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Hailey Wilt | hwilt@radford.edu

When it comes to having a dog in college, should students spend their money on man's best friend?

I have always struggled with my self-control when it comes to helping those in need.

I have spent years doing community service through philanthropic events, so when I see someone in need, I spring into action. So, when I saw a pair of sad puppy eyes looking back at me from a dark crate, I dropped everything to help. I could not just do nothing. Which leads me to where I am today, the proud adopted mother of a beagle named Amethyst.

However, as I have come to experience first-hand, having another mouth to feed in college can quickly set you back.

When it comes to having a dog in college, is the company worth the amount of money it costs?

For the first time, going home was not lonely. I wanted to provide whatever I thought she needed to be happy, but I was also nervous about spending the money it would inevitably cost. She needed the same things humans did, and then some.

Upon getting Amethyst, I spent well over \$600 on her 'necessities' - i.e., vet visits, food, bedding, crates, toys - and it hurt me financially. Then once I had her for a while, I cracked down on the number of items I would provide her with. I allowed myself an allowance each month to get her what she required.

It indeed worked. When I stopped allowing myself an endless amount of money to shower my dog in, my bank account stayed at a steady amount.

However, some college students do not know how much the puppy in the window costs.

From 2007-2015, the Bureau of Labor Statistics kept track of what households spent on average for their pets. In 2015, the average family paid around \$528 for pet services, food,

veterinary services, and other purchases. The amount compares to the beginning of the study in 2007 where it was only an average of \$431.

The same study shows that on average, households with just one consumer spent the least on their pets. The 2015 assessment showed that a single consumer household paid around \$360 a year on their pets, opposed to the three-person consumer units which spent \$653.

As far as the Bureau of Labor Statistics charts goes to show, I have this budgeting thing down to a science. As of October 8th, 2017, I have had my dog for an entire year. Upon checking my bank account, it shows that despite the initial spending spree, I have stayed along with the average single person household.

Now that I have a steady job at Moe's Southwest Grill, and Amethyst is a bit older, I can wholeheartedly agree with everything the Bureau of Labor Statistics has found about the amount households spend on pets. My sorority sisters, students of various class standings, are now more cautious about getting dogs now that I have shared my experiences. I frequently cancel dinner plans or shopping trips to save the money to help my dog and her needs, so they see it as a learning experience.

Radford students also experience troubles in finding homes in which to bring their dogs back to. The online Price-Williams Realty lease agreement states, "There are absolutely no pets allowed at Price-Williams. This includes visiting pets/animals. Residences found to have unauthorized pet(s) will be held in breach of their lease agreement."

At the same time, Bondurant Realty's pet addendum asks for a \$400 non-refundable pet fee and the company has full disclosure to disapprove a certain breed of dog, if they view it as threatening.

So, I acknowledge that there is much money that goes into the purchase of a dog in college. If you watch your spending, while keeping an eye on their needs, you will find your experience to be fulfilling. Dogs are another mouth to feed, and another spot saved in your house so be wary if you think you can handle it.

Having a dog in college does not mean that you will never have the amount of money to feed both yourself and the pooch. If you set a budget on your income, you are likely going to have a better life with your pet. The price of the pup in the window varies, but the puppy kisses are a nice reward.