



PET CONNECTION

SUMMER 2014

Rose Ramey, a 3-year-old pointer mix, was adopted from Forever Friends.

Dogs, Cats
And Even Horses

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Puppies Destined
For Important Work

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Fair Oaks ❖ Fair Lakes

PHOTO BY TOBY CHIEFFO-REIDWAY



PET CONNECTION

Dogs, Cats and Even Horses

Humane Society of Fairfax County seeks adopters.

BY KARA COLEMAN
THE CONNECTION

According to the Humane Society of the United States 2013 Annual Report, 118,328 animals were cared for last year by the Humane Society and its affiliates, through disaster relief, cruelty interventions, wildlife rehab centers and more. But that number doesn't count the local rescue groups around the country who work to protect, shelter, and rehabilitate animals and adopt them out to homes, including many in Northern Virginia.

Marlene Hammer, corresponding secretary for the Humane Society of Fairfax County, said that the local organization currently has dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, and a

ferret up for adoption.

"Our main goal is to adopt as many animals as we can out," she said. "By having people adopt, we can take in more animals."

The Humane Society of Fairfax County has a main office in Fairfax and a farm in Centreville. The farm is home to horses as well as 27 dogs.

A full-time manager lives on the farm to care for the animals, and if people want to adopt a horse or dog from the farm, they must go through the manager to apply.

The Fairfax office is also a home for cats who are waiting to be adopted out to families. "The cats have it very nice," Hammer said. "It's not like being in their own home, but it's the best thing to it."

According to Hammer, the cats are not in crates, but instead are housed in rooms at the shelter. Four or five cats, usually members of the same litter, share a room. Caretakers clean the cats' rooms every day, including changing litter and blankets, and mopping the floors. Volunteers that the shelter refers to as "socializers" also come in to play with the cats.

Hammer said that occasionally, animals will be dropped off at the Humane Society of Fairfax County with no note.

"One Sunday morning a few years ago, someone left a tiny dog on the porch," Hammer said. "I found him, and took him to the vet as we always do. My daughter had been looking for a small dog, and she ended up adopting that one."

Hammer said that drop-offs don't happen often. Many of the animals the Humane Society receives are given up when an owner has to move to a nursing home or is not able to keep the animal anymore. But other dogs are rescued,

such as one Hammer adopted that had been left tied up outside for a long period of time.

The Humane Society of Fairfax County operates almost entirely on a volunteer basis. Operating a thrift shop in the building

next door to its main Fairfax office, its volunteers sort donations, operate cash registers, and wait on customers. With the exception of one paid staff member, the proceeds from thrift shop sales go toward the shelter's operating costs.

The Humane Society also offers a pet food pantry as a service to the community.

"People who are in need of assistance and are unable to buy food for their pets can come here and get free pet food," said Hammer. She said that most of the people who come to the pet food pantry for help are residents of Fairfax County, but that

sometimes people come from a little farther away. Hammer also said that most of the food is donated to the pantry by Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts who organize pet food drives as a service project.

"Our main goal is to adopt as many animals as we can out. By having people adopt, we can take in more animals."

— Marlene Hammer

Becoming Best Friends

Frodo and Sam have become best friends – sort of. My husband and I adopted Frodo from Home Alone Cat Rescue several years ago. He is part Maine Coon and part American Bobtail, with a funny short tail. He may have been mistreated by a previous owner because he is afraid of everything, especially ceiling fans. He quickly became comfortable in our home as an "only cat."

We adopted "Sam" in September of 2012. She was an adorable tabby kitten, part of a feral litter living outside of a restaurant in Washington D.C. Lee District School Board Member Tammy Kaufax and her two high school aged kids, Halle and Matthew, were fostering the litter as part of a school project. Tammy showed me a photo of the kittens in August of 2012 during the Springfield Bridge Walk and I fell in love with the smallest kitten with tiger markings. As soon as Sam had gained enough weight to be adopted we brought her home as a companion for Frodo.

It took a few weeks for the two cats to get used to each other, but now they play together and chase each other around all the time. They are so cute together, especially when Sam hides behind the bedroom door and ambushes Frodo when he walks into the room. Animals add so much to your life!

