



# Zani's Furry Friends



Summer 2008 Newsletter

## Raw Materials

The primary ingredients in pet food are byproducts of meat, poultry, and seafood, feed grains, and soybean meal. Among the animals used in rendering are livestock, horses, and house pets which have been put to sleep. The National Animal Control Association estimated that each year about 5 million pets were shipped to rendering plants and recycled into pet food during the 1990s. They are generally listed as meat or bone meal in the ingredient lists.

The animal parts used for pet food may include damaged carcass parts, bones, and cheek meat, and organs such as intestines, kidneys, liver, lungs, udders, spleen, and stomach tissue. Cereal grains, such as soybean meal, corn meal, cracked wheat, and barley, are often used to improve the consistency of the product as well as to reduce the cost of raw materials. Liquid ingredients may include water, meat broth, or blood. Salt, preservatives, stabilizers, and gelling agents are often necessary. Gelling agents allow greater homogeneity during processing and also control the moisture. They include bean and guar gums, cellulose, carrageenan, and other starches and thickeners. Palatability can be enhanced with yeast, protein, fat, fish solubles, sweeteners, or concentrated flavors called "digests." Generally, artificial flavors are not used, though smoke or bacon flavors may be added to some treats. Most manufacturers supplement pet foods with vitamins and minerals, since some may be lost during processing.

Ingredients vary somewhat depending on the type of pet food. The basic difference between canned and dry pet foods is the amount of moisture. Canned food contains between 70 and 80% moisture, since these are generally made from fresh meat products, while dry pet food contains no more than 10%. Additional ingredients used for dry foods include corn gluten feed, meat and bone meal, animal fats, and oils. For a meat-like texture, dry foods require more amylose, or starch ingredients; proteinaceous adhesives, such as collagen, albumens, and casein; and plasticizing agents.

Semi-moist pet foods usually require binders, which come from a variety of sources, such as gels, cereal flours, sulfur-containing amino acids, lower alkyl mercaptans, lower alkyl sulfides and disulfides, salts, and thiamin. Semimoist products may also incorporate soybean flakes, bran flakes, soluble carbohydrates, emulsifiers, stabilizers, and dried skim milk and dried whey.



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## Where Does Pet Food Come From?

It's a question many of us don't think about. We see pictures of whole grains, prime cuts of meat and human grade vegetables on the bag, and we assume there's some chef in a pet food kitchen cooking up the best for our loved ones. Unfortunately, this is far from the truth.

Most of what makes up dog and cat food comes from the rendering plant. To render, as defined in Webster's Dictionary, is "to process as for industrial use: to render livestock carcasses and to extract oil from fat, blubber, etc., by melting."

When chickens, lambs, cattle, swine, and other animals are slaughtered for food, usually only the lean muscle is cut off for human consumption. This leaves about 50 percent of a carcass left over. These leftovers are what become what we so commonly find on pet food labels, such as "meat-and-bone-meal" or "by-products." So basically, what pets eat are lungs, ligaments, bones, blood and intestines.

Some other things that may go into rendering are:

- Spoiled meat from the supermarket, Styrofoam wrapping and all
- Road kill that can't be buried on the roadside
- The "4 D's" of cattle: dead, dying, disease and disabled
- Rancid restaurant grease
- **Euthanized companion animals**

When all this comes to the rendering plant, it's put in a huge vat and shredded. Then it's cooked at 220 to 270 degrees for 20 to 60 minutes. After it cools, the grease is skimmed off the top. This is "animal fat." The rest is pressed and dried. This is "meat and bone meal."

Huge conglomerates use pet food companies as a cheap, and even profitable, way of disposing of the waste from their human food companies. Three of the five major U.S. pet food companies are owned by these huge corporations: *Nestle* (Alpo, Fancy Feast, Friskies, Mighty Dog, Purina One); *Heinz* (9 Lives, Amore, Gravy Train, Kibbles-n-Bits, Nature's Recipe); *Colgate-Palmolive* (Hill's Science Diet); *Proctor & Gamble* (Eukanuba and Iams); *Mars* (Kal Kan, Mealtime, Pedigree, Sheba, Waltham's)

# Nutrition

## Nutrition for Dogs

While dogs can be allergic to many things, some have food allergies to different meats, grains, dairy products, and artificial additives such as colorings, flavorings, and preservatives. Dogs with food allergies often develop skin problems such as rashes, hives, chronic itching, and hot spots (painful, warm infected areas of skin). Some dogs develop allergies to protein and carbohydrate sources after being exposed to them for a long time, so simply changing the protein and carbohydrate sources of your food from beef and corn to turkey and rice, for example, may be enough to halt the allergic reaction. Many dogs with severe skin allergies finally find relief when their owners switch to feeding them a homemade diet.

