

Next Month:
Humanitarian Recognition

Healthcare Marketer's

Exchange

"Where Healthcare Marketers Connect"

Vol. 35, No. 2
MARCH 2026

Annual Pets Photo Contest Winner!

FINN



**Finn's Human
Maggie Gerraputa
Initiative**

Feel-Good Pet Stories from

Kelly Casey • Lorraine Gibson
Julie Gould • Mandy Graziani
Charles Martin • Ivette McFarland
Jonathan and Ashley Lee • Ann Mehl
Monique Michowski • Diane Power
Erika Sinner • Valerie Cole (Personal
Exchange)

Plus Annual Pets Photo Contest Pics

Gina Andreacchio • Erica Armstrong
Sarah Baumann • Erica Bogert • Jaci
Burke • Kevin Callahan • Diane Carpenteri
Kelly Casey • Paula Czeisler • Scott
DeNicola • Lynn Gale • Maggie Gerraputa
Lorraine Gibson • Julie Gould • Mandy
Graziani • Stephanie Jablonski • Jonathan
Lee • Joe Loftus • John Loughran
Al Lucchesi • John Malamphy • Charles
Martin • Ivette McFarland • Monique
Michowski • Elizabeth Milic • Amanda
Morris • Renee Napoli • Diana Noce
Ellen O'Brien • Michelle Perkel • Diane
Power • Dora Shankman • Erika Sinner
Jim Smith • Lilly Tonetti • Brian Wagner
Sarah Yung

An Antidote to Digital Overload



Annals of Internal Medicine

- 89% of ACP members surveyed have read *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and 86% plan to read it in the future.¹
- 75% of internal medicine physicians receive *Annals of Internal Medicine*—more than other internal medicine publications.²
- 59% of internal medicine physicians currently read *Annals of Internal Medicine*—more than other internal medicine publications.²

1. ACP Member Survey

2. M3 MI Medical/Surgical Media Measurement, 2025

To advertise with the medical journal that physicians read, contact Kevin Bolum at kbolum@acponline.org or 215-351-2440.

PUBLISHER

Nancy A. Leonard

P.O. Box 64

Verona, NJ 07044

973-420-1192

naleonard@HMEExchange.com

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER

Laura Dingman

973-420-1192

laura@HMEExchange.com

ART DIRECTOR (Ad Submissions)

James J. Ticchio

jim@directm.com

EDITOR (Editorial Submissions)

Elise Daly Parker

973-919-1067

editorial@HMEExchange.com

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

Katie Leonard

katie@HMEExchange.com

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Dear Healthcare Marketer,

Welcome to our Pet Issue – Guaranteed to put a smile on your face.

I've grown up with dogs all my life, and each one holds a special place in my heart. So many of my favorite memories – the funniest, most comforting, most joyful – revolve around them.

There was my first childhood poodle, Misty, who insisted on drinking fresh ice water from a glass. This was nonnegotiable, according to my grandmother, who lived with us and loved dogs more than people. In fact, during the Depression, when my mom was little, my grandmother had food delivered daily for the dogs, and it was served on silver platters. Hard to believe – but true!



Then came Pick-It, named after the lottery. The very day we found her, my mother played the number and won \$600. I secretly hoped Mom would win the Mega Millions and, taking Pick-It with her to collect, would make front-page news.

Once I had my own home and kids, there was Molly, our gentle sweetheart. Rudy, the stunning show dog, adored me, but unfortunately, no one else. He wasn't a fit with my kids, so we found him a better home where he thrived. Huey's story ended too soon – a story for another time. Daisy, who grew up with my kids, was truly one of a kind. Losing her was heartbreaking.

Now there's Penny – my PETA pup. Since Dad passed and Maddie moved away, Penny developed separation anxiety and even takes Prozac. Yes, I'm one of those people...I finally bought her a stroller. We don't use it all the time, but it comes in handy. At our Christmas gathering, I decorated it with lights and tinsel and sat her inside so she wouldn't beg for food and belly rubs all night. It worked like a charm! She's been to the mall, craft shows down the shore – she absolutely loves it. There was also Barney the bird and countless goldfish. Each pet brought joy to our home. My daughter Katie now volunteers with a pet rescue – a full-circle moment that makes me incredibly proud.

Pets teach us about loyalty, patience, humor, loss, and love. They become part of our stories. In this issue, we celebrate those stories – the wagging tails, funny quirks, quiet companionship...the profound bonds that make our pets family.

Ivette McFarland (A.L.L. Global Media Solutions) observes the striking similarity in the relationship between her two dogs and the relationship she shared with her younger brother. Though her husband had other plans, after losing her beloved dog, **Kelly Casey** (Initiative) "just happened" upon a sweet and irresistible new pup. **Monique Michowski** (Bryn Mawr Communications) broke with her family's canine tradition when she met Bernese Mountain Dogs on vacation. Speaking of large dogs, **Julie Gould** (Formedics) gives us the inside scoop on the wild and wonderful life with her Doberman. And **Mandy Graziani** (SSCG Media Group) found a new purpose while on vacation in Negril, Jamaica, when she discovered an overwhelming kitten population.

Erika Sinner (Directorie), after losing her dog, a cherished family member, wrote a book and started a movement to help others navigate the often-minimized grief of losing a pet. **Charles Martin** (Omnicom) has a service dog extraordinaire who helps him see and warns of low blood sugar. **Jonathan Lee** (Formedics) and his wife **Ashley** explain the intricacies of fostering that allowed them to care for three dozen dogs. Speaking of three, **Diane Power** (PeerDirect) tells the tail of how she's found herself with a trio of dogs. Find out the results when **Lorraine Gibson** (Compas), so inspired by her first dog's life-changing impact, decided to add another. **Ann Mehl** (Executive Coach) shares lessons learned about being here, now, and so much more, observing the simple, happy life of her Labrador. And thanks to **Valerie Cole** (Spring & Bond) for giving us a glimpse into her life in this month's *Personal Exchange*.

Thanks to all who participated by entering their pet photos into our Annual Pets Photo Contest. And congratulations to **Finn**, voted this year's Cover Dog, and his human, **Maggie Gerraputa** (Initiative).

May these stories and photos warm your heart
and make you smile,

Nancy



WE WANT YOUR STORIES – PARTICIPATE IN THE EXCHANGE!

Digital Trends

Just Tell Us In A Few Paragraphs
About One Or More:

- Favorite binge-worthy series, movie, or documentary on Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, YouTube, etc.
- Apps that make your life easier and how
- Online groups you belong to – health, hobbies, book groups
- AI advances and use, personally and professionally
- Favorite websites and podcasts and why
- Tech gadgets, social media connections and experiences



Let's Celebrate Life and Self-Expression!

We want to hear how you embrace your individuality

Tell us about

- Passions
- Hobbies
- Writing
- Painting
- Dancing
- Side Gigs

Share pictures and stories of milestones

- Births
- Birthdays
- Weddings
- Religious markers
- Graduations
- Reunions
- Memorials



Send your submissions to Nancy at NALeonard@HMEExchange.com or call 973-420-1192 to discuss.

