

Best Friends for Life: The Earliest Dog Lovers



Dr. Streeter

By **Jasmine Streeter, DVM**
Special to The Skanner News

Many of us have heard the saying since childhood: Dogs are man's best friend. I have no choice but to agree since I am writing this piece as Sheba, my German Rottweiler, snores softly on my gray Chesterfield sofa. (Soleil, my Egyptian Mau, glares from the back of my chair as she reads the title of this article.) Turns out, dogs and humans have been friends for a very long time, for good reason, and research can prove it.

A recent study published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* found humans may have developed emotional and caring bonds with their dogs around 14,000 years ago, during the Paleolithic era. The bone remains of a dog found in Bonn-Oberkassel, now a suburb of Germany, showed that its owner cared for it through multiple bouts of illness for weeks. The puppy suffered from distemper, a debilitating viral disease that without intensive care by humans would have resulted in death within days. These findings suggest that this puppy was a beloved pet that was near and dear to its owners' heart. Thankfully, due to modern medicine, canine distemper virus is nearly 100 percent preventable because of vaccines.

Fast forward to mod-

ern day and we can still appreciate the strong physical and emotional bonds that people share with their pets. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, with nearly 63 percent of households in the United States having a companion animal and nearly 69 million of those animals being dogs, it is no secret that dogs bring us joy.

Studies have found that dogs are good for mental health. They help people become more social and can even help you score a date. Dogs make us appear friendlier, less threatening and more approachable. Their presence brings added benefits of reduced stress, increased quality of life and may even extend longevity. As a dog lover and owner, I reap the rewards of my furry forever puppy every day. Sheba will be seven years old on March 8. Not only is she my best friend, but I am also hers. So if you are wondering, yes, there will be a party thrown in her honor.

It seems friendships between dogs and people are here to stay. As stewards of this earth, we are responsible for those who cannot take care of themselves. If you have been blessed to share your life with a dog that brings you joy, please email a picture to be featured in upcoming articles.

You can ask Dr. Jasmine your pet question or email your pet photo to drjasmine@theskanner.com.

Howard University Heads to Puerto Rico to Help Students Give Up Spring Break to Help in Recovery Efforts

By **Tatyana Hopkins**
NNPA Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — When Oluwakanyinsola Adebola signed up to do community service as part of Howard University's Alternative Spring Break, she knew she wouldn't be joining her classmates and thousands of other college students who use their week off to party and play in the sun and surf of Jamaica or Aruba or any of a half dozen other Caribbean locations.

Instead, Adebola would be part of the hundreds of Howard students who, each year for more than 20 years, have given up their traditional spring breaks to serve in communities in need in places like Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, Memphis and New Orleans.

Ironically, Adebola will travel to a Caribbean island after all. She will be in Puerto Rico aiding the millions of U.S. citizens still struggling to recover from Hurricane Maria, which hit the island on September 20.

The storm, which had 155 mph winds, caused at least \$90 billion in damage, destroying thousands of homes, killing at least 60 people and decimating the island's already deterior-

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rating power grid. Currently, about 1,200 generators power some of homes, hospitals and schools while seven larger, more powerful energy centers, called microgrids, provide energy to key areas near important buildings like hospitals and schools.

Electricity, however remains a challenge. Recurring blackouts plague the island, and about 340,000 people, are still without power. The blackouts have



Ivon Alcime, a graduate communications major, helps build a cement wall at the School of Good Samaritans as part of a previous Alternative Spring Break in Haiti after the country was struck by an earthquake that devastated much of the island.

upset traffic and interrupted water service to dozens of neighborhoods, including the historic Old San Juan in the nation's capital.

The Federal Emergency Management Administration has been providing relief and rescue efforts, providing meals and water to residents.

Adebola and 47 other students, accompanied by two faculty advisors, land in Puerto Rico Friday, March 9, and begin a week of work on Monday, March 12. The ASB participants will paint schools and fix homes and churches in and around San Juan, the island's capital.

Howard students will also visit and assist in the daily activities at two Boys and Girls clubs in Las Margaritas and Bayamón about 20 minutes outside of San Juan. Students and faculty will be staying about an hour west of San Juan at a campsite in Arecibo, six people to a room.

This year, no students applying for ASB knew where they would be placed when they signed up for the annual service missions. Applicants selected a service preference ranging from “children/orphanages” to “prison rehabilita-



Ericka Laws, a junior biology major, tutors two 4th grade students in math as preparation for the upcoming state-wide standardized test during the 2013 Alternative Spring Break mission in New Orleans.

tion.” The luck of the draw would determine at which of this year's 15 service sites they would be placed.

Adebola, an ASB first-timer, said when she checked “recovery” on her application, she thought she would be going to Houston or Belle Glade, Fla., two U.S. cities that also were hit hard by hurricanes last fall. She said she never expected to be placed in Puerto Rico.

“I'm really excited,” she said.

A native of Nigeria, Adebola moved to the United States to learn mechanical engineering to further technological advancement in her country, which she said lacks proper waste disposal systems, consistent electricity and access to clean drinking water in many parts of the country.

She said old medical equipment failed to save her 13-year-old sister's diminishing eyesight, leaving

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