Most pet dogs are more likely to become overweight than malnourished, but when a dog is fed a diet lacking in basic nutrients, he can become malnourished. Malnutrition can be caused by a diet that is not complete and unbalanced or by a limited diet (for example, meat only). Dogs who aren't fed enough, often due to neglect or other poor conditions, are likely to become malnourished.

On the other hand, too much protein may contribute to kidney disease in some dogs. Some dogs, especially the large and giant breeds, can develop bone problems if they were fed too much calcium as puppies. Some puppies, especially the toy breeds, need many small, frequent, nutrient-dense meals to avoid hypoglycemia. A lack of antioxidants like vitamins

C and E could possibly contribute to an increased cancer risk (studies suggest this could be true for people), and inadequate fat can result in a dull, dry coat and itchy, sensitive skin. Some dogs are sensitive to too much copper or a deficiency of zinc in their diet.

## Human foods that are a danger to dogs.

Not everyone agrees on whether or not dogs should ever eat the food we eat. Because high-quality dog foods provide a dog with all the nutrients he needs in the correct proportions, many vets and dog experts advise never straying from that highly researched formula. Too many additional extras can throw off that perfect ratio of nutrients.

On the other hand, some people, particularly holistic veterinarians and other alternative health care experts, believe that because many of the original nutrients and enzymes in dog food are destroyed during processing, a strict diet of processed kibble isn't sufficient and is at best unnatural for dogs. They feel that the addition of healthful people food to a dog's diet won't hurt and may even provide the dog with fresher, more available nutrients than those in processed dog food. These people choose to feed their dogs a homemade diet of unprocessed fresh foods either as a supplement to a commercial food or as a complete diet.

An occasional healthy snack for your dog is probably fine in moderation, but certain foods humans eat are dangerous for dogs. Others, such as potato chips and ice cream, may not be toxic, but they can cause gastrointestinal upset, contribute to obesity, and provide no benefits.



# Cat nutrition

The ideal diet for cats include a good quality food and plenty of fresh water. They should be fed amounts sufficient to meet energy and caloric requirements. Inadequate or excess intake of nutrients can be equally harmful.

Cats in the various life stages, including kitten ("growth"), adult and senior ("geriatric"), require different amounts of nutrients. Special situations such as pregnancy and nursing kittens can dramatically affect nutritional needs. Working cats need more calories, while the "couch potato" needs less (just like us).

Cats have particularly unusual nutrient needs. These include:

## Vitamin A

Cats don't have the ability to convert the carotene found in plants to vitamin A. Their source of vitamin A must come from liver, kidney and other organ meats. If a cat lacks vitamin A in its diet, poor growth, weight loss, damage to cell membranes and decreased resistance to disease are among the possible consequences. More importantly, female cats may fail to cycle, the embryo may fail to implant or the pregnant cat may abort or produce kittens with abnormalities, such as a cleft palate.

## Niacin

Cats are unable to synthesize niacin from the amino acid tryptophan, due to an excess of a certain enzyme. Therefore, unlike other animals, their requirements for niacin must be met entirely from niacin present in animal tissues (plants are low in niacin). Deficiencies include weight loss, loss of appetite, unkempt fur and wounds around the mouth.

## Essential Fatty Acids

Some animal fat should be included as arachidonic acid, a fatty acid found only in animal tissue, is needed. Dermatitis and poor reproductive performance are among the deficiency symptoms.

## Taurine

Taurine requirements are quite high. Naturally they obtain taurine, an amino acid, from muscle meats. Fish and shellfish are also exceptionally good sources. Taurine deficiency can produce central retinal degeneration (CRD), a form of blindness. Besides CRD, deficiency symptoms of taurine include poor reproduction and dilated cardiomyopathy (heart muscle disease).

In addition to these dietary peculiarities, cats require a high amount of protein in his diet, about 12 percent in comparison to 4 percent for adult dogs. Cats do very well on a high-fat diet. Fat gives them needed energy, assists the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, such as A and E, and adds taste. Fat also adds needed calories, a daily requirement of about 35 kilocalories per pound of body weight.