*Winner chosen by a random drawing of all participants.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONWARD & UPWARD

promotions • additions

AbbVie has announced the appointment of **Libby Previti** as Account Supervisor 3.

Acadia Pharmaceuticals, Inc., has announced the appointment of **Amanda Gantan** as Senior Manager, NUPLAZID HCP Marketing. She can be reached at amanda.gantan@acadia-pharm.com.

Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Inc., has announced the appointment of **Eric Nelson** as Rare Disease – Regional Account Manager.

Amgen has announced the appointment of **Naveed Patel** (Npatel34@amgen.com) as Head of Media and the promotion of **Anneliese Rosenberg** to Associate Vice President, General Manager, Lifecycle Brands.

AstraZeneca has announced the appointments of **Audrey Sbulrati** as Senior Marketing Manager, Immuno-Oncology, GI, and **Lindsey (Ferrara) Bellere** as Global Content Delivery Manager.

BioPharm Communications has announced the appointment of **Jenna Rae Lee** as Associate Vice President, Omnichannel Strategy and Sales Architect. She can be reached at jenna.rae.lee8989@gmail.com.

Bryn Mawr Communications has announced the appointment of **Brian McCarthy** as Manager, Business Development – Endovascular and Cardiology.

CheckedUp has announced the appointment of **Lyndi M. Hirsch** as Chief Marketing Officer. She can be reached at Lyndi.hirsch@getcheckedup.com.

CMI Media Group has announced the appointments of **Andre (AJ) Dopwell, Jr.**, as Executive Vice President, Client Leader, and **Anne Beck** (anne.beck@cmimediagroup.com) as Vice President, Engagement Strategy.

Digitas Health has announced the appointments of **Sam Gabriel** as Manager, Data Strategy, and **Elizabeth Sarian** as Senior Manager, Engagement Strategy.

Eli Lilly and Company has announced the appointment of **Shaun Rudy** as Senior Director – IBU Consumer Media (Global).

EVERSANA INTOUCH has announced the appointment of **Jordyn Nolan** as Group Program Director, PMO.

Fingerpaint Group has announced the appointments of **Annie Khan** (AnnieSarah1231@gmail.com) as Senior Media Planner and **Elizabeth Mansell** (liz.mansell@fingerpaint.com) as Senior Vice President, Media Strategy. Promoted at the company was **Christine DeFabrizio** to Vice President, Media.

GSK has announced the promotions of **Jelissa Weston** to Director, HCP Marketing, and **Jaimie Allen** to Consumer Marketing Director.

Havas Media Network has announced the appointment of **Julia Jeges** as Supervisor, Digital. She can be reached at Julia.jeges@havasmedia.com.

Impiricus has announced the appointments of **Aaron Wattenberg** as Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, and **Justin Young** as Senior Client Services Manager.

Incyte has announced the appointments of **Sam Sukoneck** as Senior Director, Trade and Distribution, Dermatology, and **Brian Gaughran** as Associate Director, Oncology Market Access, Key Account Management.

Inizio Evoke has announced the appointment of **Daniel Sawl** as Director, Operations. He can be reached at dan.sawl@inizioevoke.com.

INVIVO BRANDS has announced the appointment of **Dan Oh** as Executive Vice President, Creative Director of Copy. He can be reached at doh@invivobrands.com.

IQVIA has announced the appointment of **Philip Ford** as Global Vice President and General Manager, HCP Engagement and Medical Affairs, and the promotion of **Robert Zwick** (Robert.zwick@iqvia.com) to Solution Sales Director.

Klick has announced the appointments of **Julie Notaro** as Media Planning Manager and **Elizabeth Casarella** as Account Director.

Merck has announced the appointment of **David Mondor** as Executive Director, U.S. Oncology Marketing – Lung and Head and Neck Cancers,

and **Nicholas Walz** as Associate Director, Digital Marketing, Customer Engagement.

MJH Life Sciences has announced the promotion of **Tracy Chirico** to Associate Marketing Director.

NEON has announced the appointment of **Cassandra Barlan** as Project Manager.

OMD has announced the appointment of **Jamie Sokoloff** as Director, Digital Activation. She can be reached at Jamie.sokoloff1@omc.com.

Omnicom Health has announced the appointment of **Mark Franz** as Account Director.

Otsuka Pharmaceutical Companies (U.S.) has announced the appointment of **Ahmad Abdrabboh, Pharm.D.**, as Senior Director, Global Medical Affairs Strategy, CNS Mature Assets Lead.

Pfizer has announced the appointments of **Caitlin Applebaum Liberatore** as HCP Team Lead, U.S. Multiple Myeloma, **Tim Ho** as Director, U.S. PADCEV HCP Marketing, **Mina Mukherjee** as Strategy Lead, U.S. Vyndamax, **Anna Buckley** as Senior Manager, Integrated Media Strategy – Primary Care, and **Devin Middleton** as Director, Influencer and Content Marketing.

Propel Health Communications has announced the appointment of **Anna Kuchinsky** as Vice President, Strategic Growth and Marketing.

Publicis Health Media has announced the appointment of **Alexis Weissenberg** as Supervisor of Programmatic Media and the promotion of **Samantha Stanley** (Samanthax13@gmail.com) to Supervisor, Strategy.

Real Chemistry has announced the appointments of **Ericka Wilhelms McKenna** as Chief Marketing Officer, **Sami Hocine, Ph.D.**, has Executive Vice President, Head of U.S. Scientific and Medical, and **Mirelle Paris** (Mparis@realchemistry.com) as Managing Director, Social Media Strategy.

Relevate Health has announced the promotion of **George Karyotakis** to Senior Vice President, Strategic Solutions.

Spring & Bond has announced the promotion of **Megan Ritz** to Vice President, Media. She can be reached at megan.ritz@springandbond.com.

Starcom has announced the appointment of **Mark Dignam** as Director, Media Planning.

Swoop has announced the appointments of **Enki Gjeci** as Director, Sales, **Chris Vlahopoulos** as Senior Director of Sales, and the promotions of **Kalli Wind** to Senior Director of Social Partnerships, **Tianna Fougeray** to Director, HCP Audiences, and **Margie (Smith) Cukar** to Senior Director, Sales.

Wedgewood Health has announced the appointment of **Laura Marczika** as Senior Vice President, Director of Client Services. She can be reached at laura.marczika@wedgewood.health.com.

WPP has announced the promotion of **Amanda DiBuono** to Vice President, Group Account Director.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

awards • mergers • approvals

Boehringer Ingelheim has received U.S. FDA approval for VETMEDIN (pimobendan) Chewable Tablets and VETMEDIN Solution (pimobendan oral solution) for the delay of onset of congestive heart failure (CHF) in dogs with State B2 preclinical myxomatous mitral valve disease (MMVD). VETMEDIN is the only medication approved to treat preclinical heart disease in dogs and extend their symptom-free life.

Johnson & Johnson has received U.S. FDA approval for DARZALEX FASPRO® (daratumumab and hyaluronidase-fihj) in combination with bortezomib, lenalidomide, and dexamethasone (D-VrD) for the treatment of adult patients with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma (NDMM) who are ineligible for autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT).

