

## Welcoming 'Unwanted Love' Into Your Heart and Home

Now the No. 1 way of acquiring a new pet in the US, it's just one of many reasons to celebrate National Dog Day today. Whether or not you own a dog, you're sure to find inspiration here from this list of 20 unique ways to celebrate your special pup.

**Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker**

### STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- National Dog Day is August 26
- Started in 2004 by Colleen Paige, National Dog Day takes place August 26 each year because that's the day she and her family adopted her Sheltie pup
- National Dog Day is now celebrated worldwide and was even written into New York legislation in 2013
- National Dog Day partners with a number of rescue organizations, raising awareness for the millions of dogs in need of homes
- For your pup, the ideal day involves spending it with you! So, if you want to make National Dog Day special for your furry canine, simply spend time together — give him some extra belly rubs and an extra-long "sniffari" walk in a new location

It's here, National Dog Day! A day devoted to discussing our favorite pooches — and everything about them. Started in 2004 by Colleen Paige, National Dog Day takes place August 26 each year because that's the day Paige, a pet and family lifestyle expert and animal advocate, and her family adopted her Sheltie pup. Paige was just 10 years old at the time, but the experience of being a dog lover stuck with her.

National Dog Day is now celebrated worldwide and was even written into New York legislation in 2013.<sup>1</sup> According to National Dog Day's official site:<sup>2</sup>

*"Our mission is to help galvanize the public to recognize the number of dogs that need to be rescued each year and acknowledges family dogs and dogs that work selflessly each day to save lives, keep us safe and bring comfort."*

### Why Celebrate Dogs?

If you're a dog owner, you're already well aware of the unconditional love, joy and companionship dogs provide. That's reason enough to celebrate. But beyond that, dogs complete extraordinary acts on a daily basis.

There are service dogs, which are certified to help people with disabilities, such as seizure disorders or visual impairments, and therapy dogs trained to offer affection and emotional support in a variety of settings, like emergency rooms, nursing homes, schools and prisons.

Dogs have extraordinary noses and can use their phenomenal sense of smell to help humans diagnose cancer with about 97% accuracy in some cases.<sup>3</sup> Because dogs and people share so much similar DNA and develop similar types of cancer, treatments that prove to be successful in dogs often prove to be successful in people as well, so dogs can even help to advance human cancer research.<sup>4</sup> National Dog Day adds:<sup>5</sup>

*"Dogs put their lives on the line every day ... for personal protection, for law enforcement, for the disabled, for our freedom and safety by detecting bombs and drugs and pulling victims of tragedy from wreckage, now they're detecting cancer and seizures ... things even humans cannot do."*

## **Rescue Pets Deserve All the Attention They Can Get**

National Dog Day partners with a number of rescue organizations, raising awareness for the millions of dogs in need of homes. Adoptions from **pet shelters** and rescues are on the rise, such that it has become the No. 1 method of acquiring a new pet in the U.S. However, about 1 in 10 pets adopted from shelters end up no longer in the home that adopted them six months later.<sup>7</sup> Paige says:<sup>8</sup>

*"Millions of dogs are killed each year because they're simply unwanted. They're unwanted because no one realized how to properly care for the demands of the breed. They're unwanted because they were bought as a Christmas gift for a child that didn't keep their promises about caring for the dog ... unwanted because they shed too much ... unwanted because they bark too much. UNWANTED ... simply because someone changed their mind."*

*All a dog wants to do is love you and be loved by you. Dogs are amazing, courageous, sensitive and sentient beings that deserve compassion and respect. Please consider bringing what was once considered 'unwanted love,' into your heart and home on National Dog Day!"*

## **Celebrating Dogs of Every Breed**

National Dog Day opposes breed bans of any kind and encourages anyone looking for a pup to do their research first. Don't support puppy mills and, if you're looking for a purebred dog, consider a breed-specific rescue in your area.

Breed-specific rescues help to free up space at local animal shelters, which will often contact the appropriate rescue organization when a purebred dog comes in. If a shelter doesn't have volunteers to contact rescues directly, they may post the dogs to national websites where breed-specific rescues can find them. According to National Dog Day:<sup>9</sup>

*"While we feel that Americans have the constitutional right to purchase a pure breed dog, we strongly discourage buying dogs from pet stores supplied by puppy mills, backyard breeders, the internet and newspaper ads. Rather, we encourage those seeking new canine companions, to consider choosing adoption first."*

*If you'd like a pure breed dog, look into a pure breed rescue in your city, to see if they might have some little furry soul just waiting to make your life complete. Another great place to find a new best friend is at large chain pet stores that host adoption drives for local shelters and rescues."*

I would add there are a growing number of heritage, preservation and functional breeders focusing on intentionally creating purebred dogs with fewer "breed flaws" and more robust genetics, check out my 21-point breeder questionnaire to make sure you are working with an ethical breeder if you're considering buying a specific breed.

## 20 Ways to Celebrate Your Special Pup

For your pup, the ideal day involves spending it with you! So, if you want to make National Dog Day special for your furry canine, simply spend time together — give him some extra belly rubs and an extra-long **walk around the neighborhood**. For more unique ideas, try the 20 tips below:

1. Foster a dog from your local shelter or pure breed rescue organization. You can also volunteer at your local shelter, helping to walk dogs, clean cages or play with the pups.
2. Conduct a safety check of your home to ensure it's safe for your dog.
3. Donate blankets, food and toys to animal welfare organizations.
4. Organize a peaceful demonstration in front of your community pet store that sells puppies.
5. Write your Congressperson and ask that he/she support the ban of puppy mills in your state.
6. Send a dog-related gift to a friend or family member.
7. Have a National Dog Day party and invite all your friends and their dogs.
8. Spend the day taking photos of your dog.
9. Donate to your favorite dog welfare organization.
10. Assist an ill or elderly neighbor by walking their dog.
11. Have a portrait painted of your dog to suspend the fleeting magic of dogdom.
12. Buy your dog a fun new dog toy — or five.
13. Give your dog some fun exercise by taking him or her to a doggy play resort.
14. Brush your dog to eliminate excess fur.
15. Give your dog a massage or natural spa treatment.
16. Teach your dog a new trick.
17. Buy your dog a comfortable collar, harness and leash.
18. Hire a professional pet photographer for a fun photo shoot.
19. Take your dog to the beach.
20. Say "because dogs" all day, every time someone says hello!

### Sources and References

<sup>1</sup> [National Today, National Dog Day](#).

<sup>2,5,8,9</sup> [National Dog Day, About](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Experimental Biology 2019, Accuracy of Canine Scent Detection of Lung Cancer in Blood Serum](#)

<sup>4</sup> [STAT News February 4, 2017](#)

<sup>6</sup> [PR Newswire September 4, 2019](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Orvis January 15, 2019](#)

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