my amazing, wonderful service dog, Dani, in December, and then my cat Magic in March. And my cousin's cat, who we had been caring for, went back to go live with his "dad." That meant we went from three pets to zero in three months. I always wanted to get a small kitten because all the animals I ever had were adults, so I asked my parents if we could please get a kitten because being in lockdown was kind of sad. We asked our vet if they knew about any kittens and within two weeks, we had two!



Their names are Odin and Star. When we first got them, they were rambunctious little scamps. They loved their new playground, which was our house. They would chase each other around, jumping on everything and bumping into walls. I have never seen such curiosity in an animal before. I dubbed them "my children." Star is the more outgoing one. She will jump on my tray and let me pet her. Her talents are nibbling on fingers and being attentive to me when I need some kitty love. She also snuggles up against me in bed and plays iPad with me as she tries to catch the little people on the screen. Odin, her brother, started out a little smaller and was the shy timid one. His talents are chasing and destroying Q-tips and jumping into my parents' laps at the least convenient times. His new talent this week is jumping up to the water dispenser in the refrigerator door. I'm not as close with Odin as I am with Star, but his purring and fur are especially nice, and he loves to snuggle with my parents. I love them both as the individuals they are.



By Serena Wetmore



Chico the Dog

Chico is more than a dog. He is my best friend! I know it sounds like a cliché but it's true. Having a pet is a huge responsibility but it is fulfilling. For the last 15 years, I have received unconditional love from my dog. Even with that age, he still has the energy of a puppy, surprisingly. I love Chico so much that back in the fourth grade I did a school project about him. I wrote a story about my dog and it was displayed at a county fair. I wrote about how excited he was when I returned home from school or how much he loves to sunbathe. I even mentioned that he likes to tuck himself in at night. Yes, my dog enjoys doing that. He is very trained, but the older he gets, the more stubborn he is. Unless that's just me? One time I almost lost Chico. I spent hours looking for him but I couldn't find him. I thought I wasn't going to see him again. Luckily, when my mom and I were searching for him the next day, we found him. With a little help from the local sheriff, Chico returned home safely. Chico is more than just a dog; he is my family and my best friend.

By Alex Gonzalez

National Pet Day

Hello, my name is Leah and I am talking about my dog because April is National Pet Day. I love my dog because she always sees if I'm okay every day. She is my service dog and she knows when I am feeling weird. Her name is Sandy and she is 8 years old and she will be turning 9 this year. She is my favorite friend and she is always on my hip. She always likes to drive me crazy because when I try to relax she always wants to give me kisses every hour. She got her name because she has beach color, and her name is Sandy. I taught her by saying yes, maybe, and no. She takes care of my mother and me.



By Leah Gorman



How Do I Become Part of The Florida Youth Council?

The Florida Youth Council is a group of youth (between the ages of 15 and 17) and emerging leaders (between the ages of 18 and 30) with disabilities or special health care needs that live in Florida.

The Florida Youth Council is all about getting youth and emerging leaders involved in self-advocacy, peer mentoring and other activities that will improve the quality of life for youth and emerging leaders with disabilities in Florida. The program empowers youth and emerging leaders to decide what issues are important to their generation, to discuss those issues in their state and local communities, and to develop strategies to address them.

We are seeking a group of enthusiastic, motivated youth and emerging leaders to participate. If you would like to take a leadership role in advocating for youth and emerging leaders in Florida, please visit The Florida Youth Council website at www.floridayouthcouncil.com. The program is open to application year round. We hope to hear from you soon!



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