Sentynl Therapeutics, Inc., has received U.S. FDA approval for ZYCUBO® (copper histidinate) for the treatment of Menkes Disease in pediatric patients. This is the first and only treatment approved for Menkes Disease, a rare and fatal genetic condition.

Vanda Pharmaceuticals, Inc., has received U.S. FDA approval for NEREUSTM (tradipitant), an oral neurokinin-1 (NK-1) receptor antagonist, for the prevention of vomiting induced by motion.

AMM | Association of
Medical Media

JOIN US FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS
NEXUS AWARDS CELEBRATION

2026
NEXUS
Awards

Tuesday, April 28, 2026
5:00 – 9:00 PM

Hosted by the AMM, this event honors outstanding contributions throughout the medical publishing industry.

Join us for an evening of recognition, inspiration and celebration as we spotlight the trailblazers shaping the future of medical media. Don't miss this cornerstone event.

Sponsorship opportunities are available!
Visit ammonline.org to learn more and to register!

 THE LIBERTY HOUSE
JERSEY CITY, NJ

PHARMA LOVES THEIR PETS!

Welcome to our Annual Pets Issue and Photo Contest. We sure do love our pets. Enjoy this wonderful issue filled with pics and stories of our furry friends. We can always count on them for their special blend of warmth, care, and snuggles right when we need it most.

Each pet on the following pages deserves a prize for being such a loving companion. But only one pet can grace the cover of *The Exchange*. Congratulations to Finn and Finn's human Maggie Gerraputa from Initiative. And thanks to all who participated.



Saeem

Saeem is my trained service dog and rides with me in a backpack to work. He helps keep me safe by alerting me to low blood sugar – often by close contact and licking when something is off.

Charles Martin
Omnicom
charles.martin@mbww.com



Bella

Bella is a spoiled Australian Shepherd who loves to dress up in her favorite clothes, cheer on her favorite Phillies teams, and hop in the car to get a pup cup from Starbucks. Bella says, "Go Birds!"

Gina Andreatchio
SSCG Media Group
gina.andreatchio@omc.com



Maui

Maui and her ducky friend!

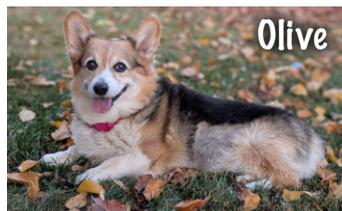
Dora Shankman
DPS Strategic Media Enterprises, LLC
doras@dpsme.com



Tator Tot

Tator is a true survivor with a heart as big as his paws. He's a rescue who overcame incredible odds after battling heartworm disease for six long years. At age seven, he was flown to Gainesville so University of Florida veterinary students could perform a rare, high-risk surgery – one that only about 10% of dogs make it through. Tator beat the odds. Now 11 years old, he's healthy, happy, and absolutely loving life. Proof that second chances can turn into the best chapters.

Kevin Callahan
EVERSANA INTOUCH
Kevin.Callahan@Eversana.com



Olive

You can't help FALLING in love with previous HMEExchange cover girl, Olive.

Sarah Baumann
Initiative
Sarah.Baumann@initiative.com



Ned

Counting down the days until it's hammock season again.

Chippy



Life is short. Be a little more Chippy.

Jonathan Lee
Formedics
jonathan.lee@formedics.com



Blue

Blue was recently rescued from Puerto Rico and hates his sweaters but hates the cold more!

Kelly Casey
Initiative
Kelly.Casey@initiative.com

Chloe Dancer



Soaking in the shore smells.

Michelle Perkel
EVERSANA INTOUCH
Michelle.Perkel@eversana.com



Jackson

Rating the setup: 10/10 cooling power potential...2/10 legroom.

Julie Gould
Formedics
julie.gould@formedics.com



Mika

Cold days require a fluffy blanket for our new kitten Mika.

Lynn Gale
OptimizeRx
lgale@optimizex.com



Finn

Finn celebrating Christmas in his favorite sweater!

Maggie Gerraputa
Initiative
Maggie.Gerraputa@initiative.com



Wanda

Year two or three for Wanda my rescue Dachshund.

Scott DeNicola
Conexiant
scott.denicola@conexiant.com



Honey

The good girl.

Mandy Graziani
SSCG Media Group
mgraziani@omc.com



Henri

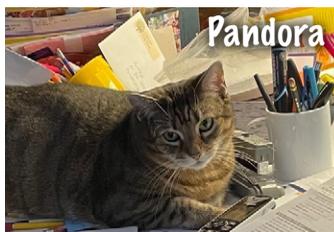
The troublemaker.



Ruby

Sleeping on the job.

Stephanie Jablonski
CMI Media Group
sjablonski@cmimediagroup.com



Pandora

I just like to be in the middle of everything...especially a messy desk!

Paula Czeisler
Frontline Medical Communications/
MDedge
pczeisler@medge.com



Sophie

Sophie, a purebred Golden Retriever, arrived at the rescue with a deformed paw and underdeveloped leg – but that doesn't stop her! She does a great job keeping up with her sister while running and playing in the backyard – whether it's fetching balls or running laps with each other. Her personality will melt your heart too! She loves everyone she meets and is the happiest when her hoomuns are home. She's always by your side – whether you're cooking, cleaning, or working. She also thinks she's a lap dog when it comes time to lounge on the couch – and she makes a great weighted blanket!

Amanda Morris
Compas, Inc.
amorris@compas-inc.com



Kobi

Kobi enjoying his favorite activity – long walks in the woods!

Joe Loftus
Biogen
josephloftus@comcast.net



Winnie

Winnie the Maltipoo post-spay.

John Loughran
InterVid Media Solutions
johnl@intervidmedia.com



Marty

Marty, a gentle giant and my muse.

Monique Michowski
Bryn Mawr Communications
mmichowski@bmcctoday.com



Conner

Master of his domain.

Diane Carpenter
HealthCom Media
dcarpenter@healthcommedia.com



Captain

Captain runs a tight ship...as long as treats are involved. He is our fearless leader of the house and boat, in charge of snack oversight and morale. Rules are important – as long as they apply to everyone else.

John Malamphy
RXNT Media
johnmalamphy@rxnt.com



Gravy Bolognese

Gravy Bolognese was rescued from the streets of Delaware at about two months old after an injury caused him to have his eye surgically removed. When the shelter rescued him, he was agitated and aggressive, so the team thought that they would have to release him after his surgery. However, once he was healed, he became a whole new cat! He was affectionate, chatty, always wanted to play, and really the perfect fit for a foster home. I adopted him in 2022 when he was five months old, and it has been the best decision I've ever made! He is now living out his dream New Jersey-Italian life in Bergen County and is a cuddly, sweet four-year-old boy! He loves playing with his toy lobster and watching birds outside the window from his tower. His favorite foods are salmon and broccoli – the king of health! He is a snuggle bug and will always want a pet or neck scratch from everyone he meets.

Erica Bogert
Omnicom
Erica.Bogert@mbww.com



Kaia and Kane

Double trouble...Worth it!