## Feeding

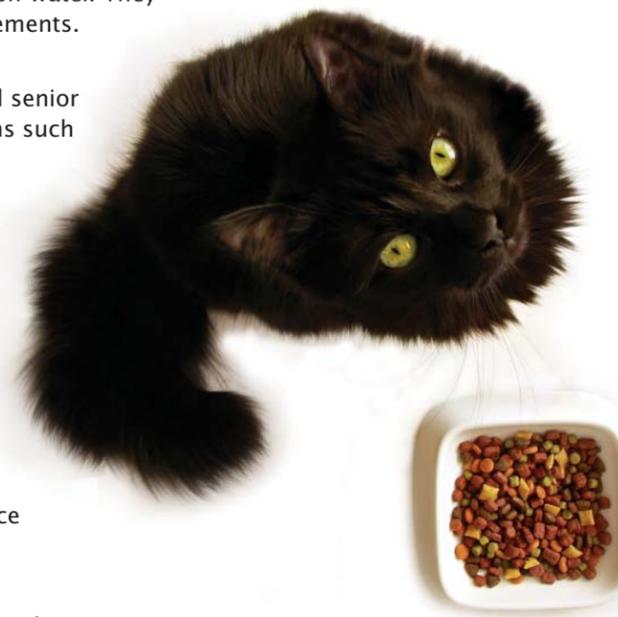
You can either feed your cat at least two meals a day or leave food out for snacking. In order to fulfill your cat's needs, feed him one ounce of canned food daily, or 1/3 ounce of dry food, per pound of body weight. Most young cats (one to four years of age) are very active and self-regulate their food intake, thereby maintaining a healthy body weight.

As your cat ages, s/he may slow down and begin putting on extra weight. Monitor their weight - if s/he's becoming too fat, consult your veterinarian.

Remember, water is also an important nutrient. Cats need fresh clean water daily. A cat drinks about twice the amount of water as s/he consumes in dry food, though since canned cat food is greater than 75 percent water, s/he barely drinks when his diet consists of canned cat food only.

## Recommendations

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) is an organization that publishes regulations for nutritional adequacy of "complete and balanced" cat foods. Diets that fulfill the AAFCO regulations follow the national consensus recommendations for feline foods and will state on the label: "formulated to meet the AAFCO Cat Food Nutrient Profile for...(a given life stage).



## Cutting Pet Care Costs

Designer collars, faux-mink coats, doggie donuts—you may love the novelties, but do your pets really need 'em? The bucks we spend on those little extras for our animal companions add up—and in fact, according to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, U.S. consumers spent over \$36 billion on their animals in 2005. Bottom line? Stick with the basics, and remember—preventative measures are excellent money savers!

### 1. Go to the Vet!

Annual veterinary exams can catch health crises early on and can save you a lot of time and money. This includes heartworm preventative treatment, flea and tick control, and a thorough check-up of your pet's gums, teeth, heart, lungs and internal organs.

### 2. Give Your Pet Regular Check-Ups

Weekly home checkups are a great way to nip potential health problems in the bud.

- Check under your pet's fur for lumps, bumps, flakes or scabs. Check your pet's ears and eyes for signs of redness or discharge. Make note of any changes in her eating or drinking habits. If something seems off, call your vet right away.
- Learn how to clean your pet's ears, especially if your dog is prone to ear infections.
- Brush your pet's teeth regularly with a toothpaste formulated for pets, and check his gums. In some cases, this can help prevent the need for dental cleanings, which can run up to \$200 per visit.
- Check your pet's breath. Bad breath can indicate a digestive problem that's better dealt with sooner rather than later.

### 3. Vaccinate Wisely

"Although certain vaccines are required by law, there is no longer automatically one policy for all animals," says Dr. Lila Miller, Vice President, ASPCA Veterinary Outreach. "Veterinarians are now advised to assess each individual animal's risk of exposure when designing a vaccination program." So before subjecting your pet and your wallet—to general vaccinations, ask your pet's vet which vaccines s/he recommends and about titering.

### 4. Spay/Neuter Your Pets

Spaying and neutering your pet will have a dramatic impact on their health. For females, it dramatically reduces the potentiality for breast cancer, and ovarian and uterine cancer disappears. Neutering also reduces chances of testicular cancer in males. Not only will spaying or neutering save you on future health care, but it will significantly diminish your pet's desire to wander and will save you the surprise of an unplanned litter.

