

## **Why pets make terrible Christmas presents!**

Guelph – ON, Christmas is fast approaching and along with it comes the tradition of giving and receiving presents. This is the time when most think: what am I going to get him or her for Christmas? Well, as cute and tempting as it is, giving a pet as a Christmas gift may not be the best idea!

### **Deciding to adopt a new pet should result from a well-considered decision:**

Giving a pet as a present could be filled with moments of excitement and happiness for both the giver and receiver. However, both parties need to realize that this relationship involves a commitment that will last for years! So, before making this decision, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this person really want a pet? Even if he/she expressed the wish to adopt a pet, maybe they were not sure.
- If yes, is it a dog or cat? What breed has he/she chosen and will it fit with their lifestyle? The breed and temperament are very important to consider.
  - Has this future pet-owner prepared their home for their furry family member? For example, it is important they provide scratching posts for cats to express their natural need to mark their territory.
  - Is this person ready to walk a dog at least twice a day?
- Is he/she or a member of his/her family allergic to pets?
- Is he/she a landlord or a tenant? A lot of landlords still don't accept pets. Relinquishment is also very common when tenants move to another place where pets are not accepted.
- Does this person have the financial resources to take care of a pet? This includes yearly veterinary examinations, vaccines, deworming, flea and tick treatments, food and either insurance or savings in cases of emergency.
- Is this pet being considered for a child? Whether the pet in question is a dog, cat, rabbit, hamster or fish, parents of small children should be fully prepared to be the main caregivers of any pet(s) they adopt. Kids quickly lose interest in pets and will not always take responsibility for their care.

### **Adopting a pet always requires some preparation:**

- If there is already a pet in the house, they should be prepared to accommodate as this can be a stressful period for all the animals in the household.
- Adopting a new pet also means buying the essentials: leash, litter boxes, training pads, food, toys etc.

Unless you are prepared to consider all of the questions above, we strongly recommend you to opt for another gift! If you find yourself hesitating, it is most likely that this present is definitely not a good idea. Consult with your veterinary team if you are considering adopting a pet over the holidays or have any questions; they can help you with this important decision.

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