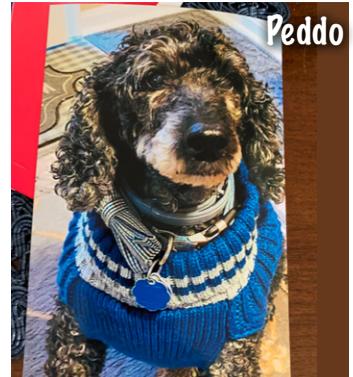
Ivette McFarland
A.L.L. Global Media Solutions
ivette.mcfarland@all-gms.com



Archie

"Proof someone in this house is obsessed with me."

Elizabeth Milic
Real Chemistry
emilic@w2group.com



Peddo

Granddog Peddo was part of our family for 16 years until he went to doggy heaven. He was a great therapy dog for our beautiful granddaughter.

Al Lucchesi
lucchesi.aj@gmail.com



Jaeger

Snuggles and sheep dreams are the best kind of therapy.

Brian Wagner
CMI Media Group
bwags.photography@gmail.com



Winnie

"I can see you didn't bring treats!"

Erica Armstrong
Formedics
Erica.Armstrong@formedics.com



Link

Link is being prudent around a screaming Amelia playing!

Diana Noce
CMI Media Group and Compas
dnoce@compas-inc.com

Cheeto



I present to you: The Creature known as Cheeto.

Ellen O'Brien
CMI Media Group
eobrien@cmimediagroup.com

Weston



Professional napper and sweater enthusiast.

Sarah Yung
CMI Media Group
syung@cmimediagroup.com

Johnny



Johnny – 12 weeks old, and already an angel on paws.

Diane Power
PeerDirect
diane.power@peerdirect.com

Scarlett



Snow ballin'!

Renee Napoli
Initiative
Renee.Napoli@tramfrontiers.com

Tony



Out of office...in spirit.

Lilly Tonetti
FCB Health New York
Lilly.Tonetti@fcbhealth.com

Bella



Bella's recipe for Christmas cheer: one tiny poodle, one cozy sweater, unlimited sparkle.

Jim Smith
Red Nucleus
jimsmith@rednucleus.com

August Ford Sinner



August Ford Sinner reporting for duty. Snuggle expert, house protector, built-in alarm system, and nonstop fun. We may have brought him home, but he runs the place now.

Erika Sinner
Directorie
esinner@directorie.com

Whiskey and Mimosa



Two inseparable souls.

Lorraine Gibson
Compas
lgibson@infocures.com

Omegah Addonis



Omegah is the most loving, gentle, funny four-year-old American Staffordshire Terrier in NJ. He loves carrots, peanut butter, pizza crust, and forehead kisses.

Jaci Burke
Initiative
Jaci.Burke@initiative.com



Pharma Loves Their Pets

Some Bonds Come Full Circle

BY IVETTE MCFARLAND

When you live with two German Shepherds, you expect some chaos. What I didn't expect was déjà vu.

Kaia, our older girl, will be five in March. She's steady, observant, well-mannered – the kind of dog who follows the rules even when no one is watching. Kane, her eight-month-old half-brother (same mom, born on the Fourth of July), is...not that. He's bold, mischievous, endlessly curious, and completely convinced that whatever Kaia is doing – or has – is exactly what he should be doing, too.

He follows her everywhere. He tests boundaries she would never cross. He invades her space, steals her toys, mirrors her every move. She tolerates him with a mix of patience and long-suffering grace – sometimes correcting him, sometimes sneering at him when he dares walk too close, a look that cracks my husband and me up every time. And then, when she feels especially generous, she'll reward him with a gentle lick on the face. Some days, they're inseparable. Other days, she's clearly wondering when we're sending him back.

Watching them feels strangely familiar.

SIBLING BONDS

I was once the well-behaved older sister: mellow, obedient, a little shy. My younger brother Cesar, five years my junior, was my opposite: daring, rebellious, impossible to

tame, and utterly charming. Like Kane – our Fourth-of-July pup – Cesar was born on a holiday, too – Thanksgiving. And like Kane, he followed me everywhere. Wanted what I had. Wanted to do what I did. Wanted to go where I went. I loved him and resented him at the same time, wishing he'd give me space, while secretly missing him when he wasn't around.

Cesar was taken from us far too young, nearly 30 years ago. And yet, when I watch Kaia and Kane, I see us again – our rhythms, our friction, our bond. It's like watching my childhood reincarnated as a dog!

There's something profoundly comforting about that. These dogs didn't replace anything I lost, but they remind me that love leaves patterns. That connection repeats itself in new forms. That some relationships – big sister, little brother – are so fundamental they find their way back to you when you least expect it.

Sometimes healing doesn't arrive loudly. Sometimes it pads into your life on four paws (or eight!) and settles quietly into your soul.



Same dynamic...different species!

Sometimes healing doesn't arrive loudly. Sometimes it pads into your life on four paws (or eight!) and settles quietly into your soul.



Ivette McFarland is Media Director, A.L.L. Global Media Solutions. She can be reached at ivette.mcfarland@all-gms.com.

Welcome Baby Blue

BY KELLY CASEY

My dog of 15 years, Kobe, unfortunately passed away just before Thanksgiving, but had an amazing and long life. My husband decided we were not getting another dog. My ten-year-old daughter, eight-year-old son, and I had another plan.

While my husband was at a golf outing on Black Friday, my kids and I were just looking on Pet Finder and applied to adopt the cutest puppy that we have ever seen. When I got a call that our vet's office gave us a glowing application reference and we popped to the top of the adoption list, I was beyond shocked. They informed me on a Wednesday that we needed to be at the adoption event that Saturday,



Tired after Blue's first Christmas.

or he would likely go to another family. I informed my husband of the "great" news, cleared our schedules, and we were off.

Luckily, my husband said the puppy has a face that no one could get mad at and fell in love instantly. He even gave him the name Blue as in "That's my boy, Blue!" Blue and his brothers and sisters were rescued from Puerto Rico by a facility called Heaven Can Wait in Rockland County, NY, and was described as a Terrier, Chihuahua, Spaniel mix. We ordered a DNA test, and results should be coming in a few weeks. We are so lucky to have baby Blue as the newest member of our family!



Blue is ready for an adventure in the snow!



Kelly Casey is Director of Communications Design, Initiative, 100 West 33rd Street, New York, NY 10001. She can be reached at Kelly.Casey@initiative.com.



Pharma Loves Their Pets

Our Berner Marty

BY MONIQUE MICHOWSKI

If you know me, you know I am somewhat predictable.

- I go to the same place for vacation over and over again.
- I have my favorite restaurants in New York City and rarely deviate.
- And, most importantly, I have always been *gaga* for Golden Retrievers. I've had a Golden in my life since I was 12 years old. My last one, Midas, was PERFECT.

When Midas crossed the Rainbow Bridge, we went in a different direction – a surprise for everyone who knows me well.

In October 2024, my husband and I traveled to Argentina, where we met two of the sweetest,



Marty at seven months walking on pool cover.

calmest Bernese Mountain Dogs on Earth. They were polite. They were quiet. They didn't beg, bark, jump on furniture, or even think about swimming in the resort pool.