### 5. Invest in Training

A well-trained dog will be easier to walk, will be calmer in most situations and will be less likely to get into things he shouldn't. Teaching your dog to stay by your side and to come when he is called proves far cheaper than paying for expensive emergency care caused by his running off possibly into the street and eating items that he shouldn't.

### 6. Consider Pet Insurance

The recent growth spurt of procedures your pet can undergo: MRIs, cat scans, cancer treatments, even kidney transplants, though life-saving, are quite expensive.

Accidents, too, can be costly. Pet insurance is one way to take some sting out of the bill. The cost of a policy typically runs about \$300-\$400 per year and many cover both regular and emergency visits.

*Continued on page 8.*

### **Avoid the following foods when giving your pet treats or a homemade diet:**

- *Alcoholic beverages*
- *Avocados*
- *Baking Powder and Baking Soda.*
- *Bones from fish, poultry, or other meat sources*
- *Chocolate, coffee (grounds and beans), tea, caffeine*
- *Fatty Foods*
- *Grapes and raisins*
- *Hops*
- *Human vitamin supplements containing iron*
- *Macadamia nuts*
- *Marijuana*
- *Milk and other dairy products*
- *Moldy or spoiled food, garbage*
- *Nutmeg*
- *Onions and garlic (raw, cooked, or powder)*
- *Pits from peaches and plums*
- *Potato, rhubarb, and tomato leaves*
- *Raw eggs*
- *Raw fish*
- *Salt*
- *Sugary foods*
- *Table scraps (in large amounts)*
- *Tobacco*
- *Yeast dough*



## Special Needs? Very Special Boy!

by Victoria Boon



I came to meet my special needs kitten through a circuitous route. I had adopted a red male kitten and a brown tiger torby female from the same litter along with an older female cat as my step daughter had lost her three kitties in a house fire that destroyed their home, almost taking Alexandra and her mother's lives! My husband and I figured at least when she visited us in the city she would have some feline company, and

some normalcy, while she and her mother rebuilt their lives. I went to Val's to pick up our new family additions and she showed me a toy the "squeak and play" that all the kittens loved. When the chirping started, out stumbled this adorable kitten who kept falling over as he walked and interacted with the toy. This was Woody, the neurologically damaged biological brother to my two new kittens. She informed me that he had suffered from a severe upper respiratory infection that had left him unable to jump because his back legs were not coordinated so he would fall, and a bit of a head shake. I picked him up and he started purring!

I left with my three new cats, but couldn't stop thinking about Woody. He haunted me. I told my husband about him and, much to my surprise, as my husband had never had pets, he told me to go back and get him!

I contacted Valerie immediately and told her that we wanted to adopt him too. The only foreseeable problem was that we lived in a duplex with a spiral staircase which frightened Zani's Furry Friends as well as my husband and me. With needs comes solutions. We chicken wired the full staircase and built a block at the top so Woody could not fall through to the lower level.

Finally, we were able to bring him home and reunite him with his sister Bella and his brother Flame. All were ecstatic. Over time there have been many changes in his life. Starting with his new name. He never answered to the name he was given in rescue, but for some reason, we jokingly said that he was "special ed." To our surprise he turned, looked, and ran towards us when we said those two words. He now answers to "Special Ed" or "Eddie." He has proven to be a sharp little cookie. As medical specialists agree, when one loses a physical ability, it can promote another ability to be more acute. With Ed, it is

most certainly his brain. He is always thinking two steps ahead in order to deal with his disabilities. He has learned to navigate stairs by propping his body on his bad side against the wall. His back claws are always hyper-extended to help in stability. He most recently figured out the one thing no one thought he would ever be able to do and that is to jump. He is our fiercest predator and can spot a bee dying 50 yards away. He is simply a genius.

Through his amazing personality he has also formed a community that know and love him. While we were still living in New York City, Eddie became the savant of our front door. He knew all the cues that it might open. Grab the garbage, keys, mail, purse, leash, and when any of these happened he would bolt towards it in hopes that he would be able to see his great love, our hallway. Special Ed's favorite thing to do was to run out there, just in front of the elevator, flip on his back, rub on the tile, and purr. Our gruff New York neighbors gave him a belly rubs and knew him by name.

Since we've left the city and moved to Stamford we have become more and more proud of our special boy. He is our Kitty Ambassador. When we fostered a litter of kittens, he was the first to walk right up to the mom, give her a good lick, and then settled in to groom the kittens to give her a break.

