

“Lola's Crosswalk” Written by Veronica Boulden
Based on a little girl's life events here in Prospect

Emily Pastore and her family live here in Prospect. Emily's nine years old and she is currently in the fourth grade. But her story started a while ago.

You see, Emily has wanted a puppy since she was five years old. And, she has always known exactly what kind of puppy she wanted, too -- a Chihuahua. She asked her parents for the dog over and over, but they had said “no” for various reasons, including the fact that they would soon be moving from where they lived then, in California, to a small town called Prospect, all the way in Connecticut. Emily was so persistent in asking for the dog, though, that her parents couldn't say “no” any longer. So, her mom promised her, “Once we've moved into a house, gotten settled, and all the boxes are unpacked, we'll get you a puppy.” Emily was ecstatic. She hardly even thought about how sad it was that she was moving or even how scary it may be for her to go to a new school. She was so happy about getting her puppy.

The family moved to Connecticut, settled into a house in Prospect on a busy road named Summit Road, and at last, the final box was unpacked. Emily gave her mother no time, she approached her immediately. “Mom, can I have my puppy now?” Mrs. Pastore agreed and explained to Emily that they should try to find a puppy from the local animal shelter, since those puppies were in need of good homes. They examined every dog in the shelter, but there were no Chihuahuas and that was the kind of dog Emily wanted, definitely. When they asked, they were told that the shelter had lots of puppies, but rarely -- in fact, never -- did it get Chihuahuas. So, sadly, it looked like Emily would not get her puppy after all.

The next day, however, the Pastore family got a surprise phone call. The workers at the shelter could hardly believe it themselves; that morning a Chihuahua puppy had been brought into the shelter. What were the chances?! It seemed to everyone involved that fate had provided a way for Emily to have her puppy. The Pastore's adopted the puppy right away and named her “Lola.” In no time, she became an important part of Emily's life. Every morning before school, Emily, Mrs. Pastore and Lola went outside to meet the other neighborhood kids, moms and even some of their pets, to wait for the school bus by the side of their street. Until it was time to leave for school, the kids played, the moms visited and the pets stood nearby on their leashes. But, everyone, especially the moms, kept careful eyes on the kids, pets and the road. At the same time they were waiting for the bus, cars went speeding by in a hurry to get to work, using Summit Road as a quick route to the major highway.

One particular morning, after Emily and the other kids were gone on the bus, Mrs. Pastore said goodbye to her neighbor and walked Lola towards the house. As she opened the door, she let Lola off her leash. But, unlike every other morning, the puppy didn't go right into the house. That morning, Lola ran back towards the bus stop. Just like a puppy, she was eager to keep playing with the neighbor's dog, who was still outside in the yard across the street.

Within a minute, Mrs. Pastore was rushing the puppy to the vet, trying to save Lola's life. But, nothing could be done. Emily's puppy had gone too far into the street and it had been hit by a speeding car. The car didn't even stop after it hit the puppy. In fact, the driver may have never known it hit anything, since the puppy was so small and the car

was traveling too fast.

A few hours later, Emily's parents were picking her up early from school, telling her the awful news, explaining how Lola had been lost. Emily was devastated, but mature enough to understand what had happened and why. After a few days with her thoughts and grief, she approached her mom and asked, “Is there something we can do?!” The cars are going too fast when they pass our house. They don't follow the speed limit. If they did, this wouldn't have happened. Another dog, cat or kid could be hit, or even an adult!”

So, to help Emily, Mrs. Pastore composed what she called a “Neighborhood Request.” Emily recruited help from her closest friend and neighbor, another girl on the street, Leigh-Anne Barreira. Mrs. Pastore chaperoned as the two girls took the “Neighborhood Request” door to door, explaining what had happened, how the incident pointed out the danger and how the street needed some-



Emily Pastore gratefully hugs her friend Leigh-Anne Barreira to thank her for helping her make this crosswalk in front of her home a reality. Called “Lola's Crosswalk” by these young neighbors, this safety crosswalk is in memory of Emily's puppy Lola who was struck and killed on Summit Road. Photo by Gwenn Fischer



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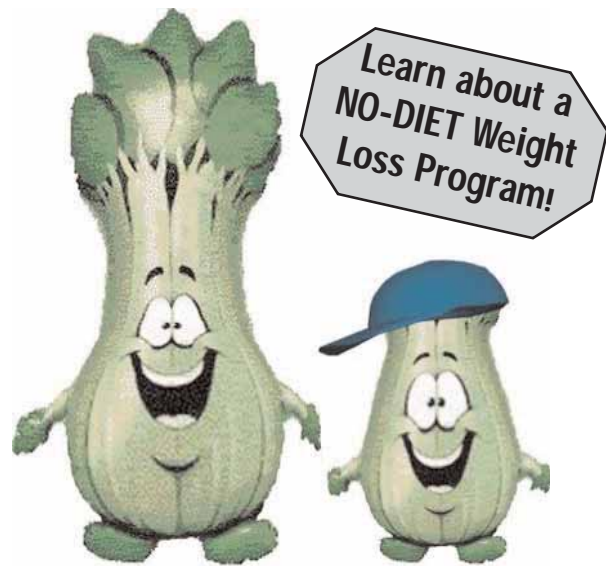
thing, like a crosswalk, to slow the traffic.

Mrs. Pastore even called Prospect's Mayor Chatfield about the situation. He was concerned about the speeding and he agreed to come out and see the traffic for himself. So, one morning, he arrived in time to wait on the school bus with the kids and their parents. With him, he brought two other town leaders: the local State Trooper and the Head of the Safety Committee. They all listened to the children and their parents as they explained the situation. The Mayor took Emily's “Neighborhood Request” and saw the speeding traffic for himself. When he and the others left,

they promised to see what they, as leaders, could do about the danger on Summit Road.

Weeks passed with no news for the Pastore family or their concerned neighbors, till one morning, the Pastore's went outside and discovered a freshly painted cross walk on their street! Since the crosswalk has been there, the cars have started slowing down. Emily is often reminded by her mom that her puppy Lola's life was not lost in vain. “Lola's Crosswalk,” as the Pastore family calls it, serves as a good reminder to drivers that the people they pass on Summit Road are more important than the places they are going.

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