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Ugly Betty Star Recovers Her Cute Canine



By Steve Dale

"I never thought it would happen to me," says *Ugly Betty* star and Grammy Award winning singer Vanessa Williams.

This past Memorial Day, she returned home from a short trip to find her Yorkshire Terrier, Enzo, gone from her home in Chappaqua, NY.

Los Angeles-based veterinarian Dr. Jeff Werber says Williams isn't alone, "There are over 10 million pets who become lost every year; everyone thinks it will never happen to them. Greater than 90 percent don't have a form of identification and will never be reunited with their families."

Immediately, Williams posted a reward for Enzo's safe return. Williams says she noticed



Ugly Betty star, Vanessa Williams

a suspicious car parked near her home around the time that Enzo disappeared. "What worried me is what he may have been taken for,"

she says. "People told me how little dogs were taken for bait (for dog fighters), or maybe that Enzo was marked for some sort of ransom."

Williams had a platform most pet owners don't – and began to do interviews asking for the safe return of her pup, promising there would be no charges pressed and no questions asked. "I also pointed out that because Enzo's microchipped, eventually we'd find him."

She continues, "I was so lucky that, in fact, he was microchipped. I am sure that was the reason he returned home again."

Enzo was recovered eight days later in Stafford, CT. As promised, Williams didn't press charges. She isn't sure what motivated the criminals to take her dog in the first place.

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Healthy Breath May Mean a Healthy Pet



By Scott Vande Griend, DVM

Imagine, if you didn't brush your teeth. Gross! I am sure you would never dream of even skipping a day of brushing your teeth, or your children's teeth – let alone months or years. But we do tend to neglect our pets' teeth for years.

Flip the Lip! Lift your dog or cat's lip and sniff – how does it smell? Can you see any discoloration of the teeth or redness of the gums?

Dogs and cats suffer from periodontal disease and gingivitis (gum infection) – just like people. So part of a good regular checkup with your veterinarian is a dental exam. February is National Pet Dental Health Month so this is a great time to increase your aware-

ness of pet dental disease and how you can treat or prevent it. If left unchecked, dental disease can impact organs such as the heart and kidneys and shorten lifespan. Also, serious periodontal disease and gingivitis may be quite painful.

Many people mistakenly assume that kibble serves as a kind of toothbrush. While kibble might have some role, really, does eating crunchy cereal or gnawing the meat off of a steak bone make it possible for you to avoid brushing?

Ideally, dogs and cats should have teeth brushed daily. As difficult as it sounds, it really is easy – ask your veterinarian or veterinary

health care team member to show you how. You really can train dogs, and even most cats, to tolerate brushing. It helps that pet toothpastes tastes like liver, turkey or chicken. Do not use human toothpaste.

For pets who do not accept a toothbrush and/or have serious dental disease, ask your veterinarian about oral rinses or gels. Another consideration is a pet dental sealant, called Oravet™, which is first applied during the teeth cleaning at your vet office, and then used weekly at home to help prevent plaque and calculus accumulation. Still, when all is said and done, brushing is the best prevention for not only gum problems but also stinky mouths.



Our PAWPRINTS guarantee: Love your pets, and they will love you back.

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Ugly Betty Star Recovers Canine (cont'd)

Enzo was recovered in good shape, perhaps better shape than his frazzled family members. "It was like a death in the family," says Williams. "We were heartbroken. Between praying, putting up posters, searching the neighborhood and searching the Internet – the anguish was remarkable."

Werber says most stolen or lost dogs without microchips don't have similar happy endings. These dogs can't be identified because their ID tags have been lost or taken. Luckily, many animal shelters, animal control officers and sometimes police departments and veterinary offices use a scanner to 'read' a microchip, which serves as a permanent ID which can not be lost or taken.

One microchip company, HomeAgain (www.homeagain.com) goes above and beyond to help families recover their pets. Werber explains, "It's called the Proactive Recovery System." This includes a 24/7 hotline and HomeAgain posting alerts to local shelters and veterinary hospitals. They even have their own team of volunteers who will help to hang posters and canvass the area.

Werber says he's baffled as to why most pets aren't microchipped. During the recent California fires – lots of animals – cats especially – were separated from their families. "Animals who were microchipped were reunited, others maybe not," Werber says.

One objection to microchipping derives from a recent report in the popular press that microchips have caused cancer in lab animals. "In my practice and (in the practices of) my fellow veterinarians, we're talking many, many hundreds of thousands of pets microchipped, and none of us has seen a reaction," states Werber. "I have no doubt whatsoever the threat of cancer – if there is even one – is not nearly as great as the pet needing a microchip for identification in an emergency."

FROM THE AVMA

The Healing Power of Pets



Sure, everybody loves a cute puppy or cat. But can these interactions with household animals actually be good for us? Increasingly, researchers are finding that the answer is a resounding 'yes!'

In a Jan. 11, 2008, feature in *Newsweek*, psychologist Herbert Nieburg stated unequivocally: "Pet ownership is good for your health both physically and psychologically."

For many people, this is hardly news. The Delta Society has been training hospital staff on animal-assisted therapy for patients for decades.

"I believe the human-animal bond has never been stronger, but the truth is it has always been strong. What has really changed is how well that emotional bond and its power is understood and respected," explains Dr. Gregory S. Hammer, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). According to the "2007 AVMA U.S.

Pet Ownership & Demographic Sourcebook," only about two percent of pet owners consider their pets to be property (as opposed to beloved companions or valued members of the family).

So how do pets improve our lives? Here are some examples:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many independent published reports, pets decrease blood pressure, even cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels as well as feelings of loneliness.
- Young victims of the wars in the Middle East benefit emotionally when they're given stuffed animals. In fact, another recent study showed pets are even better than human friends for reducing stress.
- Pets can also stave off depression. A study conducted by UCLA found that AIDS patients who did not own pets were up to three times more likely to report symptoms of depression than AIDS patients with pets.
- Pets also benefit their owners by combating both sedentary lifestyles and isolation.
- Doctors are writing on a prescription pad, 'get a pet.'

For more information, please visit www.avma.org.

