



## New Pet Store Opens on H Street

BY HEATHER SCHOELL



Anna and Kelly, Lee and Batman, Hannah and Sunny. Photo courtesy Metro Mutts.

### Bring it Back! Good Job.

So you know H Street – lots of bars, lots of food, theater, dance and a couple of retail spaces that sell motor oil, Islamic Shea butter, kids clothes. There had been a pet store at 508 H – at the corner of Eye Street – that went under, leaving an empty space for H Street and for pet owners.

Lee and Kelly Hartshorn and their friend and neighbor Anna Lappas-Collins got an idea. They would open a pet store on H, just steps from their home, where they could stock all the good stuff that they fed their own animals, and make it so other locals could likewise feed their pets healthfully without the schlep. They call it Metro Mutts.

“The city aspect – [the Depart-

ment of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs] – was very easy,” said Anna. “There was already a Certificate of Occupancy for this address. The biggest hurdle was finding time for all the little things it takes to open a store.” They have proactively sought the brands and products that people want and have a white board for suggestions. “We wanted to do it right, wanted to be a little different.”

“People tend to know H Street for its bars and restaurants rather than its retail options,” said Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Drew Roneberg (6A). “However, that’s starting to change with the arrival of new businesses like Metro Mutts. Sparky and I have become loyal customers. Their dog food and treats are high quality

and reasonably priced, and their store is clean and well stocked.”

A current, albeit temporary, challenge is H Street construction. “There’s not a lot of foot traffic yet, but the local neighbors are shopping here,” Anna said. “The H Street community has been so supportive. Dangerously Delicious Pies brought us a pie. Sidamo brought us a carafe of coffee for our customers.” Kelly added that they do “Argo-Mutts” with the Argonaut, treat and drink specials for people and pets on Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m.

### Want a Treat?

“It’s great,” said first-time Metro Mutts customer Hilary Hart. “They carry the food I like. He’s on a holistic diet,” she said of her little pookie, Lou.

“Our biggest sellers are VerUS and Merrick,” said Anna. “Our focus is USA-made, holistic food, no food from China, all natural, and nothing from the Diamond Food Plant.” They carry FREDFRED collars from local leather artist and Eastern Market vendor Jon Wye, Wacky Walkers (sort of a bungee leash that keeps shoulders in sockets), and Port-A-Poo (the name truly captures the essence). They also have 100 percent guaranteed Planet Dog toys, which smell like mint and gives a percentage to service-dog training and placement.

Despite having three kids, a house and a business, Anna finds the time to bake homemade dog treats. “The bacon cheeseburger cupcakes are the favorites, and the puppy pizza” she said.

“The cheese fries, too,” said Kelly. When she doesn’t have time to whip up a batch, they always have K9 Granola Factory treats in stock – peanut butter cookies, donuts and decorated birthday treats. Metro Mutts “saves me a trip to Virginia,” said neighbor Jeremy Kenny. “Our dog Niña loves their homemade cookies.”

It’s not all about dogs, however. There are plenty of catnip things to pounce on – squeaky mice, US-made cat food and lots of kitty treats. Cat owner and ANC 6C Commissioner Anne Phelps is also a fan of the store. “It’s terrific to be able to get quality cat food right in our neighborhood. And the owners are so friendly, too – makes me wish we had a dog so we could shop there more!”

#### Community Service

Metro Mutts is doing what they can to be a part of the community where they live and work. They get a lot of hearing-impaired pet owners from Gallaudet, so they hold a once-monthly ASL social gathering with questions about products and services translated by Katrina, a student there.

On the last Tuesday of the month, from 7 to 8 p.m., Heather Morris from Spot on Training is at Metro Mutts. Bring your puppy aged 6 months or younger for training and discounts on training products.

Grooming is available every Wednesday evening. Call for details and pricing.

See local photographer Bev Hollis’ striking images displayed throughout the store, available for purchase.

The Humane Society is going to be at Metro Mutts for an adoption event on July 3 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Stop in for a new family member!

Join Metro Mutt’s fan page – they’re on Facebook, look them up at [www.metromuttsdc.com](http://www.metromuttsdc.com), call them at 202-450-5661, or stop in at 508 H St. NE. ★

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