

Puppies make Responsible Couples

[by Dr. Elizabeth McGill]



Young couples often adopt a pet as they seek to unify and solidify their relationship together. Adopting a pet together creates a mutual responsibility. It is the next step after securing accommodation together, promising a life of blissful happiness together and looking forward to a shared future. Putting it bluntly adopting a pet is a great “trial run” before having kids. You get real hands-on experience about adding a mixture of chaos and wonder into your life. After having a pet you will have already worked out who will get up in the middle of the night, what will be sacrificed in order to cover the financial responsibility of another mouth to feed and which one of you will smile first as your family member “shakes a paw” for the first time. You will experience the joy of watching some thing that you have done together grow and be proud of it. You will find that you will be including pictures of your “little one” in

Christmas Cards, delighting your friends with amazing stories and looking forward to the end of the day for quiet snuggle time.

There are many options to be considered about where to adopt your family member from. Most Humane Societies have a large adoption center with a variety of ages and breeds to choose from. Most of the Humane Societies screen dogs for aggression before putting them up for adoption and cats and dogs are already spayed or neutered. If you are interested in a specific breed, pet breeders are a good source for adopting your pet. Look for breeders that socialize their kittens and puppies and ones where you are able to meet the parents of the pet you are going to adopt. Many breeders offer a guarantee of health and require a health check by a veterinarian within a few days of purchase. Do read the fine print on the guarantee and know what you are actually being guaranteed for. In the last few years

many of my clients are finding puppies through Kijiji. Often when you get to the person’s home you find many puppies (not just the one advertised) of different breeds and ages and there is no mother or father of the puppies on site. You will hear stories like “my sister is the breeder of the puppies and she is in the hospital right now and I am just helping her to sell these puppies”. Unfortunately this is how puppy mills distribute their puppies and you are buying from a distributor.

Regardless of where you purchase your new puppy or kitten remember that they will need to visit a veterinarian for a health check up, be vaccinated (puppy and kitten vaccinations are never complete before 16 weeks of age) and be put on a de-worming schedule. Your veterinarian is your best partner for information about diet, vaccinations, parasites, training, health insurance and preventative health care.

Having a pet as part of the family completes the family. They teach us about the value of a life other than our own. ■