After doing our research, we agreed on an "M" name. The Michowskis are all Ms – Michael, Monique, Maximilian, Madeleine, and Mia. That is a tradition



Marty at nine weeks old.

we could not change. We found Marty with a breeder in Indiana. He joined our family on May 10 (Mother's Day!) at nine weeks old and 18 pounds. Today he's 10 months and almost 100 pounds. Every Tuesday, Marty, my husband Michael, and I go to class. Marty just graduated Good Citizen Class, and he'll be repeating the course, because you can never be too good.

Marty is incredibly sweet and very loving. He hasn't gone swimming yet, and I am not encouraging it, but he *does* love standing on the pool cover – a testament to the strength of our pool cover. He also hasn't fully embraced the "no dogs on human furniture" rule...and honestly, I am okay with it (not the husband). I am ready to give him the sofa.

Marty has reinforced that not only can change be good...it can be great. Bernese Mountain Dogs are often called "Velcro dogs," and that describes them perfectly. He is always by our side... and we wouldn't have it any other way.

In the end, Marty didn't just join our family, he opened up our world and expanded the love in our hearts.



Monique Michowski is Director of Business Development, Bryn Mawr Communications, A US HealthConnect Company. She can be reached at mmichowski@bmcctoday.com or 908-910-3405.

A Vacation Leads to Rescue

BY MANDY GRAZIANI

My passion for cat rescue began in April 2025 during a family vacation at a resort in Negril, Jamaica. There, I discovered a troubling situation. The local community cats were suffering due to a discontinued spay/neuter program, resulting in an overwhelming population of kittens. With the veterinary clinic no longer permitted on the resort grounds and reports of mistreatment by some guests, I felt compelled to take action.

Upon returning home, I began researching the situation through social media and found that the community was actively discussing these concerns. I connected with several compassionate individuals who had already stepped in by fostering cats from the resort – bringing them all the way to the United States to provide them with better lives. Their stories reinforced my commitment to help. When my husband suggested I reach out to the General Manager we'd met, whose genuine concern for the community had impressed us, I seized the opportunity. I crafted a thoughtful email outlining



"I'm cute and I know it."

both the ethical and practical benefits of implementing a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program at the resort. To my delight, he responded within a week, and we soon scheduled a teleconference to discuss next steps.

This conversation led to a meaningful partnership with a local rescue organization that now conducts weekly TNR operations at the resort. Since then, my involvement has expanded significantly. I've helped facilitate connections between the local rescue and foster families in the United States. I've also become involved with multiple U.S.-based rescues to provide funding and support for their TNR initiatives, helping dozens of cats find safety and stability. My daughters and I also volunteer at shelters whenever we can.

If you'd like to support this work, donations of any size make a real difference: <https://gofund.me/c2e8f1a6>



"Not digging the hat so much."



Mandy Graziani is SVP, Director, Media, SSCG Media Group, 300 American Metro Boulevard, Suite 190, Hamilton, NJ 08619. She can be reached at mgraziani@omc.com.



From Pain to Purpose: Why Seeing “Pets Are Family” in the Barnes & Noble Window Meant Everything

BY ERIKA SINNER

I did not set out to be an author. I set out to survive one of the most painful seasons of my life.

When my husband and I lost our soul dog, Kingston, to cancer, the grief was overwhelming. Kingston was not a chapter of our life. He was our family. We chose not to have human children. Our dogs are our kids. But what I learned through that loss goes far beyond personal choice: Pets are family. It really is that simple.

SHARING THE PAIN OF LOSS

Writing *Pets Are Family* became a form of healing I didn't know I needed. The book was born from pain, but also from a deep need to make sense of it. To put language to a kind of grief so many people experience, yet are rarely given permission to name.

Just weeks after saying goodbye to Kingston, we found ourselves fighting for another member of our family. Our dog Edmond was diagnosed with aggressive oral cancer. Suddenly, we were back in survival mode. Radiation appointments. Surgeries. Long, uncertain days.

The University of Illinois saved Edmond's life, and we will be forever grateful. But the journey required a three-and-a-half-hour drive each way. Those drives and overnight stays became my writing time. I wrote from hospital parking lots, waiting rooms, and hotel rooms. I wrote while processing fear, hope, exhaustion, and love. The book became a place to put everything I could not say out loud.



Erika and husband Chris at Barnes and Noble, 5th Avenue, New York City.

they took their last breath. For anyone who felt the depth of that loss and then wondered if they were overreacting.

They weren't.

The love is real. And because the love is real, the grief is real too.

GRIEF UNDERSTANDING

I wrote *Pets Are Family* for anyone who has ever had to make the impossible decision to put their dog to sleep. For anyone who has held their best friend as

I also wrote it for people who did not understand. For the well-meaning friends, coworkers, or leaders who might say, “It was just a pet,” or “You can get another one.” I wanted to invite them into my life and show them why this kind of loss reshapes routines, homes, identities, and emotional well-being.



Erika and Kingston a few days before saying goodbye.

GRIEF AND SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

As an employer, I was acutely aware of how fortunate I was. I own my own company, and we have a compassionate pet bereavement policy. When Kingston was dying, I did not have to ask for permission to grieve. That access was critical, and it made one thing clear to me: Everyone deserves that support.

This is not a trend. It is a cultural shift.

Pets are not a lifestyle add-on. They are part of how people define family, responsibility, and emotional well-being. The next generation of employees expects workplaces to reflect real life, not separate from it. That means recognizing that family structures include pets.

Ninety-seven percent of U.S. pet guardians say their pets are part of their family. Research shows pet loss grief can be comparable to losing a human family member. Grief does not check itself at the office door. When it is ignored or dismissed, it does not disappear. It shows up as disengagement, burnout, absenteeism, and turnover. Replacing an employee can cost three-to-four times more than retaining one, and unsupported grief costs companies more than two-hundred-billion dollars annually.

Pet inclusive policies are not nice to have. They are smart investments in people and performance.

The good news is they do not need to be complicated or costly. Employers can start small: one-to-three days of flexible pet bereavement leave, manager training on how to respond to pet loss, flexibility around remote work during acute grief, and access to resources that include pet loss. What matters most is clarity and consistency.

Empathy is no longer a soft skill. It is a leadership skill. And empathy and excellence are no longer mutually exclusive.

VALIDATING LOSS

When I stood in New York City and saw *Pets Are Family* featured in the Barnes and Noble window on Fifth Avenue,

(Continued on page 13)



Saeem – My Service Dog

BY CHARLES MARTIN

Saeem is my trained service dog for vision and diabetes assistance. While most labradoodles are 75/25, Saeem is 50/50 giving him more muppet-like hair than a curly doodle. Saeem rides with me in a backpack while I bike and commute to work. He helps keep me safe by alerting me to low blood sugar – often by close contact and licking when something is off. On duty he’s calm, focused, and constantly checking in. Off duty, he’s pure joy: social, affectionate, and always ready to say hello.