He is brave and will step between two warring fosters, protect the kittens from our pestering dog, and walk right up to vacuum cleaner when it is on. While our other cats scatter to get away from the vacuum monster, he hops right on it.

He loves everything electronic. Walking on our computer keyboard causes results. He sits in front of our DVD player for hours trying to figure out how to open the disk drive, and knows how to turn a power bar off and on.

Wherever you find him, there will usually be kittens curled up next to him. He is patient, loving and loyal.

There have been many personality conflicts amongst the cats we have fostered, but not one unkind action or sound has been made towards Special Ed. I asked my friend who is a teacher and animal lover if she thought the other animals knew he was different, her answer was right on "they probably realize he is better than them."

Nothing is truer in terms of Special Ed. When I am having a bad day and come home, he runs to the door to greet me. I realize how can my day be that bad, when his are always so good? As the writer Jon Katz says in his books, "There is one animal for each of us that is a life changing animal. To be a good guardian of an animal, you have to become a better person." I hope through the lessons I've learned from Special Ed that I am as good a human as he is a soul.

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, 'What are you doing?'

The youth replied, 'Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die.'

'Son,' the man said, 'don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!'

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said... 'I made a difference for that one.'

The Original Starfish Story found in "Star Thrower," a collection of essays by the naturalist and writer Loren Eiseley 1978

## Adoptees

Here are just a few of our current fosters — all looking for forever homes. Cats and Dogs are up-to-date with all age appropriate shots and microchipped. Cats are feline combo tested for FIV/FelV; dogs are heartworm tested and rabies vax'd. All our cats/dogs/rabbits are in NYC unless otherwise noted. If you are interested in meeting any of these wonderful animals, please contact Gisella ggmcs@juno.com. You can see all of our current fosters at <http://zanisfurryfriends.org>.



Dustin here! I'm the runt of the litter though you wouldn't be able to tell from my giant personality! I'm a total ham, fearless too, and love to play with everyone. Won't you come and meet me? My two brothers got adopted but they left me behind. I love my foster family but really want a furrever home! I'm a purring machine (I even purr when I eat!) - you won't be disappointed! I may have chronic sinusitis which means I snore:) but that doesn't keep me from being a wonderful little boy. I love other cats and am fine w/ dogs and children.



Hi, my name is Trey! I am an 11 month old, already neutered black and white American Short Hair. I'm quite friendly and even cuter than my picture! I love to hang out in the bathroom during shower time and then jump in the tub. I am a very interactive and curious cat but not destructive or wild! And of course I am looking for a loving home.



After having lost the only family I've ever known, I am still very sweet, affectionate, and quite elegant. And I am declawed! I am 100% healthy and in great shape w/ lots of years left to share w/ you. I am 10? but a young 10, which is really only middle age for a cat and I get along great w/ cats/kids...! and all those younger cats competing for attention. If you want a cat who's mellow, wise and knows how to be a loyal companion, don't overlook me!



Milo, a midsize, gorgeous sable-colored Holland lop adult, is an active, friendly, confident, take-charge guy who chins everything in sight! His fur is silky-soft, and when he's not busy surveying his territory, he likes head rubs and cuddles. Milo has been neutered and is litter-box trained



Mickey, a gentle, enterprising, young cinnamon-colored Dwarf mix, is a naturally handsome guy: the pink dye job on his feet (courtesy of his previous owner) was totally unnecessary! Though a little shy initially, he really does enjoy being cuddled. Mickey has been neutered and is litter-box trained.



Blue is an amazing 6 year old female Pit Bull mix who is looking for her forever home. Spayed and up to date on all of her shots, Blue would be a wonderful addition to your home. She is fantastic with all people. Her current home has 4 children with many of their friends running in and out on a daily basis. Blue can't get enough attention from everyone and anyone. She is constantly carrying around her ball, waiting for you to tell her to drop it and throw it for her.

Blue, however, does need to be the only pet in the house. She is fine walking with other dogs, but she does not like to be approached by them. She is also a little over zealous with cats and can be rough with them. To keep everyone safe she is better off being the only "queen" in the castle.



