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## The Importance of Pets

By Andrew Wang



Perchy the parakeet Photo provided

Lamorinda teens work hard. Between volunteering, studying and athletics there is hardly any time left for quality time with family, let alone the family pet. Almost 70 percent of U.S. households have at least one domestic pet, according to the American Pet Products Association, and recent studies have linked pet ownership with reductions in loneliness and depression, as well as other health benefits, so we must not forget to always cherish our most loyal and incorrigibly joyful family members, our pets.

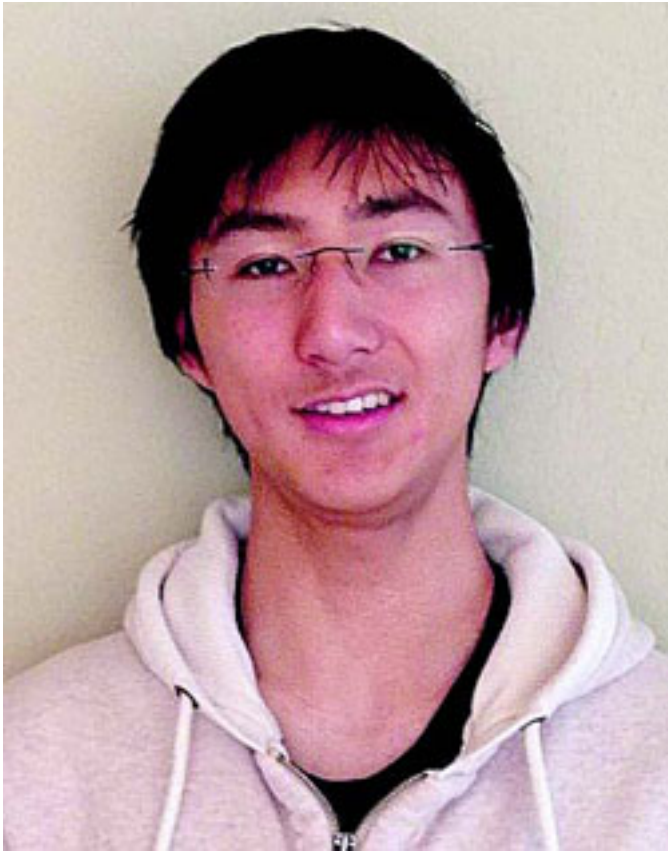
When I was 8, I got my first pet, a meek jade-blue parakeet we named Perchy. Perchy still greets me with a welcome chirp every day when I get home. Our happiest time of day together is when I practice the piano; Perchy's loud chirping counterpoint is the best musical accompaniment. His secret hobby is biting the pages of my homework, much to the chagrin of my teachers.

I asked other local teens about their relationships with their pets. Cary Huang of Campolindo says that, ever since he received two brown and black kittens from a family friend, they have been his endearing companions. He calls them "Good" and "Bad," and jokes that sometimes Good is the bad cat and Bad is the good cat. "Good sleeps on my chest every other night," he says, "but after 20 minutes of pure silence she instantly jumps to the floor and dashes away, which always wakes me up. Then early in the morning, around six, she'll meow because she wants the window blinds open so she can sit on the windowsill. I open the blinds while half-asleep, before realizing that the bright sunlight pours in. But, I do it for Good because Good really likes it."

Kourosh Arasteh says his family's dog, Elvis, is not just "incredibly loyal" but also "channels the Lhasa Apso spirit. ... This breed was used to guard temples in Tibet. He literally warms up my day," he says, "mostly my feet, because he likes to lie on them." Another Campolindo student adds that his favorite part of having a dog is "having a companion that loves me unconditionally."

For all animal owners, pets are heartwarming friends and usually considered an integral part of the family unit. Whether you are a cat, dog, rabbit, mouse, chicken, or iguana owner, take a moment to appreciate the love and entertainment your furry, feathered, or scaly family member has granted you. Treat him or her with a nutritious snack, safe toy and your loving attention. Your bond with your pet is truly special and deserves to be celebrated. Who owns whom is a question that cannot be answered.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.



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