

SHARING THE HOLIDAYS WITH OUR PETS

The holidays represent a time of warmth, joy, upliftment, love, friendship and camaraderie and an opportunity to spend time with friends and family members –some new and some with whom we have grown up and shared a lifetime of love and cherished experiences and memories. However, for many of us who live far away from and are unable to be with close friends and family members, the holidays can be a very sad, lonely and depressing time. We may feel detached or alienated from others and disassociated from the holiday cheer and hustle and bustle of the season. We may not receive invitations to holiday parties and get-togethers. We actually may feel more alone and isolated than at any other time of the year during this period, which places such great emphasis on relationships and celebrating and sharing joy, warmth and gifts with family and friends. We may feel tempted to isolate and withdraw from contact with others.

We can derive a great deal of comfort and support as well as friendship and happiness from celebrating the season with our animal companions. By interacting and spending quality time with them, we can actually share, celebrate and enjoy the season so many of us have come to dread or fear. Our pets love spending time with us, participating in sports, games and other activities or simply just “hanging out” with us. When we feel sad and lonely, they lift our spirits and make us laugh at their antics. We can socialize and interact with them and truly be ourselves; we can let down our guard, show our true feelings and even confide in our pets who seem to possess a remarkable ability to empathize with us and accommodate our moods and needs.

Our animal companions can enjoy the wintry weather and holiday decorations with us. They can help us socialize with others who have animals – anyone who has ever visited a dog park knows that our pets make it easy for us to meet and trade stories and anecdotes, interact and even form relationships with other humans. When we have a pet, we are never truly alone. They share our daily routines and experiences with us and love us unconditionally. Their demands are few, and they are delighted to watch television with us or sit by our side (or on our laps) while we’re on the phone or at the computer.

Our pets offer us beauty, joy, fun and entertainment and many other gifts that require no ornamental or expensive wrapping paper, tissue and bows. They offer their unspoken love, loyalty, devotion, affection

and support. They enthusiastically volunteer to participate in any task or activity we may wish to undertake. If you are lonely, you may seriously wish to consider spending this holiday season with a beloved animal companion. Truly, there is no better gift than the love of one who is so pure-of-heart and willing to do whatever it takes to make your holiday (and your life) a happy one!