

# THE SECRET LIFE OF

# PETS

## [ NORTHVIEW EDITION ]

The Messenger explores the stories of some pets of the Northview community

SUHANI MAHAJAN, STAFF WRITER

“[My sister] asked me ‘Would you help pay for a hedgehog if I find one?’, and I said ‘Sure,’ thinking that it would never happen. Then, she texts me one day, telling me that we’re going to get a hedgehog, so here we are,” AP Psychology and American Government teacher Stephanie Roche said.

Roche co-parents her hedgehog, Mochi, with her sister. Four-year-old Mochi is a calm creature who enjoys being wrapped in fleece and cuddling with Roche.

Though hedgehogs cannot see very well, they have an acute sense of smell and taste, which is what Mochi uses to identify people.

“She’s pretty good with strangers,” Roche said. “She’s okay with being picked up and held.”

The texture of Mochi’s spikes, Roche describes, laughing, is more like over-gelled hair than needles. But, be warned—they can still be uncomfortable to handle, especially if Mochi gets spooked.

Funnily enough, however, it’s usually Mochi doing the scaring. Roche’s sister’s dog is still apprehensive of the little hedgehog, darting away from the bundle of spikes when it gets too close.

Be that as it may, Mochi is an essential part of the family, bringing Roche and her sister together as life goes on.

“We like the sharing idea,” Roche said. “My sister and I used to live together, and now she’s further away, so Mochi keeps the bond. We get to trade off on hedgehog duties.”



Small, but mighty, Mochi in her bed.

STEPHANIE ROCHE, SPECIAL



“There was a litter of cats in a cage with hammocks and food bowls. Chouquette was the one who fell from hammock to hammock, flipped over all the food bowl (essentially the most chaotic one you could find), and we pointed at her and went ‘we want that one!’” senior Juliette Salah said.

Thus, the Salahs brought home the newest member of their family—a black cat they named Chouquette. A lively cat, she enjoys climbing curtains and skidding across hardwood floors—with, of course, the occasional crash into the furniture. Chouquette loves chewing “cables, chargers—anything that has wires,” and Juliette suspects that perhaps this love for nibbling is why Chouquette treats her brother, sophomore Paul Salah, kinder.

“[He] feeds her! It’s the only reason,” Juliette said.

One of Juliette’s favorite memories with Chouquette is the instance when the playful cat intervened into her plans. At her mother’s request, Juliette had brought her purse to her room. However, a little while later, her mother complained that the purse was not upstairs.

Turns out, Chouquette had taken the liberty of bringing the purse back downstairs to the exact place it had been—a caring gesture of love, no doubt. After all, Chouquette is a very friendly cat. She basks in attention as much as other cats bask in the sun.

“I’ll be in my room, and the door will be closed,” Paul said. “And Chouquette will stick her paw under the door and wave it around like ‘Hey! Let me in!’”



14 Chouquette waiting for belly rubs.  
JULIETTE SALAH, SPECIAL

Sasuke slithering his way onto the page.  
ALICE LEE, SPECIAL



“For a whole month, my parents just didn’t know about him. Then, one day, my mom came into my room and was really shocked to see him. She was like, ‘Oh! we have a snake!’” junior Alice Lee said.

When Alice was in middle school, she developed a passion for reptiles. Wary of any scaly creature, her parents always turned down her requests for a pet snake. But, one day, Alice’s sister took her to a reptile shop.

“‘Just to see,’ I’d told her,” Alice said.

But, Sasuke, her now five-year-old ball python, was too irresistible to leave behind.

Though most people are scared of snakes, to Alice, Sasuke is “sweet and friendly.” When handled outside of his cage, he winds his way around Alice, enjoying resting around her shoulders.

Sasuke features in Alice’s pictures and is her tool for wrecking (playful!) havoc amongst her friends.

“Some of my friends are scared of snakes, but I’ll bring him out when we take pictures,” Alice said. “[The pictures] turn out pretty cool too.”



“My parents established that I’d have to take [any dog I got] with me to college, so I did a bunch of research on dorms and whatnot before deciding on Meka,” senior Riya Sachde said.

Riya adopted her tiny puppy, Meka, last year. Since Meka did not interact with very many humans in her early life, she tends to be apprehensive of strangers, but she has warmed up to the Sachde family and Riya’s friends.

The tiny dachshund is endearingly apprehensive of gutters and will drag her owners around a 10-foot radius of any gutter they encounter on a walk. So, the Sachde family goes on hikes instead, where Meka feels more comfortable jumping and playing around.

Although she was originally intended to be solely Riya’s, Meka quickly won over the entire family.

“Now, my parents are saying that they’ll keep her when I leave home,” Riya said. “‘We will bring her with us when we come to visit you,’ they say.”



Meka making use of household appliances.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RIYA SACHDE



Bentley looking cute as always.

VIRAJ AHUJA, SPECIAL

“My brother likes cars, and we wanted something rich and posh, so we named him Bentley,” senior Viraj Ahuja said.

Last year, the Ahuja family decided to get a dog: an adorable mini poodle named Bentley. In just a short while, he’s become an integral member of the family.

“He’s very protective. About five or six times, he’s seen a deer while we were on a walk, and he dragged me behind him as he tried to chase it,” Viraj said. “I’ve taken several rounds around the neighborhood just like that.”

Bentley spends most of his time cuddling with Mrs. Ahuja, looks to Mr. Ahuja for his dinner, and curls around Viraj when he does his homework, ever the constant companion. When Viraj’s brother comes home from college, Bentley gives him all his attention, glueing himself to the familiar guest. But, Bentley doesn’t have a favorite family member!

As the newest addition to the family, Bentley has brought the family together. He’s even pawed his way into the role of the youngest grandson.

“Because we’re all busy in our own lives, my Dadi (grandmother) doesn’t really have anyone to talk to,” Viraj said. “So, she talks to Bentley all day or just spends time with him, cuddling him. I think he’s the favorite grandchild.”