

The Cost of Puppy Love

by vcmorris - Thursday, March 17, 2011

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These days my grandlittles Morgan and Savannah can't wait to get home from school (she's pre-K and he's in second grade) – so they can play with Montana, their nearly three month old, female Shih Tsu Jack Russell terrier mixed breed dog.

Morgan and Savannah's parents – my daughter Ciara and her husband James – have already talked to them about being responsible for their pet and meeting her needs for food, exercise and play. I had a conversation of my own with them about what it costs to be a good pet owner.

They both have contributed old socks and shoes creating Montana's collection of tug-toys. "Montana's favorite game is fetch," Morgan told me. Savannah then demonstrated. Montana complied. I then congratulated them about how they had saved money by creating toys for their dog rather than buying pet toys from the store.

Now that Daylight Savings Time is here – walking the dog is the first order of business when everyone gets home from school and work. I told the grandlittles that walks and playtime are part of keeping their puppy fit and healthy. "And that makes the people who are walking them healthy, too!" Savannah declared.

Taking Montana for walks is a big deal now because they had to wait until she'd had her required vaccinations. Be sure to check with your veterinarian or local dog shelter to see whether certain vaccines are needed every single year for your pet. The inquiry could save you money and keep you from unintentionally over medicating your animal.

Making the responsible decision to have your pet spayed or neutered *costs* money (\$200 on average according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) but saves you money on fewer health problems in the future and helps assure that the pet overpopulation problem doesn't continue to worsen.

Pet insurance is something pet owners consider. It can be expensive so shop around for rates with reputable insurance companies.

Though my grandlittles' puppy Montana was a gift from a family friend, adopting a pet is another way to save money and is a wonderful act of kindness. The price often can be less than \$100 if adopting from a shelter. A pet adopted from rescue groups will usually run from \$75 up to \$300+ which generally represents the expenses the organization has incurred giving care. And remember, even if you're looking for a specific breed, there are rescue pets available for almost every type out there.

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<http://www.dailypuppy.com/articles/the-average-cost-to-adopt-a-dog-from-a-shelter/49000dab-362a-bb9c-e4d2-f01105ca7341> .

Here's to your health and wealth.

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