

*Northwoods Humane Society – Melissa Spero, Volunteer Writer*

*SPLASH! SPLASH! SPLASH!* Pepper barrels into the salty, choppy waves. She pounces on each surf as her teeth slice the glittering crest in half. While she doesn't drink the water, Pepper enjoys a good "hunt." She can entertain herself for hours stalking the ocean tide. Pepper body flops merrily whenever the water gets too deep for her to walk. Pepper paddles between her parents, making laps around us. The calm scenario changes as my giggles turn into shrieks when Pepper knocks me down. Now my legs are in the air, head barely above water as a panting, smiling Pepper treads next to me. Josh's robust laughter echoes across the grassy dunes. Our German shepherd/black lab mix loves water. Read on for more of our summer fun!

*GULP! GULP! GULP!* Pepper leads Josh or myself outside several times a day so she can drink icy, cold water from the hose. It's gotten to the point where Pepper barely drinks from her water dish. It doesn't matter how fresh and chilled the water is. Sometimes she requires a bathroom break, but it's usually that Pepper wants to gander around the water cooler. Pepper sniffs the expansive yard (aka reads the newspaper) as she occasionally trots back to the blasting, bubbly water for hydration. The cycle continues until Pepper ascends the deck steps and looks back at us as if to say, "You coming or what?"

*DROP! DROP! DROP!* Blades of smooth grass tickle our feet as we chase Pepper through the sprinkler. The sporadic, ice cold droplets cool ourselves as much as Pepper. We raise our hands while Pepper splashes her paws through the icy mist. Josh chortles whenever Pepper tries to catch the rising wave of freezing spray. Pepper places her paws through the cascading waterfall to scoop water into her excited, open snout. Once she is completely done, Pepper makes a loop around the splash zone to the deck. She sunbathes until her parents go inside.

*SPIN! SPIN! SPIN!* A pool is filled almost daily for Pepper with refreshing, chilling water so she can gulp endlessly. The icy pool cools down her paw pads. It also provides a fun game Pepper has played since she was a puppy. Pepper loves to make what I call a "Pepper Tornado" in the pool. She spins around until water cascades over her body. Then she catches it in her mouth. Pepper loves company while she's jumping around. Josh and I take turns cooling our feet and making memorable memories with our baby girl.

*CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH!* Pepper greedily crunches ice cubes all day. It's definitely her preferred snack to offset the summer heat. Want proof? Just follow the stream of water droplets to find her. Or listen to the telltale cracking sound of her enjoying the refreshing bite. Josh loves to offer her the delectable treats often. This ritual occurs so much that Pepper's satellite ears perk up whenever we open the freezer.

*WAG! SNIFF! MEOW!* Want to make some fun summer memories of your own with a furry friend? The Northwood's Humane Society needs volunteers like you! Dogs want to experience a walk and share their water cooler spot with you! Cats are excited to show you their colorful cat wands and favorite pounce attacks! If you do not have the time, please consider a financial donation to the Northwood's Humane Society. They are a no-kill animal shelter that has provided me with most of my fur babies since I was a little girl. They definitely changed my life for the better. Allow them to do the same for you whether you volunteer for a remarkable foster opportunity or add a member to your family with a furry companion adoption!

I have to go. Pepper needs another break at the water cooler, and I'm more than happy to oblige.