



It's a Beautiful Day WITH LAURA BRENNER AND PIPER

Imagine Covid doesn't exist and you have a day off from work. You are free to spend the day doing exactly as you please. Inspired by U2's *It's a Beautiful Day* – It's a beautiful day, don't let it get away – we asked Laura Brenner, to describe her perfect Lancaster County day.

About Laura

Growing up in West Lampeter Township, Laura always dreamed of living the farm life. She's come close through buying her own horse at the age of 16 and becoming the Communications Coordinator for Lancaster Farmland Trust.

Laura is also a fan of communing with nature through running, hiking and biking – in any season and on any surface. Laura's latest adventure (November) took her and Piper to the Dolly Sods Wilderness in West Virginia.

Laura is a graduate of Penn State University (B.A. in Political Science, with a minor in Agronomy) and earned her Master's Degree (Communication) from Perdue University. She also volunteers with Big Brothers and Big Sisters and the Lancaster Recreation Commission.

About Piper

Before Piper – aka The Queen of Lemon Street – Laura's family fostered a Plott Hound, a 60- to 70-pound dog bred to hunt bears in the hills of West Virginia and other mountainous southern states. The dog was ultimately reunited with her family after a few months. "That was all [the experience] we needed with that breed to want another just like her," Laura explains. "My parents found Piper, then named Chole, through an online listing at a rescue in northern New

Jersey. They listed her as a Plott Hound, which we assumed meant she was 'all' Plott Hound. Six months and 20 pounds later, we realized she was not the dog we originally anticipated. But, it's true what they say: good things come in small packages. Nearly nine years later, Piper is my best friend and greatest partner in crime. She's followed me to three homes and on several vacations. She even comes to work with me and serves as our unofficial office mascot ... and official lunch moocher.

In Her Own Words: Laura (and Piper's) Perfect Lancaster County Day

It would begin around sunrise with a few puppy snuggles. Piper is not a fan of the cold. She loves to sleep under the covers; it can take some time for her to leave the warmth of our bed.

I love breakfast, and today's needs to be a hearty one. Don't tell Piper, but I'm planning a romp through the woods later in the day. Depending on what I have stocked in the fridge, I make breakfast at home or order from one of our favorite spots in the city. One of the things I love about living in Lancaster City is not needing to drive everywhere – so, you can bet on Piper and me to pick up our breakfast order by foot. Even when dine-in is an option, I usually opt to get take-out and eat at home with Piper this time of year.

After we fill our bellies, I need to discreetly pack a bag for hiking. Piper has a keen eye for when I'm fiddling with my running or hiking gear. If she senses an adventure is coming, she becomes my shadow, which makes packing and prepping a bit more of a challenge. Even if I manage to pack and change stealthily, Piper loses her chill once I grab the keys. She bounces across the kitchen towards the door, barking as if to say, "Let's go, Mom. You're taking too long!"

We are lucky to have so many hiking and trail-running options in Lancaster County. One of our favorite spots – and perfect for a mid-week day-off – is the Conestoga Trail. You can access one end of it at Kelly's Run – that's where we are heading. The trail follows the Susquehanna River toward the Pinnacle Overlook, then on to Tucquan Glen. Though the trail continues to House Rock and Wind Cave before dropping trekkers into Pequea, Piper and I will take a snack break in Tucquan Glen and then head back towards our car.

There's nothing like a good, hot meal after a winter hike. On our way home, I'll call a friend and ask, "Want to grab a bite somewhere?" With sleepy Piper snuggled under a blanket on the sofa, I'll walk downtown to meet my friend and enjoy a hot meal and a couple of drinks.

Follow Laura and Piper's adventures on Instagram or the blog at laurambrenner.com.