

## Contents

- Springtime Tips for Pets ..... 2
- Spotlight on Our Volunteers: Lauren Adiletta..... 3
- Happy Tails: Success Story..... 4
- Volunteering with EASEL ..... 4
- Contact Us/Hours of Operation..... 5
- Pet Adoptions ..... 5
- Animals For Adoption..... 6
- The Human Bond with Dogs..... 8



*Pictured: Our newly constructed path to the dog play yard*

## Kitten Season Is Upon Us: How EASEL and YOU Can Help

Spring is not only a time when flowers bloom and grass grows. It's also a time when LOTS of kittens are born.

In most places across America, animals mate and give birth in spring. This phenomenon can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as longer days, better weather and more access to food, which means higher survival rates for the offspring. Unlike other animals, cats can keep on reproducing, having litter after litter, year after year. (bestfriends.org). Theoretically, one cat can give birth to three litters of kittens per year. With an average of four kittens per litter, and assuming an average lifetime of 15 years, this could result in up to 180 kittens over the lifetime of one cat (pets.thenest.com). Assuming these offspring continue to breed ... well, you get the idea ... hundreds of thousands of cats (oh my)!

Where do they all go, you ask? Mostly, they congregate in feral colonies outside, and those that are captured, may be brought to local

**Continued on page 7**

## Quarterly Update EASEL Q2 News and Milestones

### COVID-19 and EASEL

As the world, including New Jersey, races to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we at EASEL have also been monitoring the situation closely. We'd like our community to know that we take the health of our staff and animals seriously. We were ahead of the game from the start and have always followed best practices in the industry for maintaining animal shelter cleanliness, safety and sanitation. We are confident in our practices to keep everyone safe -- whether they have a tail or not.

Long before the outbreak, we had adapted recommendations by America Pets Alive! (APA!), a nation-wide educational program that works to prevent as many animals as possible from

unnecessary deaths. That includes helping shelters like ours put into place guidelines and training for our volunteers and staff about educating the public on a variety of subjects, including proper sanitation.

During times of crisis, it also helps us alleviate the risks associated with having to take in more animals than we (and shelters like ours) can provide, which could lead to unnecessary decisions to euthanize animals due to a lack of space.

Once the COVID-19 outbreak occurred, APA! released further guidelines and checklists that our staff has followed, including putting into place a framework to ensure that no shelter pet lives are lost and that our staff is proactive in protecting the health and safety of our pets and the community. These guidelines

**Continued on page 5**

# Tips to Keep Your Pets Safe While Outside This Spring



The days are getting longer, the weather is getting warmer, trees are budding, flowers are starting to bloom...spring is well on its way! While many of us welcome spring with open arms, you may not have thought about what the change in season means for our furry friends.

We'd like to provide some safety tips and tricks to help keep all the members of your family, especially the furry ones, safe and happy this spring.

## Flowers in Bloom

Spring is often synonymous with flowers in bloom, which, if you suffer from allergies, may not always be a welcome thing, but for our pets, it can be especially dangerous. Easter lilies, for example, are incredibly toxic to cats. Just one nibble from the petal, leaf or stem can lead to kidney failure or even death. Other flowers, like rhododendron and azaleas are also toxic to our pets. The ASPCA has a list of all plants that are poisonous to animals, along with photos of the plant, to make them easier to identify.

Gardening is a favorite springtime hobby for many of us, but we should be cautious about the products we use to care for our plants. Many fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides are toxic to our pets. And

with April showers, rain that accumulates in puddles often contains run-off from these chemicals and could make our animals sick if they drink from them.

Pets are also not immune to spring allergies. If you suspect your pet may be suffering from allergies, please consult with your vet, as allergic reactions can be very dangerous for animals.

## Holiday Food

While we should always exercise caution and avoid feeding our pets food meant for human consumption, it is especially important when it comes to food traditionally served during Easter and Passover celebrations. Fatty meats can be dangerous to our furry friends and the chocolates and sugars found in spring candies are especially toxic. Another staple of spring home décor is the colorful plastic grass often seen in Easter baskets. This material, if ingested by our pets, can lead to intestinal blockages and require surgery.

## Outdoor Activities

After being cooped up all winter and during the COVID-19 outbreak, many people will celebrate by spending much more time outside. It is important to make sure your pets are up-to-date on all of their shots, as well as flea, tick and heartworm control medications.

