

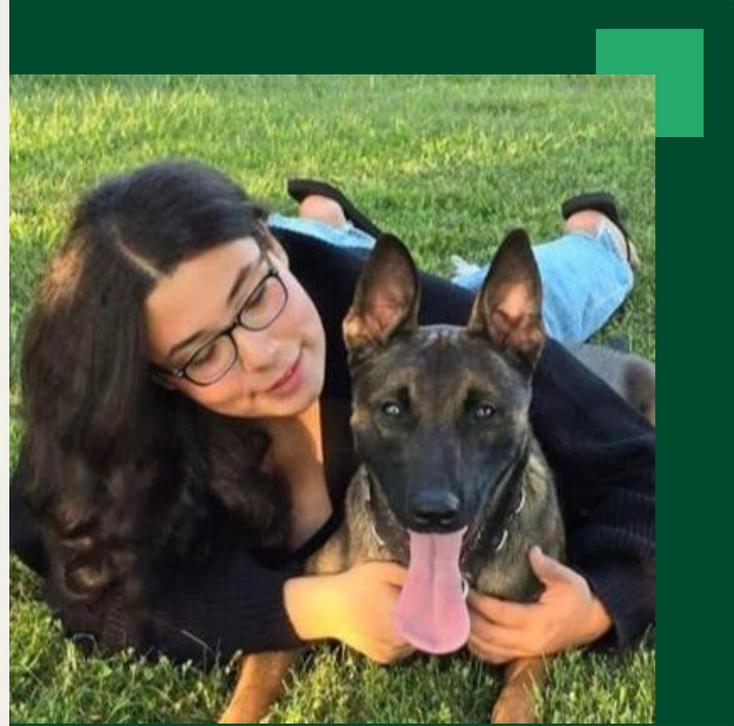
Summer Laurin

Candidate

Animal

Advocates

Merit Award



Summer with personal dog “Hoax”.
2025 earned Protection Dog Certification from
the Protection Sports Association.

About Me



■ BACKGROUND

Passionate and experienced animal handler with a focus on canine behavior and training; nearly ten years' part-time experience in animal welfare (7 years as a volunteer, and 3 years as an employee). Earned the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Presidential Volunteer Service Award program with over 8,000 hours of documented volunteerism in animal welfare.

Currently working two part-time jobs, one at an animal shelter and the other for a dog trainer. 2025 high school graduate (3.4) GPA. Was in foster care from 2013 to 2016, resulting in my adoption. Neither of my biological parents attended college. Biological father is deceased and biological mother reportedly has terminal cancer. Taking college-credit courses online through a course platform, Study.com.

Personal Goals

■ Career working with dogs

I love working with dogs, especially the tough dogs that are in desperate need of behavioral training so that they can be safe both at home and in public.

Through my shelter work, I have seen some of the worst dogs and I know what the challenges are in working with these dogs.

■ College degree

A four-year college degree will broaden my educational background and create a foundation for additional career roles that I am interested in.

■ Humane Law or K-9 LEO

Beyond dog training, two career paths that I am interested in pursuing is Humane Law as well as becoming a K-9 police officer.

Having a college degree will significantly increase my chances of pursuing either career, and is generally required to advance to the K-9 Police Officer role.

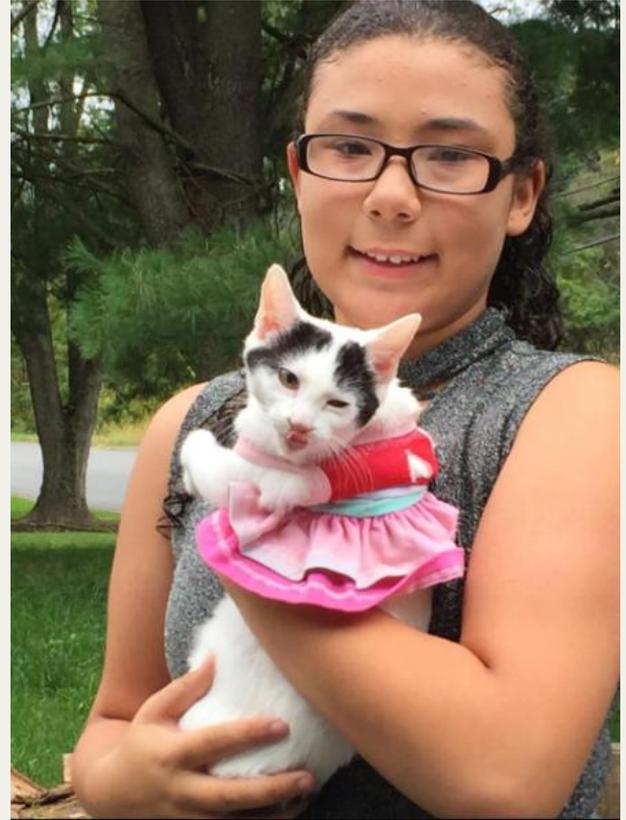


“I’m letting everyone know how wonderful today was with Summer and proving how easy it is to showcase kid-friendly pets!”

Maureen Collins, Volunteer at Brandywine Valley
SPCA, May 3, 2015, email to SPCA CEO



My goal is to improve the lives of pets and their humans through compassion, education and dedication.



Summer with Kona –
foster kitten, and then
adopted



Brief Overview of my life

2006 - 2013.

Prematurely born,
< 4 lbs at birth.

Early childhood
consisted of
neglect and abuse.

No access to
education until
child welfare
removed me from
the parental home
when I was 7 years
old.

2013 - 2016.

Foster care, resulting
in parental rights
termination and I was
adopted out to a single
mom.

Bio-dad deceased in
2016.

