

Pet artist brings passion to TV show

Spotlight on local firms that serve pets

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Fairfax Public Access Television has gone to the dogs. Well, almost. Full-time pet artist Deanna Lewis has launched "Capital Pets with Deanna," a show that will feature local businesses that provide services to pets. The weekly show premieres May 3 at 11 a.m.

As a "pet portrait artist," Lewis raised more than \$12,000 for local charities by donating her portraits to silent auctions.

At the same time she was introduced to several organizations devoted to helping animals. One was a District organization that provided care

to pets of people living with HIV and AIDS.

"I found out recently that a lot of the [pet owners] are passing away," said Lewis, who lives in Burke, Va. "They need support, they need volunteers."

Lewis began painting pet portraits as a favor to co-workers, she said. When a co-worker calculated how much Lewis could make, she devoted herself to painting full time.

She's painted portraits of everything from hamsters to horses, she said, but most requests are for dogs.

"Yellow Labs seem to be the favorite of Northern Virginia people," she said.

Lewis stepped into the world of television when she was interviewed on a show in December, she said.

After the taping, the show's host, producer and director suggested that she have a show of her own, Lewis said.

"The concept of it took a couple of minutes," she said.

"I'm hoping that it will raise more interest."

Lewis' passion is her most distinguishing trait, said Charles Finn Pena, executive director of Fairfax Public Access Television.

"She's someone who connects very easily with other people," said Pena, who met Lewis during an orientation class at the station. "I'm impressed by her high level of passion."

Animals are rarely seen on the local cable channel, but the show is a welcome addition to the varied programming Pena said.

The channel reaches about 265,000 homes, Pena said. Lewis is negotiating to have the show carried by local channels in the District and Montgomery County, she said.

"I'm still 100 percent focused on the pet project," Lewis said. "The TV show is a nice branch off that."

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Jeff Mankie/Examiner

Deanna Lewis of Burke, Va., is a pet artist and has launched a show to raise interest in animals.