

Lucky's Legacy: 5 Important Lessons TurfMutt Taught Us

(NAPSA)—Lucky the TurfMutt is a real-life rescue dog who “pawed it forward” by spending a decade educating children and families about living landscapes—why they are important to people and the planet, how to take care of them, and encouraging everyone to get out and enjoy the nature around them. Lucky inspired people to look at their living landscapes through a dog’s eyes. After all, no one loves a yard like the family dog.

Lucky, who was rescued from a busy Indianapolis roadway 13 years ago by Kris Kiser, President & CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), inspired the TurfMutt environmental stewardship and education program. The program is celebrating its 10 year anniversary in 2019 and has reached 70 million students, teachers, and families since its inception.

“TurfMutt provided the vision to see that ordinary home yards, parks, and school yards have a larger purpose than just our human one,” said Kiser. “They are suburban and urban habitat that supports our ecology and climate, provide homes and food for pollinators and wildlife, and give us a safe and healthy place to play, relax and de-stress.”

Lucky recently passed away while working at the office of the TurfMutt Foundation, which will carry on his mission. Here are the top lessons that Lucky—a dog who lived a full and purpose-driven life—leaves as his legacy.

- **Anyone can be a backyard superhero like TurfMutt.** Lucky went from being a street dog to a backyard superhero that inspired others, no matter their age, to appreciate and care for living landscapes. Over the last decade, environmental education lessons that support science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) standards were distributed to children in grades K-8 through partners Weekly Reader, Discovery Education, and Scholastic. Lucky was animated and “cartoonized” in activities and videos and the program offered an annual contest for students to win prizes for their creativity and lessons learned.

- **Sometimes street dogs become stars.** Lucky the TurfMutt appeared on the award-winning show, “Lucky Dog,” for three seasons alongside Brandon McMillan and Kiser. The TurfMutt program also sponsored the TV show



Lucky the TurfMutt, a real-life rescue dog who educated people about living landscapes.

“Ready, Set, Pet.” Lucky’s story was highlighted in Parade magazine and featured in a chapter for a 2018 National Geographic book, “Love Unleashed: Tales of Inspiration and the Life-Changing Power of Dogs.” Photos of Lucky also appeared in the calendar published by the Wildlife Habitat Council for three consecutive years.

- **Being an “outsider” is good for you.** Lucky taught by example that getting out and enjoying living landscapes (i.e. being an “outsider”) is the best way to reap the many health and well-being rewards that green space offers. Spending time in nature boosts memory, improves heart health, reduces stress, and makes for happier, healthier people.

- **Adopt, don’t shop.** Animal rescue is part of the TurfMutt education equation. The TurfMutt program hosts its annual pet adoption event, Lucky’s Mutt Madness in Louisville, Kentucky, at GIE+EXPO the leading trade show in the outdoor power, landscape and hard-scape industries. This year, the event takes place on October 17.

- **Paw-tnerships are important.** Every good superhero has a sidekick, and the TurfMutt program forged many strategic partnerships over the years. TurfMutt has been listed as a resource by the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Green Apple, the Center for Green Schools, the Outdoors Alliance for Kids, the National Energy Education Development project, Climate Change Live, Petfinder and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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