2021 - Presidential Volunteer Service
Award - Lifetime Achievement Award

2025 - Graduated Bayard Rustin High
School, GPA 3.4

2025 - Online courses through
[Study.com](https://www.study.com),
Goal: Transfer credits to a 4-year
college

2009 - 2011

Volunteer at Delaware County SPCA

2015 - 2023

Volunteer at Brandywine Valley SPCA,
Initiated Junior Volunteer Program

2018 - 2023

Volunteer host Darlington County Humane Association

2023 - Current

PT Kennel Tech, Brandywine Valley SPCA

2025 - Current

PT Board & Train Dog Trainer, The Cultured Canine

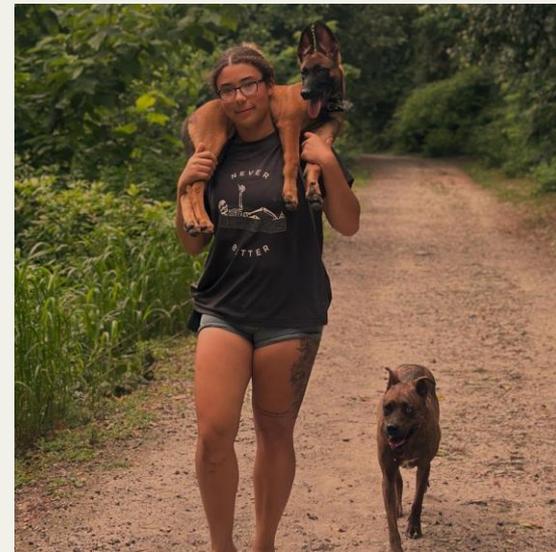
Sample photos from 2015 to 2015, this slide and next three after



11/2016 - Community Outreach Volunteer



9/2025 BVSPCA, kitten care



Puppy Hike

Can we get a big round of applause for our newest and also youngest Yellow level volunteer, Summer Laurin. Summer is a regular at group walks, community events, and has been doing an excellent job helping out at Critter Camp. Now Summer can take our smaller dogs into the play yards to give them exercise and enrichment. Congratulations Summer and thank you.



7/2017 - Promoted to Yellow Level Volunteer, Posted by SPCA behaviorist Arnie Milikowsky



SPCA Shelter Dog Pack Walk with SPCA behaviorist, Arnie



My adoption day with Judge in 2016



8/2025 feeding time in the behavioral section at the SPCA



1/2025 - Puppy management at the SPCA



Annual 5k/1M
SPCA run/walk
event



Shelter fosters
come in ALL sizes.



1/2021 -Awarded Lifetime Achievement Award from Presidential Volunteer Service Award program by President Biden



College Degree Goal Timeline

**August
2025 -
January
2026**

Complete 20 3-credit lower level college courses at [Study.com](#). 18 already completed.

**February
2026 -
June 2026**

Upgrade [Study.com](#) to access upper-level courses and complete 15 3-credit courses

**July 2026
-
December
2026**

Transfer to 4-yr college and complete summer and fall terms

**January
2027 -
March
2027**

Complete Spring Term 1 courses

**April 2027
- June
2027**

Complete Term 3 and graduate with 4-year degree

Expected college costs

Even as a live-at-home commuter student, I could not afford the tuition for our local state college (\$12k/year). The [study.com](#) program is the least expensive route to earning college credit I could find.

Most scholarships only apply to students attending a traditional 4-year college. Finding scholarships that are open to students earning college credit outside of a traditional 4-year college is rare.

Assistance to pay for the course subscription for the higher level courses is desperately needed. I love working at the SPCA, but pay in the non-profit sector tends to be low - I would need to work about 32 hours each month just to pay for the higher-level [Study.com](#) subscription.

Lower level [Study.com](#) subscription at \$125/month for an additional 2 months = \$250. Goal is to complete 20 3-credit transferable courses at this level.

Upper level [Study.com](#) subscription at \$250/month for 5 months = \$1,250. Goal is to complete 15 3-credit upper-level courses at this level.

Likely transfer to Excelsior University with 20% tuition discount and possibility for new scholarships, with only five courses to complete at Excelsior for a 4-year degree if I complete 104 transferable credits through [Study.com](#).

I have already completed 54 credits that should be transferable.

Personal Statement

As a long-time shelter volunteer, I am very aware of how many people - especially older children, teens and young adults - sign up to become volunteers, with the rosy expectation that working with shelter animals consists of puppy kisses and kitten cuddles.

The reality of the shelter environment, and of fostering animals as well, is that it can be very challenging on many levels. Many people start volunteering, but many people simply can't handle the emotional aftermath of taking home young bottle-babies to foster, and then losing half the litter because of underlying health issues.

And as much as we would like to believe that every animal coming into the shelter will be friendly and somehow, magically understand that they are now safe, the reality is that some animals come in emotionally and/or behaviorally challenged.

Most people new to shelter have a hard time handling very fearful and/or aggressive animals. They retreat when a dog fight breaks out, or if a dog suddenly charges a person - or worse, literally starts to maul a person.

For better or worse, I've already handled those situations, literally tackling an aggressive dog mauling a newer staff member, kenneling the dog and then driving the staff member to the emergency room. I know I'm built for this work, both physically and emotionally.

I've fostered and rehabbed dogs from fighting rings. Taken cats and dogs out of hoarder homes. Confronted a man who ran a dog over with his car - and the dog was left screeching with a car tire still on him. Picked up animals left to die, sealed in a box. Sat with animals being euthanized, simply because they were too far gone to rescue.

The work is often romanticized for the public, but it is often hard, messy and yet - rewarding. Not everyone is cut out for this, but I know I am.

Thank You!

