

Cats, dogs, Quillie the hedgehog are sources of comfort in crisis

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Image 1. For many people, pets are providing comfort, routine and company during the coronavirus pandemic. Photo: Artem Beliaikin/Unsplash

Lala is a black Labrador. A Labrador is a breed of dog. Ufuoma George got Lala in mid-March. The dog came at the right time. Ms. George is stuck in her apartment. She has to stay home because of the coronavirus. Staying home will help slow the spread of the virus. The flu-like illness can make some people very sick.

Lala, Ms. George thought, would be great company. The dog turned out to be so much more.

"Being alone at home kind of is hard," says Ms. George. Lala gives her comfort. Ms. George has someone to care for.

Pets Help Fill The Newly Empty Hours

Pets are now heroes. Many animals have been newly adopted. Others are being fostered. When you foster an animal you bring it to your house for a short time. When you adopt an animal you bring it home to stay. People want pets. The animals fill the newly empty hours.

Zoe is a 12-week-old terrier. This is another breed of dog. Laura Evans's family got the little dog after the coronavirus outbreak. Zoe needs lots of attention. The family is happy to give it to her.

"Everyone wants to hang with her," Ms. Evans said.

Nancy Karan lives in New York. She lives with her dog Shadow. Walking Shadow gets her out of her apartment. At night they sleep together for comfort.

Quillie Nelson is a hedgehog. Quillie is named after Willie Nelson. He is a musician. The pet lives in Houston, Texas. Quillie helps Rachael Pavlik and her two teens. Caring for their animals makes them feel more normal.

Kitty Block runs the Humane Society. The group takes care of animals. She wants more people to foster and adopt.

"It frees up space in the shelter," she said.

Trainer Says Owners Need To Tire Out Their Pets

Many people love being with their pets all the time. Some, though, find it hard. Nicole Ellis trains dogs. She said owners need to tire out their pets.

"We can't blame them if they're like, 'I'm bored! I'm bored!' and they haven't done anything all day. It's not their fault," she said.

Squiggles does not have that problem. She is a bearded dragon. The lizard lives in South Orange, New Jersey. Dan Cohen's 13-year-old daughter, Julia, cares for her. The chill lizard even has her own tiny mask.

Aubrey Fine studies human behavior. She said such relationships are good. They help both humans and animals. Even in hard times, "goodness is still around us."

