



Emmanuelle Vaugier - A passion for helping

Improving the lives of animals in need is high on the list of priorities for this ambitious Canadian-born actress.

Animal Wellness, 2012

There's a saying in Hollywood that you should never share the stage with animals. Actress Emmanuelle Vaugier loves nothing more than being surrounded by furry four-footed creatures. Sporting an impressive roster of credits in film and television, including her role as The Morrigan on *Lost Girl*, premiering on SyFy this January, and a starring part in an upcoming movie with Carrie Fisher, Emmanuelle is a very busy lady. But speak of animals in need, and she stops in her tracks.

"I always had dogs as a child," says the Vancouver-born actress. "I've loved animals all my life. I wanted to be a veterinarian but didn't feel I could manage the emotional aspect of the profession."

As so often happens, a person's passion will eventually catch up to them. For Emmanuelle, it happened four years ago when an invitation to a Hollywood charity event led to an introduction to Best Friends Animal Society. Located in Kanab, Utah, Best Friends is well known as the largest no-kill animal sanctuary in North America, and has been widely profiled on National Geographic Channel's *DogTown* series. Their goal is to end animal homelessness. Through this chance introduction, Emmanuelle learned of the hundreds of abandoned and displaced animals living at the sanctuary, including the 22 dogs involved in the infamous Michael Vick dog fighting scandal. As heartbreaking as it was for Emmanuelle to hear the stories, it fueled her desire to help by visiting the sanctuary and learning all she could about it.

"My first visit was in 2009, when I toured the facility and volunteered to walk the dogs. I returned again in 2010. During that visit I fed the pigs, which was so much fun!" Emmanuelle was then asked by Entertainment Tonight Canada to return with them for a third visit in May 2011. "While there, I worked with the horses and birds and had the chance to bring one of the sanctuary dogs to agility classes. What I love about Best Friends is their visibility and how they've become an umbrella for smaller animal welfare organizations. Best Friends gives people in cities across North America an opportunity to get to know their local rescue groups through various community events such as cat and dog adoptions. Through association with Best Friends, the smaller organizations become known, resulting in more animals receiving the help they need and deserve."

Emmanuelle didn't stop with visiting and helping at the sanctuary. She is also the brainchild of the annual Winter Fluffball Charity, founded in 2010 to raise funds for Best Friends. "It started in my home as an intimate gathering of guests to bring awareness and support to the sanctuary," she explains. It was so well publicized that in 2011 the event was held at the home of Creative Artists Agency's managing partner, David O'Connor and Lona Williams, with 200 guests in attendance. "This second event raised more than triple the amount raised the year before!" says Emmanuelle, who is now preparing for her third Fluffball, which will be "bigger and better than ever".

Emmanuelle is an Acclaimed Ambassador for Best Friends Animal Society. "I would love to see stricter penalties for the abuse of animals," she says. "Celebrities, or anyone in the public spotlight, have a responsibility to set a positive example."

Always thinking of ways to put to work her celebrity status, passion for animals, and her desire to help any living being, Emmanuelle has her sights set on the Clare Foundation, in the hopes of working with them in the near future. The California-based non-profit organization provides

There's a saying in Hollywood that you should never share the stage with animals. Actress Emmanuelle Vaugier loves nothing more than being surrounded by furry four-footed creatures. Sporting an impressive roster of credits in film and television, including her role as The Morrigan on *Lost Girl*, premiering on Syfy this January, and a starring part in an upcoming movie with Carrie Fisher, Emmanuelle is a very busy lady. But speak of animals in need, and she stops in her tracks.

"I always had dogs as a child," says the Vancouver-born actress. "I've loved animals all my life. I wanted to be a veterinarian but didn't feel I could manage the emotional aspect of the profession."

As so often happens, a person's passion will eventually catch up to them. For Emmanuelle, it happened four years ago when an invitation to a Hollywood charity event led to an introduction to Best Friends Animal Society. Located in Kanab, Utah, Best Friends is well known as the largest no-kill animal sanctuary in North America, and has been widely profiled on National Geographic Channel's *DogTown* series. Their goal is to end animal homelessness. Through this chance introduction, Emmanuelle learned of the hundreds of abandoned and displaced animals living at the sanctuary, including the 22 dogs involved in the infamous Michael Vick dog fighting scandal. As heartbreaking as it was for Emmanuelle to hear the stories, it fueled her desire to help by visiting the sanctuary and learning all she could about it.

"My first visit was in 2009, when I toured the facility and volunteered to walk the dogs. I returned again in 2010. During that visit I fed the pigs, which was so much fun!" Emmanuelle was then asked by *Entertainment Tonight Canada* to return with them for a third visit in May 2011. "While there, I worked with the horses and birds and had the chance to bring one of the sanctuary dogs to agility classes. What I love about Best Friends is their visibility and how they've become an umbrella for smaller animal welfare organizations. Best Friends gives people in cities across North America an opportunity to get to know their local rescue groups through various community events such as cat and dog adoptions. Through association with Best Friends, the smaller organizations become known, resulting in more animals receiving the help they need and deserve."

"Celebrities, or anyone in the public spotlight, have a responsibility to set a positive example."