Also, if you let your animals spend more time outside in the spring, please make sure they are microchipped and that your contact information is up-to-date. If you adopted from EASEL, all of our animals have been microchipped and details should have been given to you in your adoption packet. If you like to open your windows and doors in the spring, please make sure that the

screens are firmly and securely attached to prevent your pets from accidentally escaping or injuring themselves.

## New Friends

Spring is a time for new life ... everywhere, baby animals are being born. And while baby animals of all kinds are irresistibly cute, they only stay little for so long and many, like rabbits and chicks, require specialized care as they grow. If you plan to adopt some new furry friends, make sure you have researched what they will require as they grow and are prepared to handle them at all stages of their life. As always, we want animals to find their forever homes, not just their fur-now homes.

### Our Bingo Event Has a New Date!

EASEL's Spring 2020 Handbag Bingo fundraiser has been rescheduled for Sunday, June 14 at 3 p.m. at the West Trenton Ballroom in Ewing, New Jersey.

Ticketholders who purchased tickets for the April 3 event can use those same tickets to gain entrance into the June 14 event.

Ticketholders who purchased tickets for the April 3 event and can't make the rescheduled date of June 14, can contact Annette at [easelfundraising@gmail.com](mailto:easelfundraising@gmail.com) to discuss refund options.

Thank you so much for your patience and understanding as we worked to reschedule our bingo.

Donations are urgently needed during this time. Please [click here](#) to donate online.



# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR VOLUNTEERS:

## Lauren Adiletta

On any given day of the week during the past two years, if you visited the EASEL animal shelter site in Ewing, you likely would have bumped into Lauren Adiletta (depending on the time of day). That's because Lauren has been fiercely dedicated – a fixture – at the shelter's play yard, working with our shelter's dogs on a daily basis.

"If you don't know who I am, you aren't there enough," Lauren jokes about the time she dedicates to the shelter.

Lauren's work with EASEL began about 10 years ago, when she started by volunteering to take dogs to adoption events on weekends. That evolved into fostering dogs (she still fosters today), and then eventually, she added dog walking during the week to her list of duties.

About three years ago, EASEL applied for a grant from the Dogs Playing for Life mentorship, an innovative program founded by professional trainer Aimee Sadler that provides training for shelter staff and volunteers about the fundamentals of successful play and group experiences for dogs.

EASEL received the grant, and Lauren was on her way to the five-day program to learn about safely managing dog playgrounds, effective strategies for helping dogs interact with each other and, for some, getting them out of their shells.

"That program really jumpstarted our playgroup activities at EASEL," Lauren says. "It gave me more knowledge and practice in pulling dogs into groups and the confidence to do it."

At the mentorship program, Lauren practiced with professional trainers who managed an upwards of 160 dogs in three different playgrounds that were separated, but connected; dogs would be separated into groups of 20.

Back at EASEL, Lauren now groups dogs into groups of up to six or eight on a daily basis and works with them to build their social skills. The playgroups are an important tool that EASEL



uses to help care for its dogs as they prepare to find their new homes.

"It really helps the dogs, not just in socializing with other dogs, but also getting comfortable with people," Lauren says. "They know you're in there taking care of them, and you're not going to let anything bad happen to them."

Sometimes, if a dog is a bit more fearful, it helps them come out of their shell a bit – it kind of helps them learn how to 'dog.'"

Lauren says she utilizes tools to help manage the group, including one that makes a compressed air sound to help redirect a dog's attention when needed. Another is an oar-shaped tool that can serve as a safe way to separate two engaged dogs. Combined with her training to recognize and understand a dog's body language, these tools have helped keep a very safe environment for both the dogs and volunteers.

For some of the tougher dogs, Lauren goes a step beyond. She visits with them before the playgroups, takes them to the yard individually and sits with them. With each dog, she sits there until the dog feels comfortable to come to her.

Then, over time, she introduces the dog to progressively more balanced dogs to test the dog's reaction and adjust her socialization plan.

In the end, it is worth it for Lauren, when a dog is adopted and finally finds a safe, stable, secure home. "Once it's been a couple of weeks after a dog gets adopted, and I hear the dog is doing great, then I can relax a little bit that we helped this dog get to the right home!"



# Happy Tails: Cat's Journey from Tragedy to Relaxation

For one cat, her journey to EASEL was a tragic and arduous one, but ended in a happily ever after!

