

Matthew McConaughey Supports Growing Up With Pets

Dog lover Matthew McConaughey endorses Growing Up With Pets, a campaign to build relationships between children and pets.

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Matthew McConaughey with his dog, Foxy, and Dr. Lynn Buzhardt, DVM. With four movies in the pipeline, actor Matthew McConaughey is a busy guy. But People magazine's former Sexiest Man Alive still manages to find time to be an animal lover.

After Hurricane Katrina, actor Matthew McConaughey joined the rescue efforts to save animals that were abandoned and stranded by the disaster. In 2006, McConaughey was driving in Sherman Oaks, Calif., and saw a group of boys brutalizing a cat. The boys had sprayed the animal with hairspray and were attempting to set it on fire. McConaughey reportedly jumped out of his car, berated the boys and took the cat to a local animal shelter.

And McConaughey is no stranger to animal shelters: He found his longtime canine companion, Miss Hud, in 1993 in a Tucson, Ariz., shelter. The two were inseparable for 12 years – a relationship that lasted longer than any covered by the tabloids – until the Labrador Retriever-Chow Chow mix was diagnosed with cancer in 2005.

One of Miss Hud's front legs had to be amputated, and soon afterward, McConaughey learned that both of Miss Hud's back legs also were riddled with cancer. He told Oprah in an interview: "She and I looked at each other and I said, 'Miss Hud, do you wanna be a one-legged dog?' And she looks up and she says, 'Let me move on, Pop.' So we let her move on."

McConaughey now owns – or is owned by – an Australian Cattle Dog named Foxy.

McConaughey currently supports an initiative called Growing Up With Pets, backed by Novartis Animal Health US. The campaign aims to provide comprehensive information for families looking to build strong, healthy relationships between their children and their pets. For more information, visit www.growingupwithpets.com

McConaughey stars in the upcoming movie "Fool's Gold," with Kate Hudson, and is currently filming "Surfer Dude." Both movies are scheduled for release in 2008.