PREPARING SAEEM

I got Saeem from Labradoodles of Long Island. In order to prepare him for service, we collected saliva on gauze samples when my sugar was dropping and then froze them. These samples were put on the mother when pups were nursing. So Saeem was hyper aware of low sugars and the smell was locked into his instincts.



Commuting and biking with Saeem. He stays close and alert.

When I went to visit the pups before bringing Saeem home, they gave me a teal-collared dog by mistake. While there, my sugar started to drop and a pup with a green collar walked over to me and started to whine. The owner looked at her list and realized her



Saeem at Headshot Day in the office.

mistake. The teal-collared dog was not mine; the green-collared one was.

SUCCESSFUL TRAINING

Saeem came home with me a month later and I did his behavior training. I had some experience with this since, years ago, I was strangled and lost a lot of vision. I turned that experience into a not-for-profit, training dogs for the blind in college. I also trained my last service animal, a Labradoodle as well, though it had been some time since that dog passed. Together with Saeem’s awareness of low sugar scent, I taught him to connect that smell with licking my hand or neck.

He beats all the sensors and gadgets in detecting my sugar issues. I also added some training for Saeem to guide me and now he is with me always. He has been in three countries and 12 states so far.



Off duty, Saeem is all warmth, curiosity, and joy.



Charles Martin is Group Director, Client Insights and Analytics, Omnicom. He can be reached at charles.martin@mbww.com.

“Pets Are Family” (Continued from page 12)

it was a moment I will never forget. Friends and family flew in to stand there with me. I did a national television interview while I was in the city. But the most meaningful part was not the visibility. It was the validation.

This story mattered enough to be seen. It mattered enough for national media to ask why this conversation belongs in the workplace. And it mattered enough for people to say, “Thank you for helping me say I’m not okay.”



Erika in front of the window display at Barnes and Noble on 5th Avenue in New York City.

Vulnerability created connection. And connection created change.

My hope is that anyone who loses an animal never feels ashamed for saying they are not okay. And that leaders recognize moments like these as opportunities to show up in ways that build loyalty, trust, and healthier cultures. Because when companies support people through real life, people bring their best selves back to work.

And that is how culture changes.



Erika Sinner is CEO and Founder, Directorie, Author of “Pets are Family,” and Chief Empathy Officer of the nonprofit TinySuperheroes. She can be reached at esinner@directorie.com or on LinkedIn or Instagram.



HUNK'S HAPPY TALE

BY JONATHAN AND ASHLEY LEE

“I could never do what you do; I’d just keep them all.” That is the single most common response we get when we mention that our family fosters dogs. And honestly? We get it. We would love to keep them all. But the reason we don’t keep them is precisely the reason we foster: You have to let one go to save the next one.

THE REALITY OF FOSTERING

Our family’s commitment to fostering is rooted in simple but powerful math. For every dog that moves out of a shelter and into a foster home, two lives are saved. You save the dog you take home, and you create an empty kennel for the next stray coming through the door.

While we both love the dogs, Ashley is the true taskmaster of our fostering operation. She manages logistics, keeps track of medical schedules, and ensures our revolving door of rescue pups runs smoothly alongside our chaotic life. Since we started this journey about two-and-a-half years ago, we have fostered roughly three dozen dogs. Some were just stopping by for a night or two before catching a “freedom ride” with a rescue organization. Others became part of our pack for months, settling in until their forever family finally found them.

FOSTERING HUNK

One of our recent long-term fosters was a big, lovable boxer mix named Hunk (known at the shelter as Dean Winchester). Weighing 70 pounds, Hunk was a gentle giant. He was house-trained, well-mannered, and clearly had been someone’s pet once. Yet, he was found as a stray, and nobody ever came to claim him. So, he sat in the shelter, waiting.



Quality check: Bed approved!

To understand why fostering is so critical, you must understand the difference between shelters. Municipal, government-run shelters are “open intake.” They are required by law to take in every animal that comes through their doors, regardless of space. Private humane societies or rescues can be “limited intake,” meaning they can close their doors when they are full. Government shelters don’t have that luxury.

That is the situation Hunk found himself in. He was safe but taking up a crucial kennel. Then, a crisis hit. A local

SWAT team executed a warrant and unexpectedly discovered 19 dogs that would be left uncared for. Suddenly, the shelter needed 19 kennels immediately. They put out an emergency plea. If they couldn’t move 19 current residents into foster homes, they would be forced to make heartbreaking decisions to create room.

MAKING AN EXCEPTION FOR HUNK

At the time, we were between fosters. We usually take a weeklong break to give our five resident dogs a breather, but that’s when Ashley saw the post about the SWAT situation. She knew the stakes, and we knew we had to help.

We were at the shelter within an hour. Our requirements are simple. The dog must be friendly with other dogs and good with children. A volunteer immediately suggest-



Enjoying a sunny day outside.

ed Hunk. We loaded him up and brought him home.

Our son loves welcoming a new foster, and Hunk was exceptional with him. We had Hunk for about two months before a family living an hour away saw him on the adoption website. He looked exactly like a dog they had recently lost. They drove down to meet him, the connection was instant, and Hunk left with them that afternoon. By that evening, we received a photo of him sleeping in his new owners’ bed.



Relaxing comfortably with one of his siblings.

HUNK'S FOREVER HOME

Today, Hunk lives on a farm with three other dogs, a flock of chickens, and two parents who adore him.

Hunk got the chance he deserved because a foster home opened up. While it is always bittersweet to say goodbye, the sadness is outweighed by the joy of seeing them live their best lives. We didn’t keep Hunk, and because of that, Hunk found the family he was meant for. We are ready to save the next one.

“Saving one dog will not change the world, but surely for that one dog, the world will change forever.”

– Karen Davison



Jonathan Lee is Chief Technology Officer, Formedics, LLC. He can be reached at 502-509-6181 or jonathan.lee@formedics.com.



Pharma Loves Their Pets

WE DIDN'T JUST GET A DOG, WE GOT A STORY

BY DIANE POWER

Tootsie, our Goldendoodle, came to us at five-and-a-half years old, already past her puppy days. We used to joke that we missed those challenging early years, but we always promised to love her fully and faithfully through her golden senior ones.

Now 12-and-a-half, Tootsie is our wise old soul who is gentle, intuitive, regal in the way only senior dogs can be. Recently, though, we started to feel something tugging at us: Maybe our Golden Girl could use a little company.

So we did a thing.

WE GOT OUR DOG A DOG

Enter Campbell, a tiny Goldendoodle bundle of joy, curiosity, and unfiltered enthusiasm. We named her Campbell as a nod to my dad, who worked at Campbell Soup Company for more than 40 years. It felt right. Meaningful. Full-circle.

Campbell was everything you'd hope a puppy would be: sweet, affectionate, endlessly optimistic. She bounced through life like every moment was the best moment.

And while she adored Tootsie, we quickly realized that her boundless puppy energy far exceeded what our senior girl could comfortably handle. Campbell's version of playtime was Tootsie's version of, "Please, no thank you."

And so...we did another thing.

WE GOT OUR PUPPY A PUPPY

When we learned that Campbell's mom was having one final "retirement" litter, something clicked. We reached out to the breeder and this time hoped for a little boy preferably on the smaller side. She told us she had just the pup for us.