**Meet Scarlet.** When EASEL first learned of Scarlet, she was part of a group of 21 cats rescued from a severe hoarding situation. She came to EASEL with three of the other rescued cats, whose cages were filled with water and ice. All of the cats were in terrible shape, but Scarlet was in the worst condition and it was clear she had been through a terrible ordeal in her life. The most timid and afraid of the four, she was malnourished, extremely thin, had very little fur and had open scabs along her spine.

EASEL's vet estimated Scarlet to be around 9 or 10 years old, and she was very evidently distressed by her new environment: she did not take well to being in a cage, despite the fact that she was now warm, safe and well-fed. She would remain on the upper shelf of her cage, tucked way into the corner – clearly wishing to simply disappear.

For tricky cases like Scarlet, EASEL calls in its big guns: our resident cat whisper, Bo, who has helped cats through miraculous turn-arounds from angry, hissy, kitties to cuddly, friendly chatterboxes. Scarlet proved to be a challenge, even for Bo. So the EASEL team decided to give her an upgrade to one of our "penthouse" cat cages – large enough for Scarlet to stretch her

legs and with a window view where she could birdwatch. The penthouse treatment is normally enough to turn even the most taciturn of kitties into



*Scarlet's fur has regrown, and she enjoys sunbaths in her fur-ever home!*

more engaged and alert cats.

Alas, Scarlet was immune to her luxurious upgrade. If anything, she seemed even more timid and afraid. EASEL's volunteers thought maybe all of the changes and open space was overwhelming for her; maybe what Scarlet really needed was to feel safe and secure.

So the volunteers moved her into a smaller cage, and miraculously, that did the trick! Scarlet started to open up and come to the front of her cage. She began to respond to the volunteers, including Bo.

With Scarlet having rounded a corner, EASEL featured her as the "kitty of the week" on Facebook. A regular EASEL volunteer saw her, heard her story and felt an immediate connection. She sent a note to EASEL on a Tuesday, met Scarlet for the first time on a Saturday and the rest, as they say, is history.

A month into her new life, Scarlet is now spending her golden years enjoying regular sunbaths and receiving numerous pets and cuddles on demand.



*Scarlet was malnourished and timid when she arrived at EASEL.*

## Join Our Team of Volunteers!

The EASEL Animal Rescue League's Volunteer Program consists of dedicated and compassionate individuals who are looking to match their skills and passions with their love of animals. We couldn't achieve all that we do without volunteers — they are the reason behind our success.

Volunteers are involved in almost all aspects of the shelter and help provide organization, direction, and energy to our efforts and programs. EASEL is active on many fronts and we need motivated volunteers to help us. Volunteers actively help with our day-to-day operations, fostering, adoptions, Adoption Day Events, medications, training, and community education.

### Volunteer Opportunities

*Organizational Support Opportunities*

Fundraising – Community Outreach – Humane Education – Event Organizing – Advertising – Event Promotion – Maintaining Donation Boxes – Collecting Food Donations – Photographer – Grant Writing

### Animal Care Opportunities

Cat Adoptions – Dog Adoptions – Cat Socializing – Dog Socializing – Home Fostering – Barn Cat Placement – Dog Walking – Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) – Adoption Events – Medication Administration – Transporting Animals – Dog Training – Grooming – Cat Pawsitive training program



## Milestones (continued from page 1)

also included modules that helped us enact protocols for animal protection, emergency fosters, and more.

This continues to be our top priority. Because of the seriousness of the situation, we had to make the decision to temporarily close the shelter to visitors from the public.

***This does not mean animal adoptions are on hold. It also does not stop the need for donations for our animals.***

We will keep everyone updated via our social channels and website when we are able to re-open the site to the public. However, there are important things to remember during this time:

- We rely on donations, especially in times of need like these. Remember that animals need care and proper nutrition just as much as humans who are sheltering in place may need. Having to shut down operations does not affect the need to continue to admit animals in need of immediate shelter. If you can donate, please continue to do so. You can choose to donate online by clicking here.
- You can also purchase an item from our wish list on Amazon, which is still delivering critical pet-related food and other items during this time. You can also contact us to make an appointment to drop off a donation.
- Our pets are still in need of loving homes. If you wish to arrange to meet a pet, we are still scheduling individual appointments.
- Our Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) program is still ongoing, as spring is upon us and kitten season is arriving regardless

of the COVID-19 outbreak.

- We are working hard to reschedule a number of our events that had to be postponed due to the virus outbreak. Please stay tuned for updates as they become available. ***Our Bingo event has already been rescheduled! See page 2 for more info!***

Please know that EASEL will continue to support our furry friends during this time. We hope that our volunteers and community stay safe, and we will be in touch with updates as often as we can.

