

The Dog Blog

Celebrating our canine companions with inspiration, information, tips, tricks, and a whole lotta love.

SEARCH DOG NEWS

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Celebrate Your Dog on National Hug Your Hound Day! By Jen Reeder, Award Winning Pet Writer



I love any excuse to celebrate dogs, so I was excited to learn that this Sunday, September 14 is **National Hug Your Hound Day!** The “unofficial” holiday (no time off work – sorry!) was founded 15 years ago by renowned **Chicago Dog Coach Ami Moore**, author of [The Alphas Attitude: Your Dog Wants You to Lead](#).

Moore says the day is about celebrating the “bond and emotional joy that having a dog in your life brings,” and trying to make America even more dog-friendly.

“The human/dog bond, I call it the superglue of the heart,” she told me.

She says she got the idea for Hug Your Hound Day after studies showed the health benefits of hugging and petting dogs, such as relieving stress for both humans and canines alike as hormones like serotonin and oxytocin are released. (Studies continue to prove the health benefits of touching dogs; for example, in 2012, the American Journal of Cardiology published research (1) that found people with chronic disease and pets had more adaptable heart rates.)

“Most people get dogs because they see dogs as their emotional comfort food – their furry macaroni and cheese,” Moore says with a laugh.

But it’s not enough just to love our dogs – being a responsible dog owner is the other major component of Hug Your Hound Day, if we want to make the U.S. more dog-friendly.

“You should be able to take a well-mannered dog anywhere that you go,” Moore says. “But the key is ‘well-mannered,’ which means the dog should not bark, not jump, not growl, should not bite at anyone, not steal any type of food or anything.”

She says having well-trained dogs around makes everyone feel happier, and spreading that happiness is the fun of Hug Your Hound Day.

“The first thing is take your dog everywhere you can. In most states, the way the law is written, you can take your dog anywhere as long as food is not being served,” she says. “Have people hug your dog. Say, ‘Would you like to pet my dog? You can hug him – give him a treat.’ It’s a holiday to bring dogs to people who might not have them in their lives.”

Having our dogs interact with many different people is important too.

“I always advise people to really socialize their dog well, especially the people that don’t look like you,” Moore says. “Like if you’re tall, socialize your dog with

short people. If you're skinny, socialize him with fat people. Because the world is filled with all different types of people, and you don't want your dog to scare anyone because they look a little different than Mom and Dad."

Other ways to celebrate include volunteering with our dogs at hospitals, nursing homes or children's literacy programs; teaching our dogs a cute trick like "shake" to entertain people; and, of course, throwing a party for friends and their dogs. In fact, Moore says Hug Your Hound Day is always on the second Sunday of September because after Labor Day, dogs are more likely to be allowed in public places like beaches – she throws a barbecue for her clients and their dogs at a local beach every year.

As for "petiquette" when you want to pet a new dog, Moore says to ask the owner for permission, and then let the dog come to you.

"The third one is always ask the owner, 'Do you have a treat I can give the dog?' Because affection combined with food creates a pleasant experience for the animal as well as the human."

Ultimately, National Hug Your Hound Day is about helping our pups spread happiness to other people, ourselves, and back to the dogs themselves.

"That is always something that we who love dogs are pushing for: to create a bigger and better place for our dogs to enjoy their life," Moore says. "For them to have a big life so we can have a big life with them."

For more information, visit <http://chicagodogcoach.com>.

Jen Reeder is an award-winning pet writer and proud member of both the Dog Writers Association of America and the Cat Writers' Association.

She hugs her rescued Lab mix Rio every day.



References

1. Chan, Amanda. "Pet Ownership Linked With Adaptable Heart, Study Shows." *HuffingtonPost.com*. Huffington Post, 14 Feb 2012. Web.

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