All of the puppies had already been named at birth. Ours? His name was Johnny. My dad's name. Coincidence? Maybe. But I've always believed that certain moments line up in ways that feel intentional, even if we can't quite explain why.

Johnny turned out to be exactly what our household needed – gentle, steady, and the perfect counterbalance to Campbell's enthusiasm. And just like that, things found their rhythm.

THREE'S THE CHARM

Today, our home is shared by three very different dogs, each with their own personality and place. Tootsie, our heart. Campbell, our spark. Johnny, our quiet glue. Together, they've reminded us that sometimes the best decisions are the ones that don't make perfect sense on paper but feel right in your gut.

People often laugh when we tell the story. "You got your dog a dog...and then your puppy a puppy?" Yes, we did. And somehow, it works.

I've learned that pets often come into our lives exactly when they're needed – sometimes for us, sometimes for each other. Either way, we're grateful every day that these three found their way to us...and to one another.

Three dogs. One story. Angels on paws and all heaven-sent.



The Power of 3 – powered by love.



Diane Power is President, Business Unit, PeerDirect. She can be reached at 908-419-9656 (c) or diane.power@peerdirect.com.

Cheers to Whiskey and Mimosa

BY LORRAINE GIBSON

A year-and-a-month ago, our three-year-old rescue, Whiskey, trotted into our family's lives and forever changed them. From day one, he completely warmed our hearts and proved to be the best companion we could ever ask for. Whiskey's incredible impact inspired us to open our home to another dog.



Welcome home, sister.

This photo captures the day Mimosa, our newest family member, came home. We held our breath, worried about Whiskey's famously protective nature towards me, and how he'd adapt to a new sibling. But our fears dissolved instantly. He didn't just welcome her; he adopted her. My heart swelled witnessing him embrace his role as Mimosa's loyal big brother and playmate. He now guards her with every fiber of his being – if she barks, he barks right alongside her! It's clear – Whiskey, who once needed rescuing himself, found his purpose as a devoted protector. With these two inseparable souls, our family is truly, wonderfully whole.



Lorraine Gibson is VP, Information Technology, Compas. She can be reached at 856-667-8577 and lgibson@infocures.com.



Tales From Life With Jackson

BY JULIE GOULD

I brought my 10-year-old Doberman Pinscher, Jackson, home when he was only eight weeks old. It has been a wild ride with this big guy! After doing my research on him, I learned that he should be between 80-90 pounds. As he grew older, he also grew much larger. So much so that when I went to the vet once they told me they have never seen a Dobe so large! His heaviest was 130 pounds, but he was lean and has extremely long legs. Of course, it was just my luck that I got the biggest boy.

JACKSON FOUND ME

When I went to pick up Jackson, I was going to pick up the only female of his litter. I had just put my female Boxer down and thought I wanted to bring home another female dog. When I met the litter, I picked up one of the boys (now Jackson) and he nuzzled his head into my neck. I was sold. I left and as I was in the car home I wondered what was all over his face...Turns out he was very curious about some of his sibling's bowel movements. Needless to say, I knew I was in for a crazy ride with this guy!!

Earlier in Jackson's life, I held an event where, in lieu of favors, I made a donation to the Animal Allies of America. Any time I can support shelters or other animal-related events, I really try to. A close friend of mine works at a local animal shelter, so Jackson and I support her and donate many of his items that go unused. We even tried adopting a friend for my buddy, but I think this stinker just wanted his momma and cousins (two mixed pups) to occasionally visit. Can you say spoiled only dog?

JACKSON, THE COVER DOG

A friend of mine watched Jackson once when he was around one year old and took him to a pet photographer.



Jackson Meets Al Nostalgia: A prompt to make him look like a Lisa Frank image from the '90s.

The photographer would submit photos he took to *Pets+* magazine – a magazine for pet professionals. Well...Jackson was selected! The photographer told me the magazine has never had a Doberman on the cover before. They loved him because his ear was flopped over his head and it portrayed a very different look at a Doberman. Oftentimes, they come with a stigma that they are scary and ferocious – not this boy. I'm pretty sure this boy is scared of his own shadow!

Jackson loves to be dressed. I know most people doubt it, but he waits in anticipation to be dressed – especially in the wintertime. He has sweaters, pajamas, and plenty of Halloween costumes!

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

In my small two-bedroom apartment, Jackson has three giant dog beds for extra comfort. To say he's spoiled is an understatement. He was also part of my small hobby. I was creating gifts and other items for pop-up vendor events. I called it J&J Designs in honor of him being with me while I worked! Of course, his dog hair made it into some of the projects, so it was only fitting that he was part of the "company" name.

DON'T FORGET INSURANCE

Dobermans are not a breed for the weak, however. They do take a lot of attention and training. So, for folks who are looking to rescue or adopt, do your research!! They are great protectors, but socializing your Doberman is the most important thing. And for a Doberman, pet insurance is a must! They run the risk of heart issues, along with Von Willebrand Disease, and, of course, hip issues. Hip dysplasia in any large breed is always possible. I will warn, though, home insurance with a Doberman can be tough. Due to their historical aggressive nature (not always true), some insurance companies will not cover your home/apartment because of this breed's reputation. Good news, though, there are still plenty of companies that will cover!

My final story about Jackson is about his life working with me! He's been known to "talk" and participate on my team calls. He's often seen behind me walking around and, most of the time, everyone stops to talk to him. And if he's not behind me, I have a pillow of him sitting on the couch in my office. Formedics also has two casual team chats – The Water Cooler, for personal and fun updates, and The Water Bowl for all things pet related. As you can imagine, Jackson has been featured many times in The Water Bowl.

PART OF THE TEAM

As you can tell, I probably love my dog way more than I should, but he's the best thing to have happened in my life when things were really rough. A decade later, to still have him around is the most special thing.

I hope you loved learning a little about Jackson and seeing his pictures.

I hope you loved learning a little about Jackson and seeing his pictures.



Jackson catching snowballs at daycare.



Jackson as a Halloween monster in 2024.



Julie Gould is Senior Managing Editor, Physicians' Weekly, Formedics. She can be reached at julie.gould@formedics.com or 609-610-3318.



A Short Guide to a Better Life

BY ANN MEHL

As an Executive Coach, I spend most of my days helping accomplished people navigate stress and get out of their own way. And yet, some of the best wisdom I've encountered on this subject has not come from leadership books or personal development courses, but from watching a slobbering doe-eyed 80-pound Labrador navigate his days with more guile, wit, and charm than most C-suite executives I know.

Every morning, Sunny plants himself at the foot of my bed and wags his tail until I wake up. Not a bark. Not a whimper. Just the steady *thump-thump-thump* of his tail against the bed as if to say, "Hey, what do you say we get this thing started, huh?"

When my eyes finally open, his whole body vibrates with joy. Not because something extraordinary has happened, but because this moment, this day, is hugely exciting for him. His usual routine is to wander downstairs and look for food (very "on brand" for a Labrador). But not before he loudly slurps some water, shakes his jowls dry, and does some deep stretching and strange vocal exercises. After this, comes an amble outside to water the plants, look for birds, and cause a bit of mischief.

