

# Cow/Gucci the Cow is a big hit in person, too

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thought he needed a friend," said Mason. "He was so ugly that I thought he was cute — had eyes going in different directions and a mean underbite."

With a newfound bougie lifestyle with Mason, the young cow quickly got accustomed to a new habit of outings and shenanigans around northeastern Iowa. With a new luxury name to match the unusual routine for a dairy cow, the fun was only meant to be temporary.

Gucci was tagged, dehorned and readied for the truck to go to the slaughterhouse. But the owner, having seen the videos, let Mason take him home.

Gucci finessed his way out of becoming ground beef.

Before long, the social media channels that Mason used to continue the stand-up comedy he started in college quickly moved in a direction that behooved both cow and comedian.

## SERVING A NEW MISSION

Whether he's going out for ice cream, carrying Mason around downtown Cedar Rapids, turning the party or grabbing cash from an ATM, Gucci's weekends with Mason have taken on a life of their own.

Over the last couple years, the videos filmed by Mason and his brother, Michael, have turned into real life engagements, garnering invitations to festivals, fairs and parties as well as nursing home and school visits.

The 1,700-pound cow is fueled by his favorite foods — bananas and doughnuts. Earlier this month, Gucci had his first Guinness beer at the Iowa Irish Fest in Waterloo. (All are occasional treats that supplement a well-balanced diet of grass hay, corn and minerals.)

Like the average large dog, he's a sucker



Mason Corkery smiles at Gucci while children stop to pet him Aug. 4 during the Waterloo Irish Fest in Waterloo. (Savannah Blake photos/The Gazette)



Mason Corkery holds up a banana for Gucci as a treat after bath time at his family's farm in Jesup on Aug. 4. The 1,700-pound cow's favorite foods are bananas and doughnuts.

for chin scratches and bounces around on the lawn with a playful energy that indicates he's blissfully unaware of how large he is.

Most reactions to his appearances are simply "wow," particularly in urban environments like downtown Cedar Rapids.

"I remember there was a guy in an ambulance looking at me and mouthing, 'Is that a cow?'" Mason said after riding Gucci south of the DoubleTree by Hilton. "And I mouthed, 'Yes, it is.'"

With the petting and selfies come up-close learning opportunities about the kinds of places that cows like Gucci hail from — small dairy farms.

Like the farm that Mason and Michael grew up on, small dairy farmers are quickly being pushed out of existence by an industry demanding larger and larger production to make ends meet. Mason knows several farms around theirs that have gone by the wayside, too — like they have in most parts of Iowa.

"I wish more people understood how small farm America is disappearing at such a rapid rate," he said. "A lot of people have demonized the farmer. But a lot of people don't understand that at a lot of these small farms, that's their livelihood. They have to treat these animals with dignity and respect because that's their pay-

check."

Mason now works as a nutritional consultant for large dairy farmers across the Midwest. But Gucci represents an emotional connection to a time long gone for many in the dairy industry.

Now, Mason just wishes Gucci was still small enough to stuff into the back seat of his GMC Sierra.

"I always say there's not a lot of pride in milking another man's cow," Mason said. "He became one of my buddies. He's one of my bros — that's the idea of my (TikTok) channel."

Comments: (319) 398-8340; elijah.deciuous@thegazette.com

# Want to live longer? Play with your grandkids

By Bob Brody, Washington Post

My 4-year-old granddaughter, Lucia, and I are once again getting athletic together.

One minute we're kicking around a soccer ball, the next we're shooting miniature basketballs. Later, with me holding her hand, she'll teeter-totter atop a foot-high stone wall along our driveway. Tomorrow, we'll probably have a pillow fight and chase each other around the backyard. Meantime, I'm ready for a beer.

Make no mistake: Helping to raise your grandchildren is a workout, and routine tasks such as lifting, carrying and following younger children around all day or night can be pretty strenuous. But research suggests that grandparents who play regularly with grandkids stay active and healthy longer and — bonus points — live longer.

Getting physical also promotes advantages well beyond the merely physical. Through one-on-one physical play together, grandparents and grandchildren can get to better know, understand and appreciate each other. It's inherently social, mentally stimulating, lends your life an extra sense of purpose and meaning, and can establish a wholesome lifetime relationship.

"Playing with children adds value not only for children but also for

adult caregivers," according to "The Power of Play," a 2018 report from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

These findings are fortuitous. Grandparents today can expect to live longer than previous generations, and they may have more time available to play than parents do.

"Grandparents make wonderful playmates," says Michael Yogman, assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and lead author of "The Power of Play," who himself has two grandchildren, ages 2 and 4. "We have so many opportunities to play a huge role. I say, 'Go for it!'"

## BUILDING AN ACTIVE FAMILY CULTURE

Physical play between grandparents and grandchildren remains little researched, but a University of Glasgow study showed how grandparents "contribute to a family culture of physical activity."

"Grandparents often play a key role in shaping attitudes toward physical activity in family cultures," says Michael Rogers, director of the Center for Physical Activity and Aging at Wichita State University. "They can be role models in transmitting an active lifestyle. They legitimize it for future generations as a worthwhile practice for staying healthy."

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