This blog is republished from Fur Kids Foundation board member Felicia Messimer’s Facebook page. Felicia lost her beloved pet, Lucy, a pup who has been a Foundation ambassador at many events. We wanted to share this love story with our followers to show the incredible bond that can be forged between people and their fur kids.

Yesterday, September 27, 2013, Lucy was given her angel wings. According to some dog-age time tables, she was more than 86 years old. She leaves behind one grief-stricken, and grateful human. I’d like to think that anyone who was around us could see the intense bond that had developed through our nearly 10-and-a-half-year relationship.

Lucy knew me before I knew her. She found me in the Anchorage Animal Care and Control Center in early May 2003—I walked in looking for a medium-sized pet to take home and she knew I was a keeper. The animal care officer had no history on her, but made sure to tell me that many had passed her by simply because she was so big. At the time, my tiny box of an apartment also made me concerned about her size, but there was something about her smile and the way her head tilted when you scratched her ears.

Lucy became my constant buddy immediately. We enjoyed numerous walks and hikes, camping trips, bike rides, fishing expeditions where she refused to get into the water, and day-trips to oceans (from Alaska to New York). She was with me through heartbreak, traveled with me on a couple of cross-country moves, listened to me as I complained about my job/life/family/men, and made me smile and laugh more than any living being has before.

Lucy was what you’d call a food-motivated dog. Her many shenanigans are stories that I love to recite. Lucy has eaten the petals off of fake flowers, a friend’s purse from Greece, batteries (I only knew about it after it passed—don’t judge), a few large mouthfuls of birdseed (ask me about the Tweety story), some very special birthday brownies, blocks of cheese, and several bags of trash. She also attacked and tore apart an “indestructible” food bin—and, while it wasn’t completely destroyed as pointed out by a friend on Facebook, it was rendered entirely unusable. All of these memories draw the largest smile on my face each time I tell them. Even now, as I morn my beautiful pup, there is a smile creeping across my face.

And then there is her name, Lucy. I kept the name that the shelter gave her, even though many told me to change it. I just found it too much fun to walk into my house after work or running an errand and bellow, “Lucy, I’m home!” like I was Ricky Ricardo on the I Love Lucy show. Her name also was the beginnings of many a nickname—Lucy-fur, Lucy Moosey, and a very common, Ooooh Lucy! See, Lucy was one of those dogs who had terrible gas and an even worse sense of timing.

Lucy taught me to “wag more and bark less,” to stop and smell the flowers as often as possible, to be patient (patient, patient), that making snow angels in drifts in parks make you feel 10 years old, and that there was great beauty in the little things. Since July 9, when Dr. Darren Lynde at AMC had to break the news to me that Lucy had bone cancer, I’ve spent as much time with Lucy as possible, and prayed for more time. (For those who have followed me on Facebook, I’m sure you’ve been overwhelmed with the photos.) We’ve frequented the equestrian park out at CAM-PLEX so she can wander in and out of the sage brush smelling old horse poo, roll in doggie caviar (more commonly known as Antelope scat) and plod through the stagnant, smelly water in the horse jumps.

That last day it snowed early in Gillette, Wyoming like some kind of happy happenstance. After her nummies, Lucy bounded outside off the deck, dunking her head into the snow and rolling around in it like she always had. But that afternoon she showed me that she was in pain and let me know that it was OK to let her go.

Thank you to everyone who has checked in on me and Lucy. Your support has meant the world to me, and Lucy always enjoyed company. I truly believe what French Literature Noble Prize winner Anatole France once wrote:

Until one has loved an animal, a part of one’s soul remains unawakened.

And while I don’t think I’ve felt as empty as I do right now, I’d happily adopt Lucy all over again.

Felicia Messimer

www.furkidsfoundation.org