Emmanuelle didn't stop with visiting and helping at the sanctuary. She is also the brainchild of the annual Winter Fluffball Charity, founded in 2010 to raise funds for Best Friends. "It started in my home as an intimate gathering of guests to bring awareness and support to the sanctuary," she explains. It was so well publicized that in 2011 the event was held at the home of Creative Artists Agency's managing partner, David O'Connor and Lona Williams, with 200 guests in attendance. "This second event raised more than triple the amount raised the year before!" says Emmanuelle, who is now preparing for her third Fluffball, which will be "bigger and better than ever".

Emmanuelle is an Acclaimed Ambassador for Best Friends Animal Society. "I would love to see stricter penalties for the abuse of animals," she says. "Celebrities, or anyone in the public spotlight, have a responsibility to set a positive example."

Always thinking of ways to put to work her celebrity status, passion for animals, and her desire to help any living being, Emmanuelle has her sights set on the Clare Foundation, in the hopes of working with them in the near future. The California-based non-



treatment and recovery services to people suffering from alcoholism and substance abuse, and helps them return to sober, independent living. Emmanuelle envisions a program which would bring people in recovery together with shelter animals. She feels the benefits of animal therapy are both a learning and healing experience for patients. Meanwhile, the animals receive care, affection and socialization, so when they return to the shelter they are more adoptable. "I would love to set something up so the two organizations can work together for the greater good of both causes. It would be a win-win situation!"

Emmanuelle's door is always open to those in need, and she fosters dogs whenever she can. She works tirelessly to ensure their care and rehabilitation, but most importantly, she reunites these dogs with how it feels to be truly loved.

One of the dogs who has benefited from Emmanuelle's compassion is Elmo, a bearded collie that was taken in by Best Friends after being hit by a car and receiving extensive injuries including a fractured hip. Elmo went to finish his recovery at Emmanuelle's home, with the help of a friend, in April 2011.

"He was still a bit of a mess," she explains. "He was full of matted hair since he couldn't be groomed due to the stitches. He still needed medical care, and he had some behavior issues. He was shy, skittish and food aggressive." However, with the help of a good friend who shared in the fostering responsibility, love and patience prevailed. "After a few months, you could see a real change in Elmo," Emmanuelle says. "Now he's like a totally different dog, and has since been adopted into an amazing 'forever home'."

In June 2011, the tables turned and Emmanuelle found herself as an adoptee instead of an adopter. "I was filming *Covert Affairs* in Toronto, and a puppy named Jack firmly planted himself next to me and subsequently into my heart. I joked with the person he belonged to by saying I would take him off her hands. Turned out, he actually needed a new home because she didn't really have the time the puppy needed. It was a difficult decision for her, but we have an 'open adoption' policy. We see each other every time we visit Toronto."

Emmanuelle is virtually unstoppable when it comes to the plight of animals in need. Her drive, commitment and compassion for all animals are profound. She wears her heart on her sleeve, and is compelled to do anything she can to help. "Please spay and neuter your animals," she advises. "Education is key to people learning the importance of being responsible."

Written by Tessa Kimmel

Reprinted with permission of *Animal Wellness Magazine*, © 2009, animalwellnessmagazine.com

profit organization provides treatment and recovery services to people suffering from alcoholism and substance abuse, and helps them return to sober, independent living. Emmanuelle envisions a program which would bring people in recovery together with shelter animals. She feels the benefits of animal therapy are both a learning and healing experience for patients. Meanwhile, the animals receive care, affection and socialization, so when they return to the shelter they are more adoptable. "I would love to set something up so the two organizations can work together for the greater good of both causes. It would be a win-win situation!"

"Now he's like a totally different dog, and has since been adopted into an amazing 'forever home'."

Emmanuelle's door is always open to those in need, and she fosters dogs whenever she can. She works tirelessly to ensure their care and rehabilitation, but most importantly, she reunites these dogs with how it feels to be truly loved.

One of the dogs who has benefited from Emmanuelle's compassion is Elmo, a bearded collie that was taken in by Best Friends after being hit by a car and receiving extensive injuries including a fractured hip. Elmo went to finish his recovery at Emmanuelle's home, with the help of a friend, in April 2011.

"He was still a bit of a mess," she explains. "He was full of matted hair since he couldn't be groomed due to the stitches. He still needed medical care, and he had some behavior issues. He was shy, skittish and food aggressive." However, with the help of a good friend who shared in the fostering responsibility, love and patience prevailed. "After a few months, you could see a real change in Elmo," Emmanuelle says. "Now he's like a totally different dog, and has since been adopted into an amazing 'forever home'."

In June 2011, the tables turned and Emmanuelle found herself as an adoptee instead of an adopter. "I was filming *Cover Affairs* in Toronto, and a puppy named Jack firmly planted himself next to me and subsequently into my heart. I joked with the person he belonged to by saying I would take him off her hands. Turned out, he actually needed a new home because she didn't really have the time the puppy needed. It was a difficult decision for her, but we have an 'open adoption' policy. We see each other every time we visit Toronto."

Emmanuelle is virtually unstoppable when it comes to the plight of animals in need. Her drive, commitment and compassion for all animals are profound. She wears her heart on her sleeve, and is compelled to do anything she can to help. "Please spay and neuter your animals," she advises. "Education is key to people learning the importance of being responsible." 🐾