



The Pandemic Through Our Dogs' Eyes

**Story by: Carolyn Otto, Professor
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Monday morning rolled around and after our morning walk and breakfast, Mom said “go to work.” That was our cue to lay down on the couch while the parents went to work. However, Mom went to her office room and Dad to the basement. We were confused but happy. They stayed home with us! After our morning nap, we heard them talk about getting out of the house for some coffee. They leashed us up walked us to a drive thru window to get coffee and this started one of many new routines for us.

Over the course of the next year, we got to explore Eau Claire. Every weekend we went on a long walk on the Chippewa Valley River Trail and then to downtown. Mom and Dad mentioned how important it was to get food at some of the local restaurants. They would pick up the food and eat it on benches and picnic tables around the city. Sometimes (most of the time) they dropped some food and we got to eat it!

We visited a ton of new parks, too! We got to see the dog parks and meet new friends! There were so many other parks in the city, too! Every week, we got to go out for walks with so many new smells! Mom and Dad said words like Sherman Park, Centennial Park, Boyd Park, River Prairie, Owen Park, Carson Park, High Bridge, Phoenix Park, and many more! There was one weekend we even got to go camping! We got to play all day with our ball and nap in the sun.

Mostly we walked or ran with our parents on our leashes, but sometimes we got to ride in the car! It seemed like Mom and Dad always wanted to get out of the house, but they didn't have anywhere to really go. We didn't mind though; we loved going for rides and being with them. They liked to get their coffee drinks and often went to different coffee places. We loved this and we often got “pup cups” which were delicious! We knew the drill of sticking our heads out the window so the workers could see us and give us our treats.

This past year has been great for us. However, Mom and Dad often seemed sad, and we never got to see many people like we did before. We love being petted and missed that strangers didn't get to pet us! We tried to make sure we would cuddle with Mom and Dad as much as possible, especially when they were on the couch usually mumbling something about “Zoom”. They seem happier now, but still always want to go for walks, coffee, and cuddle. We couldn't be happier...maybe some more treats would be nice.

**Artist: Lark Keating-Hadlock, Assistant Archivist
McIntyre Library
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Lark Keating-Hadlock is the Assistant Archivist at UW-Eau Claire. Lark earned her BFA with an emphasis in both ceramics and painting as well as a BA in art history from the University of Delaware, and a graduate degree in library science from UW-Milwaukee. She has been painting in watercolor, oil, and acrylic on and off since childhood.

I chose to interpret Carolyn Otto's story, told from her dogs' viewpoint, about exploring Eau Claire and visiting various parks around Eau Claire while social distancing from people who

once used to pet the dogs. I'm one of those people who got a puppy during the pandemic, so her story really appealed to me.

View all the pieces in the *Healing Reflections* [online gallery](#).