

Internationally Renowned Canine Philanthropist Ecco D'Oro Dies

World famous Canine Philanthropist GCH Sweetbriars Ecco D'Oro JH "Ecco" died on October 24, 2020 after a short battle with an aggressive cancer.

SMITHFIELD, VA, USA, October 25, 2020

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Ecco, a Spinoni Italiano, was best known as the "naughty dog with the big heart" after he reached social media fame from his not-so-stellar but laughable antics.

What started as a simple Facebook page turned into a journey that can only be described as mind boggling.

"When I posted pictures of Ecco, more times than not, he was in some kind of trouble", recalls his owner, Amy Havens. "Instantly, he became a global internet sensation. Ecco's personality was so human that I began to write through his eyes. I would post inspirational Italian lessons daily from Ecco's perspective and a poem weekly coined Sunday Prayers, which morphed into a new page dedicated to prayer requests due to the demand. I had to get him his own P.O. Box because he was receiving fan mail!



Canine Philanthropist Ecco D'Oro

“

When you care...and share...life can take you ANYWHERE!”

Ecco D'Oro

'I realized that many children were watching Ecco's naughty behavior so I decided to turn his negatives into positives. It's impossible to be well behaved all of the time. However, the lessons you learn when you make mistakes are what really matters.

'Ecco was known for stealing and destroying underwear, so

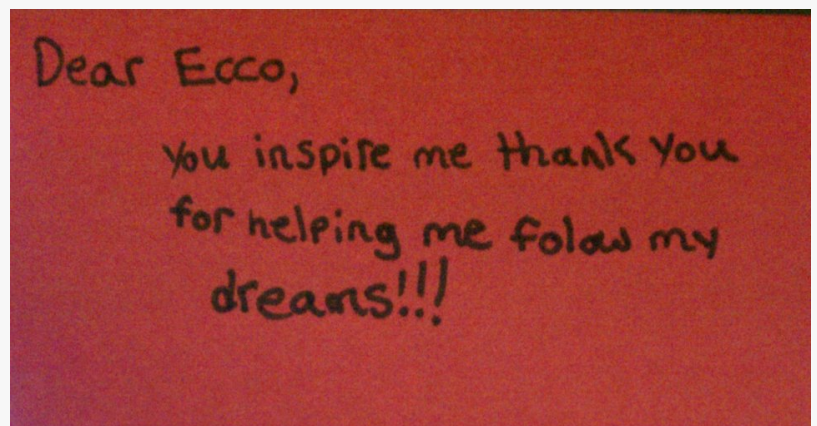
I created the international "Underwear Everywhere Drive." People would send socks and packages of new underwear from all over the world. Ecco and I would then travel down to the Union Mission in Norfolk, VA, and make our annual donation on behalf of his "pack".

'As Ecco's popularity grew, unexpected things began to happen. Children wrote letters to Ecco. One in particular made an impact that will stick with me for the rest of my life. A little boy disclosed how he was being bullied and contemplating suicide. This child confided in a dog, not a human. This would not be the first child who messaged Ecco in despair and at that moment, I knew our true purpose.



Ecco D'Oro with Eccolins

'This was the catalyst that inspired the birth of Nawty Dawg Big Heart, a non-profit organization to help others in need. Soon thereafter, Ecco became the larger-than-life Spokes Dog, barking our mission, "If you care...and share...life can take you anywhere."



Letter to Ecco from a child

'Prayer requests and cries for help flooded in as a result. We raised money for vet bills, transports and pretty much anything you could think of having to do with animals. We organized 911 "Bark Outs" to save animals from the euthanasia lists. Ecco's social media pack was strong and philanthropic. Thousands of dollars were raised to help animals in need.

'I don't think we would have received a quarter of the response had it not been for Ecco. People really felt like they were talking to a dog, not a human. It was the most bizarre dynamic that I have ever encountered.

Irene Binggeli, now retired from Palisade Elementary School in Colorado, recounts the impact that Ecco had on her students. "Sharing is Caring!" "This could be heard in the halls of Taylor Elementary School. It was also the title of a lesson I taught students in the library with the help of Ecco. He taught kids about the importance of looking past their own life and to help others wherever possible. Ecco inspired our students to do good deeds in their community and to be more compassionate around their peers. These lessons completely changed the way the students felt about their families, friends, town and indeed the world. Just a month ago a former student, now a high school senior, shared with me that he still has the thank you note that Ecco wrote to him after a fundraiser we did for our local animal shelter. "Oh, it's just a dog!" Hundreds of kids and young adults in Colorado would disagree with that statement."

Ecco brought joy to children and their families at Ronald McDonald House and to little ones during the Christmas season when he donned his Santa Paws outfit and visited pre-school classes. There were so many appearance requests that a stuffed prototype was created. "Eccolinis" were sold all over the world with a portion of each sale donated to a random charity.

"Eccolinis were spotted on every continent excluding Antarctica", Havens stated. "It was surreal. Those stuffed pups helped children through surgeries, made it into delivery rooms, and even found love during biker week in Sturgis!"

Celebrities started noticing the impact that Ecco's messages had on children and it wasn't long before Metropolitan Opera Diva Janet Hopkins contacted Amy to arrange a performance together at the famed Westminster Dog Show in New York.

"The one thing that was more important to us than anything else was education", said Amy. A long-time advocate for animal rights, Janet teamed up with Ecco to raise awareness about animal rescue. Janet and Ecco met in the lobby of the Hotel Pennsylvania, where Miss Hopkins serenaded Ecco with a favorite personalized Italian aria, "O Mio Babbino Cane".

Janet and Amy went on to co-write a children's libretto named, "Ecco Goes to the Opera", complete with an interactive coloring book, in hopes of bringing more children into the arts through animals and music. When Janet heard of Ecco's passing, she replied with this statement, "I will forever remember my sweet Ecco. Our duets will echo across the rainbow bridge till we meet again. You were deeply loved."

Prior to retirement, Ecco was the "[Canine](#) Travel Correspondent" for the exclusive Everyday Opera Magazine and the celebrity magazine, Concierge Q. "That crazy dog had restaurants completely shut down to throw charity wine tastings for him and his fans. It was surreal.", stated Havens. "Restaurants craved the opportunity to invite a famous [philanthropist](#) dog in to review their businesses!"

Throughout his career, Ecco was an accomplished show dog, an avid bird dog, a magazine cover dog and the subject of many articles, books and documentaries. He lived up to the meaning of his name, Ecco D'Oro, "Here is gold".

"Ecco was a 'once in a lifetime' dog but most of all, he was our beloved family member. Fly high our naughty boy with the biggest heart. You made a difference."

Amy H. Selleck

Writer

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