

# THE \$300 PUPPY vs. THE \$1000 PUPPY-

## Why You Should Pay More for a Pet!

### ~The \$300 Puppy~

There was an ad placed in the newspaper, your co-worker's dog whelped a litter, and/or you found the puppy in the local pet shop and couldn't resist it's cute face. In any case, you examine the puppy before leaving the premises and he/she looks ok. You are just happy you found the puppy and for such a great price! You aren't given any paperwork from any reputable registry (if any are provided at all, the registration papers are from some place called APRI or ConKC instead), told anything about your puppy's parents (other than "Sally" was let out one day and they think it was "Harry" who got her OR that "Sally" was mated to "Harry" because Sally's owners wanted their kids to experience "the miracle of birth" OR that she/he came from a "professional" breeder), little to nothing about your puppy's vaccination history, little to nothing about proper socialization & nutrition, and it's obvious that this will be a final decision; you won't be able to return your puppy and, once you leave, there is no further support. Your puppy doesn't exactly look like the breed you wanted either, but you don't seem to mind. You pay your \$300 and are on your way with your new companion.

However, a few days later, your 6 week old puppy becomes very ill. He/she won't eat or play, has terrible diarrhea, and is vomiting. You rush your new puppy to the vet to discover the puppy has a potentially life-threatening illness called Parvovirus- which could've been prevented by vaccines and staying with his/her mother & littermates for an additional couple of weeks. Thankfully, you got your puppy to the vet in time and he/she pulls through after a week of intensive treatments and hospitalization. You pay a total cost of around \$1000. Nevertheless, you are just happy your puppy is alive and continue on your merry way. Your puppy grows and develops into a puppy with a little more energy than you bargained for and then starts to bite you & anything else he/she can get their mouth around. You have no idea what to do about it, so you ask the only authority you can think of- your vet. Your vet then prescribes medication for the "hyperactivity" which does slow your puppy down some but makes him/her not want to eat on a consistent basis and causes bouts of constipation. So, you have your vet prescribe a medication to alleviate your puppy's bowel troubles.

However, despite it all, the puppy continues to grow and, by the time the puppy reaches 6 months of age, you can no longer stand the biting and, generally, out of control behavior of this now 50# dog. Your vet suggests spaying/neutering will make all these behaviors disappear, so you go ahead with the procedure. A month later, your dog is still as rambunctious as ever and now she/he's starting to limp in the front. You have your puppy's right front elbow radiographed and he/she is diagnosed with OCD. You decide to go with your vet's recommendation for surgery as you don't have anyone else to rely on for information or a second opinion. The surgery costs you \$3000, but your puppy pulls through just fine and is good as new in a couple of months time.

While your puppy has finally made it through his/her first year, it obviously hasn't been without its trials. In fact, this first year has left you with a bad taste for "breeders" in your mouth and you vow never to buy a puppy from a "breeder" again. You also decide that your puppy has just been too expensive for you to handle- especially since he/she is now almost fully grown and completely destructive. You simply cannot afford to replace any more furniture or handle his/her

obnoxious behavior (he/she literally knocks you over at least once or twice a day and/or he marks everything in the house as well as every tree in the neighborhood on your walks) and you make the hard decision to drop him/her off at the local shelter this weekend.

### ~The \$1000 Puppy~

Your family carefully researches and decides on the perfect breed. You then do some online research to discover a responsible breeder within 4 hours drive of your home. You visit their website, see that they have a litter planned, fill out an application, talk with the breeder over the phone a few times, visit their home a few times, and finally decide this is the right breeder. The breeder tells you about the planned litter's parents, why they think this is an appropriate breeding, provides you with copies of the parents' health clearances, registration, titles, pictures, pedigree, etc., gives you a tour of their home/property while explaining where certain events happen (such as where the puppies are whelped and kept), and lets you meet & interact with some of their dogs. It is very obvious that this breeder works extremely hard, is truly dedicated to their chosen breed, and makes even the toughest decisions in the best interest of their dogs & breed. All of the breeder's breeding stock look & behavior in the manner dictated by the breed's written standard. You leave very excited and comfortable with your decision. You return home and start preparing for your future new companion.

A few weeks later, you get a phone call and/or email. The breeder announces the breeding has finally taken place and continues to update you on at least a weekly basis about how the pregnancy is progressing and some of the mom's quirky daily activities. When the pregnancy has reached the 30 day mark, the breeder emails you a picture of the ultrasound which confirms that the mom is, indeed, pregnant and there are puppies on the way in about a little over a month. You then make your commitment by sending the breeder a deposit of \$250. The breeder then continues to update you on the progress of the mom's pregnancy.

Then, the big day arrives. The puppies are born! The breeder sends you a brief email letting you know that everything went just fine and mom & babies (all 8 of them) are doing well before making a bed and falling asleep by the whelping box. Over the next few weeks, the breeder gives you a weekly update with several pictures on the puppies' & mom's activities...Little Purple girl is a little bit smaller than her biggest brother, Orange boy, but she's not letting that stop her from getting to the food dish first!

Starting at around the 5th or 6th week of age, the breeder offers to let you visit the puppies. As much as you excitedly hound the breeder to know exactly which puppy will be yours, the breeder insists he/she just doesn't know yet and won't know until after the litter is evaluated since they are keeping the best pick(s) for themselves. While you feel a little disappointed that you don't know which puppy is going to be called your little "Debbie" or "Johnny", you understand and you leave it up to the breeder to make the best pick for you when the time comes.

Finally the day arrives when you can pick up your new puppy! You arrive at the breeders with the rest of the purchase price of the puppy- \$750 (the total cost of \$1000 minus your \$250 deposit). The breeder informs you, he/she felt Blue boy would be the most compatible to your lifestyle, so he is your puppy. Then, you & the breeder sit down, fill out the puppy's AKC registration application, your sales contract (which includes a clause to return the puppy at ANY time during his/her lifetime for ANY reason), your puppy's health guarantee (in which the

breeder offers you some sort of support should major hereditary health ailments arise), and you & the breeder go over your puppy's vaccination schedule, socialization, training & nutritional needs, etc thoroughly. The breeder then gives you a packet/folder with all of this information in addition to several informative articles on topics ranging from training, socialization, nutrition, daily care, etc, more copies of the parent's information (health clearances, pedigrees, etc), the puppy's microchip information, and an open invitation to call them day or night with any issues or updates. The breeder gives you a toy or two with Johnny's littermates' scent on it, enough of the food he has been eating to get you started, and you finally get to take him home.

Johnny is a great puppy and you have a lot of fun with him. You talk with or email his breeder at least monthly to keep them updated as to how Johnny is doing. In return, the breeder is there to support you whenever you have an issue- no matter how big or small. Once you thought that Johnny might have an orthopedic problem and his breeder brought him to one of the best specialist at their own cost so that you got, not only a second opinion, but the most accurate diagnosis. Turns out, Johnny just had a case of Pano (growing pains) and nothing was ultimately wrong with his joints, but you'll never forget how his breeder was there for you every step of the way.

As Johnny grows up, you take him to obedience classes, he becomes a very well adjusted member of your family, and everyone loves him. When the sad day comes where Johnny crosses over the rainbow bridge, his breeder is every bit as heartbroken as you are.