In the meantime, we encourage our volunteers and community to stay connected with us via our [EASEL Facebook page](#), where you can continue to see updates about our pets who have luckily found their forever homes during this time.

We are grateful to our volunteers who continue to make the trek into our facility to care for our animals during this time. We are also grateful for our community members who continue to welcome our pets into their homes and hearts despite the current state of our world as we battle this virus.

### ON A LIGHTER NOTE...

We reported in the last edition about the opening of our new trailer and the opportunity it has provided for us to better house our pets and provide an enhanced working environment for our staff.

We're excited to let you know that we also have recently opened a new path around the side of the shelter to get to the play yard for our dogs. This trail reduces the amount of mud and dirt that our dogs can carry with them and offers a safer path

for our staff and visitors.

We look forward to future improvements and continuing to make the environment for our animals and community safe and comfortable.

### SEEKING NEW SHELTER

EASEL is seeking a new location for a larger shelter. If you know of a suitable place in Mercer County (land with or without a building), please contact Karen Azarchi, President ([kazarchi@easelnj.org](mailto:kazarchi@easelnj.org)).

### VOLUNTEER MODULES

As a reminder, we have training modules rolling out as part of our volunteer assessment. Volunteers should check their email for the next training module coming out in April.

## Pet Adoptions

While our pet adoption events are on hold, we are still holding adoptions by appointment once an adopter is approved. You can fill out an application online by [clicking here](#).

A phone interview is conducted prior to meeting pets.

Additionally, pet stores are considered essential, like grocery stores. So, our cat habitats at Petsmart are occupied with cats that the public can meet. Social distancing practices are in effect when pet meet and greets take place.

## CONTACT US

### PHONE / WEB

(609) 883-0540  
[info@easelnj.org](mailto:info@easelnj.org)  
[www.easelnj.org](http://www.easelnj.org)

### ADDRESS

4 Jake Garzio Drive  
 Ewing, NJ, 08628

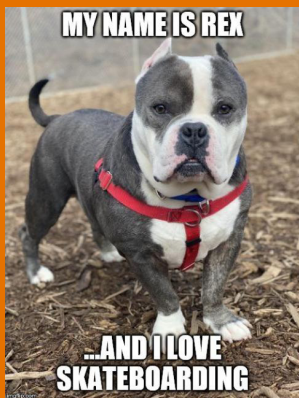
(Near Trenton-Mercer Airport off I-295,  
 behind the municipal building.)

### ADOPTION CENTER

Everyday: 12 noon - 3 p.m.  
 Wednesday Evenings:  
 5-7 p.m.

# Who Will Be Our Next Happy Tail?

## Featured: EASEL Pets for Adoption



### Rex

*Adult/ Male/ Neutered  
American Staffordshire Terrier,  
English Bulldog*

Hey, Guys! My name is Rex, and I am not just going to throw myself at you, but I like people! Most of all, I would make an excellent companion for you. I like female dogs as they love my good looks, but I can be dominant of other male dogs. I don't do so well with children either, but I promise you, I will do what I can to put a smile on your face! They tell me I have some skin issues ,but it will clear up. I am a mixed breed, but I am not mixed up ,as I know I want to be your lifetime companion. Any dog that can skateboard is worth his weight in gold.



### Clamer Mom

*Adult/ Female/ Medium /  
Spayed*

Clamer Mom roams our cat room, giving cuddles and foot rubs to all who enter. She is simply irresistible. This is that special cat who comes when you call, greets you at the door, and purrs on contact. If you are ready for a furry friend full of unconditional love, this is your girl! She loves to play with cats, and gets along well with dogs! She'd make a perfect addition to any home!

For our full list of adoptable pets, visit [easelnj.org](https://easelnj.org).

## Donations Needed!

Not unexpected, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many, if not all of EASEL's important fundraisers were put on hold or cancelled. Unfortunately, animals coming into the shelter will not be!

If you can find it in your heart, please think about donating a few bucks, food, grocery store/pet store gift cards, or any of the items listed below to EASEL.

Items especially needed during 'kitten season' are:

- Kitten Formula (KMR)
- Dry Kitten Food
- Chicken or Turkey Baby Food
- Kitten Nursing Bottles & Nipples
- Plastic Forks, & Knives
- Old Towels, Sheets, & Blankets
- SnuggleSafe® microwave heating pads

[Click here to donate online!](#)

You can also order items from our Amazon wishlist and have them sent to us or call to arrange a drop-off at our site. [Click here for our Amazon wishlist!](#)

Thanks, fellow animal lovers, and be well. Take care of yourselves and each other!