SUNNY'S MICRO-HABITS

There is a lot of behavioral research that supports the idea of building "micro-habits" – small behaviors that help us develop new neural pathways that compound like interest over time. I doubt Sunny knows too much about neural pathways. But he sure knows what feels good: a brisk trot around the block; a power nap midday; sniffing the pine trees. While most of us are already doomscrolling our phones and fueling up on caffeine, he's already made five deposits towards his mental and physical health. Then, he's busy rolling around in the grass where there appears to be a very good smell.

A POSITIVE MINDSET

One of Sunny's many great traits is that he is exuberantly available – to other people, other dogs, and new experiences. And any stick within a hundred-yard radius. Sunny's entire affect is one of unbridled optimism: "Maybe this will be good. In fact, maybe this will be *fantastic!*"

Many of us make snap decisions about people or ideas before they've had a chance to prove themselves. Dogs tend to do the opposite. They say *yes* first, evaluate later. Radical availability does not mean having no boundaries. It just means allowing for the possibility of surprise; some-

thing good *might* happen, if we let it. It's the difference between leading with curiosity and leading with fear.

THE POWER OF PRESENCE

If dogs do have one superpower, though, it's their complete understanding of what really is enough. There is no social comparison game with other dogs and what they are up to, what they wrote on Facebook, or where they are going for the holidays. Sunny does not know (like I do) that his buddy Max lives in a house twice the size of ours. Nor does he know that Max spends four months out of every year in Key West. Who cares? "Max is here now, and he wants to run with me! Hooray!"

Nor does Sunny worry too much about where his next meal will come from. Because, all things being equal, there is a pretty good chance that there will be more chow tomorrow. And more again, the day after that. Not that he is too concerned with the future. He is too busy enjoying *this* moment. What he knows is that when he is thirsty, he drinks water. Feeling sleepy? A short rest in that warm patch of sun is a surefire remedy. Some dog was mean to him

in the park earlier? That's okay, he's already forgotten about it. Is this revolutionary thinking? Hardly. But as an effective way to move through life, there's a lot to recommend it.

I think most of us know, deep down, that fostering an "attitude of gratitude" is one of the strongest predictors of well-being. Dogs are a good reminder of this, as are most animals. Because they know – as we do – that all joy is really local, and all that matters is making the best of *this* moment.

It may not be perfect, or even a moment we chose, but if we try, we can still find something to savor. And maybe that's the real wisdom of Sunny. Life isn't lived in some far off yonder. It is to be found in the here and now, and the small, beautiful, and ordinary moments that actually make up a life.



Sunny, the Fox Red Lab. Age 2.



Ann Mehl is an Executive Coach, Offering Leadership Development for Individuals and Teams. She can be reached at ann.mehl@gmail.com or 917-355-0956. Visit her at www.annmehl.com.

Valerie Cole



Birthplace: Baltimore, MD
Marital Status: Married
Job Title: Group Media Director
Years in Industry: 15
College: Drexel University

*"You're good. Get better.
 Stop asking for things."*
 — Don Draper

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

My first career was as an animator. I hold an AA in animation from The Art Institute of Philadelphia, which is now closed, sadly, but provided the opportunity to intern at MTV Studios. There, I worked on a very short-lived cartoon called Spy Groove. I recently found episodes on YouTube and thought, "Wow, I was a part of that."

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE YOU HAVE OVERCOME?

Putting myself back through school a second time. It was really hard to break into animation, and I eventually had to make the decision to move on and start again. I enrolled in community college and then transferred to Drexel University, where I earned a BS in Communication and Media Studies. It was a huge gamble because I had to fully fund it myself, but Shannon, my husband (then-boyfriend!), supported me while I took full-time classes and worked part-time at a marketing agency.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PETS?

Lucy is my Cocker Spaniel who faithfully sleeps under the desk, begs for my pretzels, and occasionally makes cameo appearances on Teams calls.

IF YOU COULD HAVE LUNCH WITH ANY PERSON, LIVING OR DEAD, WHO WOULD IT BE?

My nieces, Adeline (10) and Mia (7), but the restaurant would need to serve chicken tenders.

WHAT WOULD BE THE TITLE OF YOUR LIFE?

Bless Her Heart, She Still Hasn't Given Up: A Memoir.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE INDUSTRY?

I had my first agency opportunity through Drexel University's co-op program, where I learned about pharma marketing. After graduation, I spent the first few years in integrated agencies wandering around departments – filling positions in project management, copyediting, research, and analytics – before finding my spot in media.

DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES?

Reading books, but also buying books. I stand strong behind the idea that these are two separate hobbies. I also still like to draw and collect toys from the '80s and '90s. I'm on the hunt for an original Rainbow Brite.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOUR COLLEAGUES DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I don't just read a lot of books; I write them, too. To date, I've written seven novels and even had a literary agent at one

point. My stories have crossed the desk of every major traditional publisher in New York and, while none of my stories are currently published, I'm not done trying.

IF YOU COULD SEE ANYONE IN CONCERT, WHO WOULD IT BE?

I wish I'd seen Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour, but those ticket prices were insane! If you went, please tell me all about it so I can live vicariously through you.

WHAT WAS THE BEST PRESENT YOU EVER RECEIVED?

A lap desk, which sounds utilitarian and underwhelming, but Shannon noticed that when I worked from the couch, I always balanced my laptop on two pillows. Sometimes the best presents are the things you don't realize you need.

WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

Moved to Chicago sooner. Shannon and I have lived in Philadelphia, Nashville, and now outside Chicago. Being raised on the East Coast, I never thought I'd like the Midwest this much. I found a fun group of bookish friends and have fully committed to a love of Buffalo chicken dip.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT?

Diet Pepsi...yeah, I'm one of those monsters who prefers it to Diet Coke.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT AND WHY?

Cape May, NJ. After we left the East Coast, we tried several other beaches, including Little Tybee, Gulf Shores, and Waikiki, but nothing has come close to the cozy feel of a Victorian cottage "down the shore."

WHAT IS THE LAST GOOD BOOK YOU'VE READ?

Wild Dark Shore by Charlotte McConaghy and The Favorites by Layne Fargo.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW FOR SURE?

Don't look at your career like a ladder; it's really a winding path of experiences. If you reach a dead end, don't be afraid to turn right around and find another path. If you're going to make the change, pivot hard and take the gamble on yourself. In the end, you land where you're supposed to be.



Apple picking and Midwest living.

Valerie Cole is Group Media Director at Spring & Bond, part of Real Chemistry. She can be reached at valerie.cole@springandbond.com.



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- ▶ 26% of all prescriptions during office visits are written by family physicians³
- ▶ 23% of all patient visits go to family physicians³
- ▶ 239,000 CME quizzes completed annually—proof of reader engagement²

1 Source: AAFP Internal Data
 2 Source: M3 MI
 3 Source: IQVIA Data
 4 Source: CDC National Center for Health Statistics

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PDQ And The Power Of Two

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