Ralph is a lovely puppy, who goes with the flow. This 6 month old fellow came to the Shelter as a stray on 7/12. He was found wandering along Central Park on 110th Street. He's an exotic Anatolian Shepherd puppy -- how fancy! But to us he just looks like a super cute, happy, affectionate little guy, rather thin, but full of pep. He's everything you'd want in a puppy: Loving, playful, floppy-eared and a bundle of fun. He's calm and friendly and needy, and cool with other dogs. Ralph, just wants ... to be, to be ... happy and loved and cared for. A real sweetheart. He's an He weighs 29 pounds.



Conan is a grand dog who arrived at New York City's Animal Shelter as a stray. This 74 pound 5 yr gentleman quickly became a Shelter favorite. Volunteers were to walk him (he lumbers nicely on his leash--no pulling!)). Shelter staff loved him. Nevertheless, he ended up on a euthanasia list because there was no space for him, as no adopters were interested. But one of the staff workers went to bat for Conan, and insisted that he be saved. And now we want him to find a furever home fast as he is still in the shelter. A distinguished gentleman he is. He walks nicely on a leash, is obedient, knows basic commands, is extremely friendly ... and playful, too! He looks to his human companions for direction. In short, he's a very good and handsome dog. He is currently being fostered with 3 other large dogs and 5 kids incl toddlers!!! and he is wonderful with all!!! He is neutered, UTD w/ all shots/rabies, microchipped and heartworm negative.

## Cutting Pet Care Costs (cont'd.)

### 7. Save Up for the Future

#### *Pet Emergencies*

Invest the money you spend on toys and extra snacks into a fund for possible emergencies, and deposit a fixed amount into it every two weeks. If no emergencies arise, you'll be all the richer, but if something does come up, money will not stand in the way of getting your pet the care she needs.

#### *Elderly Pet Care*

The great news is that pets are living longer, thanks to better nutrition and veterinary care. But this often entails more frequent trips to the vet, blood screenings tests, special food and medication. You can avoid an ambush of sudden bills by saving up while your pet is young.

#### *End-of-life care*

Caring for your pet at death could cost between \$300 to \$1,000, depending upon the services you choose. Some insurance policies cover the cost of euthanasia and cremation, but it is a smart idea to put aside a savings account that will cover those bills. This way you won't have to haggle when the time comes.

### 8. Buy premium-quality food

A high-quality, age-appropriate food results in a healthy coat, more energy and fewer costly trips to the vet.

#### *Don't overfeed*

This includes resisting the urge to spoil your pets with too many treats! Serving moderate portions not only saves you money on food it also reduces the likelihood of obesity.

### 9. Shop Around

#### *Medications*

Call the local pharmacy or look online for lower prices. Just be sure to compare the same quantities and dosages when you're looking at prices.

#### *Veterinarians and Hospitals*

When looking for a reliable, cost-effective veterinarian's office, check out a few before you settle on one. Ask for recommendations from pet owners you know. Most vets' offices also offer multi-pet or senior pet discounts. Compare fees and be sure to find out what is covered during a routine visit in each office.

#### *Pet Supplies*

Buy supplies online or in bulk. Just keep in mind that it's wise to get product recommendations from your vet first. Online or store-bought products that you know nothing about could prove to be harmful or of poor quality. And if you rotate your pet's toys, they'll stay interested without you having to buy new ones every few months.

### 10. Groom Your Pets at Home

- Save the price of a visit to your groomer with regular brushings. While you're at it, you'll reduce the hair around your home and your cats will have fewer hairballs.
- Trim your pet's nails on a regular basis. It's not hard to do, and you'll likely save yourself the cost of new furniture and curtains.

Yes, your pets love toys and an occasional treat, but the best gift you can give to your furry loved one is your attention.

## Happiest Place for a Dog is Home!

Many people tie their dogs to bars, poles, bikeholders, and sometimes to trees which can be dangerous to and upsetting for the dogs. If you are going for a walk with your dog, PLEASE take your dog home before stopping to eat or shop rather than tying your dog up. Here in New York City, dogs are frequently taken away to the ACC of NYC, the municipal pound, where there is a high probability that the dog will not ever see the light of day. Dogs tied up outside can also be attacked by other dogs or let loose, stolen for medical research or fighting dog bait. Some get lucky and are just taken home. We would like to think that you are one of those wonderful dog owners who would never do anything to endanger your dog.

by Paloma and Alegra McSweeny, Age 10

Zani's Furry Friends is a registered non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law. We welcome any contributions to offset our veterenary and fostering expenses. Please make checks out to ZANI'S FURRY FRIENDS.

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