## Kitten Season (continued from page 1)

animal shelters. EASEL, as you can imagine, is extraordinarily busy this time of year with managing the community feline overpopulation and dealing with the increased volume of kittens coming into the Ewing Animal Shelter. EASEL relies on 2 of its most successful programs during this time to manage the increase: Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) and the Foster Network.

### TNR Program

As part of the TNR program, members of outdoor cat colonies are trapped, given a health check, rabies vaccination, and are then spayed/neutered. Kittens and adult cats comfortable with human interaction are considered for adoption. Feral cats, those that are not or cannot be socialized to humans, are returned to their home territory.

The TNR program has been very successful in reducing the size of cat colonies over time. Since 2011, EASEL has trapped and spayed/neutered 3,736 cats from 596 separate colonies. EASEL can assist residents who identify and manage feral cat colonies throughout Mercer County.

If you see a colony of kittens loitering about, follow these important tips:

- Unless the kittens are in a dangerous situation or clearly suffering, do NOT pick them up.
- Immediate danger includes severe weather (rain, frost, heat), a dangerous environment (near busy roads, loose dogs), etc.
- Most kittens found outside are being well cared for by their mother or by a community, called a "colony," of feral cats. While shelters and volunteers work hard to ensure cats in colonies are "fixed" so they can't reproduce, newcomers to the colonies often aren't and reproduce.

#### ***But I don't see a mother...***

- The mom cat may be out looking for food or finding a new home for her babies. If the kittens look healthy and uninjured, keep your eye on their location from a distance (more than 35 feet) and wait for the mother to return. Healthy kittens are okay without their mother for a couple of hours. And mom might stay

away if she feels threatened by you, so don't get too close to the kittens.

#### ***Okay...the mom did come back.***

- Great! If the mom seems to be relocating the kittens, you may not see them again. If she seems to have set up a nest on your property, you can provide additional shelter and leave food out.
- At about 5 weeks, kittens will start to eat on their own. Let your local rescue group know you have a mom and kittens living on your property. They can provide traps once the kittens are weaned to get the mom and kittens fixed.

#### ***The mom hasn't come back!***

- If it has been several hours with no sign of a mother, or if the kittens are in an imminently dangerous situation, you should try to capture the kittens.
- Find a pet carrier (or a box if you don't have a carrier). Line it with newspaper.
- Kittens have extra skin at the base of their neck called scruff. This is the easiest way to pick them up and will keep their nails and teeth opposite your hand. Don't worry, scruffing kittens doesn't hurt them.
- Kitten litters usually range between 2 and 6 kittens. You may need to return to the spot several times over the course of a few hours to make sure no kittens were hiding out of site.
- Call your local shelter or animal control to ask what to do with abandoned kittens.

### Resources

- For trap loans, contact EASEL Animal Rescue 609-883-0540 [info@easelnj.org](mailto:info@easelnj.org)
- For more information on abandoned kitten care:
  - <https://meowbox.com/blog/2016/3/10-steps-to-save-abandoned-kittens>
  - <https://humanebroward.com/found-kittens/>
  - <http://www.animalalliancenyc.org/wordpress/2013/05/what-to-do-and-not-do-if-you-find-a-newborn-kitten/>

### Foster Network

EASEL could not save as many animal lives as it does without its incredible foster network. A foster provides a temporary



home to animals, where they are loved, cared for, and socialized until they find their forever home. This program also frees up shelter space to take in more stray animals from the community, including those currently housed in 'kill' shelters, where their chances of euthanasia are great. If you're interested in becoming a foster host, here's some information:

#### ***What's required of me?***

- Love, care for, feed, and provide a safe, nurturing environment for the animal until a forever family is found—each animal is different, so the foster period will vary
- EASEL is responsible for all of the animal's medical treatments, so visits may be required from time-to-time
- Bring your foster pet to 3 EASEL Adoption Day events per month, and make arrangements to meet potential adopters or, once altered, your foster will be housed at the shelter or with one of our off-site adoption partners (pet store or vet office)

#### ***Benefits of Fostering***

- Lots of happy licks and tail wagging
- For most animals, EASEL will promote your foster as an available adoptee on PetFinder
- An opportunity to have a companion pet without a life-long commitment
- An enriching and rewarding experience!
- An appreciative companion and knowing you saved a life

### How to Become a Foster

You can contact the Foster Coordinator at 609-883-0540 for more information, and we encourage you to **submit a cat (or dog) foster application online**. Our Foster Coordinator will contact you to evaluate your household arrangements and personal preferences in order to match you with a homeless animal.



