

Pet Partners

GCCOA Newsletter December 2020

FROM SHELTER TO HOME

Sadly, there are many dogs and cats alone in shelters this holiday season. Maureen found 4-year-old **Sophie** at the SICSA shelter. She has been a loving part of their family for 8 years.



BEST FRIENDS

Caroline tells us that **Johnnie Mae** (dog) and **Mufasa** are best friends who snuggle in the house but engage in wild games of chase once outside.



As the holidays come and go

for another year, we want to showcase some remarkable pets whose reactions to the festivities are endlessly entertaining. We know that pets “tune in” to our emotions, so we want to “tune in” to the many ways they communicate without words.

Perhaps you are missing a beloved Pet Partner, or just missing the usual gatherings that are not possible this year. We hope our spotlight on Pets and their winning ways will brighten your day. Let’s give some special attention to our furry friends who give us so much joy all the year through!



PETS AND THE HOLIDAYS

Our pets get as excited about the holidays as we do, especially the decorations.

To prevent your cats from destroying your Christmas tree, distract them with their own tree or other artificial plant. Maureen says: “When I had cats, they loved a large basket of ivy that I found at a garage sale. I would place it in a new spot every week or so. They would hide behind it and jump out at me or the other cat in their attempts to play/hunt.”



Matt tells us his daughter Esther, age 8, recently got two Guinea pigs (after asking for a hamster for Christmas). Someone with an allergy had to give them away. The other day, they escaped for the first time and were found huddled under the Christmas tree. Matt wishes he’d gotten a picture!

TOXIC PLANTS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Remember that some holiday plants are toxic to your pets. Keep these out of reach: Poinsettias, Mistletoe, Lilies, and Holly.



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REMEMBERING OUR PETS

THE LOSS OF A PET

Losing a beloved pet can be an emotionally devastating experience. Grief over the loss of a pet may be as intense as when a loved person dies, but the process of mourning is quite different. We may be reluctant to talk about this grief; others may not understand that we lost a friend. We must go to work, make dinner, care for family, and carry on as if there isn't something important missing from our lives.



Our cats, dogs, horses and other beloved pets provide companionship, reduce loneliness and depression, and can ease anxiety. They provide structure and meaning to our lives.

Recovering from pet loss requires us to find ways to cope. Look for support from the friends & family who understand and will not judge. Take care of yourself: eat properly, get enough sleep and exercise. Find new routines and daily activities to make up for the loss. Give yourself time to grieve, maybe even take time off from work.

Try not to make any major decisions right away. Schedule some fun activities you know you will enjoy. You may need to talk to a professional. And don't rush to get a new pet: it will not replace the lost one and may add stress on top of grief. Take some time. Be gentle with yourself. Grieve as long as you need to, and remember the good times and unconditional love your pet gave to you.



Eileen tells us: "On December 25th 2018 I took this picture of my Mom and her dog **Snoopy** and my son's dog **Carman**. My dog **Wolfie** was sick and I lost him January of 2019. I still grieve for my Wolfie who was 15 years old, but I have Snoopy and Carman to help ease my pain. Dogs are special because they know when you are sick and sad. Carman comes to me for that bear hug when I am crying. She knows just what I need! Weather permitting, I walk Snoopy and Carman as much as I can. My life has been richer because of loving the dogs in my life."



From Melissa: "**Rudy** and my Mom were very close. When she passed away suddenly, it was obvious his heart was broken. With all the changes of us taking care of my Dad and my Mom not there, Rudy was lost. We decided to move him in with my brother, which was the best thing for Rudy to mend his broken heart and be loved by his family pup-member **Lyla**."



Jeff sent this picture of his sweet dog **Bentley**, who was 14 when they lost him last April.



We hope you enjoy this new publication, and welcome your comments and ideas for future issues. Please feel free to share your stories & pictures of your pets. Let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.