— SHARON BULOVA, CHAIRMAN,
FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



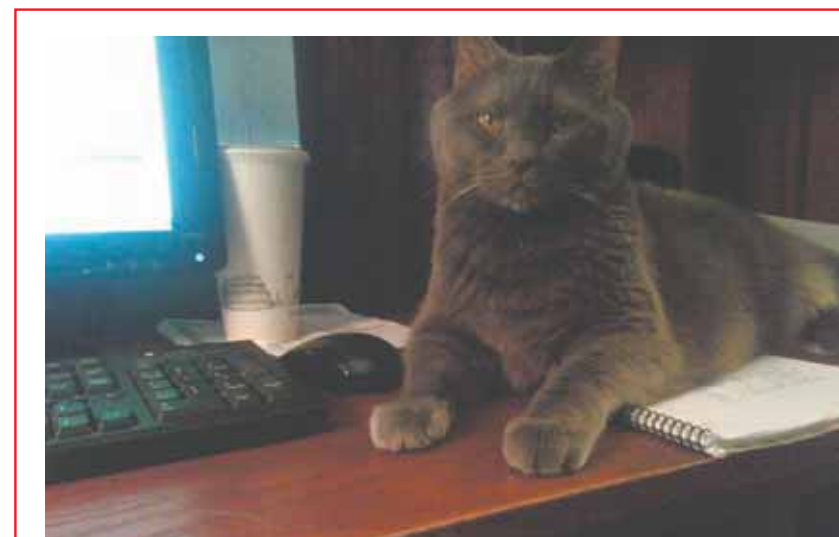
Sharon Bulova with her cats: "Animals add so much to your life!"

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Smokey is a 13-year-old medium hair male cat who was adopted at age 10 from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

— JENNIFER SMITH

PET CONNECTION



This is my pet squirrel of three years. Her name is Short Tail. Short Tail is going shopping for food.

— CANDACE HABIB OF CLIFTON



Meet "Skyler Kittens," our neighbor's cat who enjoys the views from our porch in Chantilly.

— JENNIFER GRAVIANO



Grace Ramey with Rose at Bull Run. Rose, adopted from Forever Friends, loves long walks and to nap in the sun.

PHOTO BY TOBY CHIEFFO-REIDWAY



PHOTO BY LAURA SUDDER

Sophie, just a drop!



Bocephus

PHOTO BY NATASHA EDWARDS

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known



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Puppies Destined for Important Work

PHOTOS BY JOAN BRADY/
JOANBRADYPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Bred, donated and/or rescued for assistance dog training by paws4people.org, these “baby pictures” will be shared with the children and veterans matched with each dog.

But until then, the puppies will receive comprehensive training. Training begins at the Training Center in Wilmington, Del. The specific training is proprietary, but includes learning how to navigate different surfaces and challenges and how to handle stress. At around 6 weeks, they curl up in a transport van and make the drive to the Puppy Development Center, currently in Georgia. There, they continue with socialization training as they work students who are autistic at the Lionheart school, with both puppies and students getting more comfortable with new situations and people.

At 16 weeks, they pile back into the van and are met by inmate trainers at Lakin Correctional, in West Virginia. It is here that the core of “command set” training happens. Each dog will learn 110 commands before being matched with a “client.”

After 12 - 15 months of socialization and command training, they will each be matched with either a child or a veteran.



From that point, the puppies will be trained specifically to meet their new “handler’s” needs.

During that specialized training, the dogs remain in prison. These pictures will help the newly matched children and adults get through that initial separation.

Read more about paws4people assistance dogs at joanbradyphoto.wordpress.com

— JOAN BRADY

Joan Brady is a professional photographer; mentor and advocate for current and former foster children; volunteer with paws4People, Fairfax Families4Kids, and others; and a resident of Great Falls. Reach her at joan@joanbradyphotography.com



Baby photos of future assistance dogs



This is my father and I, with my three foster failures (fostered dogs that I adopted) from the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation. The little black furball on the left is Zorro, Princess Diana is on Dad’s lap and Gryphon is my right-hand dog.

— MARCIA TIERSKY



This is Zorro and Gryphon, both adopted from the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation. Don’t worry — their coats are monogrammed so I won’t get them mixed up.

— MARCIA TIERSKY



I have three amazing cats that have adopted me. My oldest cat, Sketch, is a well traveled and extremely expressive Japanese Bobtail from Japan and he has moved back and forth with me between Florida, Virginia, back to Florida and then back up here, and has enjoyed the ride. He came to claim me as his human when he wasn’t adopted by any military families while I was running an animal rescue in Sasebo, Japan. He was adopted by two families and they decided that he was “too ordinary” and returned him. After a while, I noticed that this kitty was very extraordinary. He enjoys car rides, played fetch, and walks on a harness. Sketch is extremely loving and very loyal. There are days that I think he has ESP, because he growls before someone unexpected knocks at the front door. Currently he is fighting renal failure, but each day he greets the sun with a smile when he goes outside to roll around on the sidewalk. He really is an extraordinary feline and I’m blessed to have been adopted by him.

— MARLA GEBALDE