## SPECIAL FEATURE:

### WHAT DOES SCIENTIFIC RE-SEARCH REVEAL ABOUT OUR CONNECTION WITH DOGS?

Napoleon Bonaparte is universally considered one of the most brilliant political and military minds in history. By his own admission, he coldly ordered without remorse thousands of soldiers to march to certain death. Yet years after waging his legendary military campaigns, he confessed that the one time he was moved to tears on the battlefield was by the desperate gaze of a dog imploring Napoleon with grieving eyes to raise its dead human companion. As recounted in the book *War Dogs*, Napoleon wrote:

Perhaps it was the spirit of the time and the place that affected me. But I assure you no occurrence of any of my other battlefields impressed me so keenly. I halted on my tour to gaze on the spectacle, and to reflect on its meaning. The soldier I realized must have had friends at home and in his regiment yet he lay deserted by all except his dog...I had looked on, unmoved, at battles which decided the futures of nations. Tearless, I had given orders which brought death to thousands. Yet here I was, stirred, profoundly stirred, stirred to tears. And by what? By the grief of one dog. I am certain that at that instant, I felt more ready than at any other time to show mercy toward a suppliant foe man."

What is it about our dogs that allow them to touch our deepest emotions and even, as Napoleon was, move us to become someone better than ourselves? Not only have they transitioned from the wild wolf to our domestic partner, they share our homes and our daily lives. What is it that allowed dogs to evolve from an instinctive predator with an aversion to humans to our most loyal companions who, seemingly without effort, can read our very thoughts and feelings better than our closest friends and family members?

There are a group of scientists who have dedicated their careers to answering questions like these. Using methods and technology that range from sophisticated behavioral experiments to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), scientists have gained profound insights into how our canine companions think and contextualize their own existence within our lives.

It is believed that modern dog originated from wolves that were assimilated into hunter/gatherer human populations. These wolves were likely among the more docile and less aggressive individuals; more scavenger than hunter. Humans probably began breeding the wolves of their choice shortly after they won the trust of the more social ones; in fact, the dog is the first domesticated animal. And within a very short period of time, perhaps only a few generations based upon a famous selective breeding study with foxes, the "friendliest" wolves evolved into the dog as we know it today.



Based on DNA evidence, dogs were first domesticated at least 14,000 years ago during the Stone Age in Asia.

What are some of the attributes that differentiate dogs from wolves? As noted in the New York Times best seller *Inside of a Dog*, for dogs, "socialization among humans is natural; not so for wolves, who learn to avoid humans naturally." Dogs develop strong bonds with their caretakers, what is called "attachment" for infants. And while dogs look to our eyes for information and clues into our thoughts, wolves avoid eye contact.

But one of the truly amazing behavioral traits unique to dogs is they constantly watch and analyze our actions, habits and behavior. They watch us from across the yard, out of the corner of their eye, when we're folding laundry or watching a football game. They've learned to detect the most subtle cues and gestures that often reveal our feelings and motives. Dr. Alexandra Horowitz, a psychology professor at Columbia and the author of *Inside of a Dog*, observes: "Untrustworthy people often glance furtively in conversation. Dogs notice this gaze." Similarly, dogs notice aggressive behavior like "bold eye contact" or exaggerated motion. Dogs are not always correct in their assessments, but experiments have shown that dogs will more likely than not approach the friendly and avoid the unfriendly.

The Dog Project was a pioneering research study performed by Dr. Gregory Berns of Emory University that demonstrated through extensive brain imaging "that dogs had mental processes substantially similar to our own." By imaging the activation of different parts of the dog brain to different stimuli, his research indicates that their neurons are arranged in such a way to "concoct mental models of our behavior." In other words, one might say that dogs are naturally hard wired to learn our behaviors and tendencies, traits and personality through repeated observations. As he explains in his book *How Dogs Love Us*, "The brain data pointed to dogs' unique interspecies intelligence. In answer to the question 'What are dogs thinking?' the grand conclusion is this: they're thinking about what we're thinking."

So the next time your dog magically reads your mind with just a distant glance, rest assured that her species has had thousands of years of human interactions and evolution to become the best and most loyal friend you'll ever have.

Donations are urgently needed during this time.  
Please [click here](#) to donate online.