

The Price of Dogs

by Marsha Lindquist

We repeatedly see the breakdown of the cost of raising a child. I thought about how that compares with raising a dog and we decided to list it in a rewarding way. It's nice.

I recently calculated the cost of raising a dog from birth to 10 years (dog years). Now this is one of my dogs, not the average dog. My dog gets top notch treatment so your results may vary.

I arrived at a total of \$71,780. This all includes the cost of buying the dog and shipping her (or going to get her), the vets (plural) bills, dog medicines and supplements, dog training, dog pictures, dog sitting while you're away, fresh dog food, and various dog toys and paraphernalia. And that number doesn't presume any major calamities as we have experienced. Talk about price shock! That doesn't even touch the cost of showing or breeding. But \$71,780 isn't so bad if you break it down. It translates into \$7,178 a year, \$598 a month, or \$140 a week. That's a mere \$20 a day! Just under a dollar an hour.

Still, you might think the best financial advice is not to have dogs if you want to be "rich." Actually, it is just the opposite. What do you get for your \$71,780?

1. Naming rights. First name at least plus at least at the vet you get to use whatever last name you want!
2. Glimpses of God every day.
3. Smiles when your dog just gets up and comes over to sit by your side for no apparent reason.
4. Laughs when they do silly things or when you dress them up for Halloween.
5. More love than your heart can hold.
6. Smooshy wet kisses and warm hugs.
7. Endless wonder over tennis balls, squirrels, flying insects, and sticks.
8. A paw to hold, usually twitching while she naps at your feet.
9. A partner for hiking and swimming in the lake.
10. Someone to laugh yourself silly with, no matter what the boss said or how your stocks performed that day.

For a mere \$71,780, you never have to grow up. You get to play ball whenever the dog wants, play hide-and-seek, and throw endless amounts of Frisbees, sticks and tennis balls until your arm is sore or you wear out the tennis racket.

You have an excuse to act like a fool without anyone thinking you're nuts, never stop believing in simple pleasures like sitting on a grassy knoll looking at nothing or buy outrageously expensive toys and gadgets just to amuse your best buddy.

You get to frame pictures of your dog in ridiculous outfits, tell stories of how great Rover was on the agility field, and collect presents in the yard and wonder who the master in your family is really. You get a front row seat in history to witness the first ending to obedience class, the first swim, the first good encounter at the dog park.

For a mere \$20 a day, there is no greater bang for your buck. You get to be a hero just for coming in the front door after work (remember big smooshy wet kisses?) and you'll always be greeted that way. You get idolized if you have any food item in your hands, you even mention "that" word that sends your dog into supreme attentiveness, or you even put one finger on the leash.

You may not be able to take a tax deduction for your dog but she is every bit dependent upon you as if she were your own child. You get an education in psychology, nursing, communications, and your own mind that no college can match.

In the eyes of a dog, you rank right up there close to God. You have supreme power to heal cactus thorn scars, chase away the thunderstorm monster, and love them unconditionally. Don't count the cost - they don't. What a deal for the price!

Love & enjoy your dogs! It's the choicest investment you'll ever make both for your dog and for you. Priceless.

The only thing she missed was the kisses and cleaning up the tears when life takes your world apart! Or the warm spot on the bed on cold winter nights!