



Homecoming

A newsletter from the **Fairfax County Animal Shelter**

FCAS Removes Breed Specific Adoption Policies

Up until recently, people adopting pit bull type dogs had to meet a special set of requirements. Among other things, pit bull adopters had to be 25 years old, own a home, undergo a background check and allow staff and volunteers to do a home visit. This policy was put in place with the intention of protecting pit bull type dogs, but over the years, it became clear that it was hurting dogs, not helping them.

Because of the policy, countless potential adopters were turned away because they were not old enough to adopt or did not own a home. In addition, many adoptions fell through because adopters did not want to wait the days and sometimes weeks it took to complete a pit bull dog adoption. Finally, the policy enforced the incorrect idea, based on media hype, that there is something different or 'wrong' about pit bull type dogs.

After months of efforts and advocacy by shelter staff, volunteers and county officials, the policy has been changed and pit bull type dogs are now adopted out under the same policy as all other shelter dogs. FCAS has an in-depth adoption screening and counseling process that protects all dogs and makes matches between pets and people that last a lifetime.

Adoption Promotions Are Fun! (And They Save Lives)

Have you noticed any of the recent adoption promotions at FCAS? During a cold spell, we offered free hot cocoa and fee-waived adoptions on our "hottest" pets. For Valentine's Day, we had a kitten and puppy cuddling party, sweet treats and free adoptions on 10 special pets. These light-hearted promotions have a serious purpose: they bring visitors in and those visitors often adopt.

The results are amazing! During the Sunshine and Shelter Dogs adoption promotion last August, more than 100 dogs found homes, which is four times the number of dogs that were adopted during the same period the previous year. Look for the Adopt me, I'm Irish! adoption promotion coming in March!



Friends Featured Pets

The Friends of the FCAS will be featuring two pets every month. What does that mean for you? If you adopt one of the Friends featured pets, you'll receive a gift bag full of goodies for your new pet.

Some animals, for no apparent reason, don't seem to get noticed by potential adopters. This program is designed to give these "hidden gems" some extra attention and a loving, forever home!



Highland County Animals Find New Homes in FX



• **Leah and Nanny:** These two young cats

grew up with 35 small dogs, in a severe hoarding situation. Leah and Nanny waited for months without being adopted. They were transferred to FCAS, where they found their forever home – together!

• **Chessie**, an 11-year-old, mixed breed dog, was surrendered by her owners. Highland County Humane Society sent her to FCAS, where her heart of gold and sweet, sad eyes won over the staff and volunteers. She was adopted by a family who adore her and she's joyfully living out her golden years.

• Seven-year-old **Leebo** (at right, below) spent his entire life



tethered at the end of a chain. Highland County Humane Society managed to get custody of this friendly, loving guy and he was adopted into a home where he has a new family (complete with kids and another dog) who will never let him be cold and alone again.

Things are Finally Looking Up for Bianca

Bianca, a 9-year-old female, German shepherd mix dog, had been living her life on the end of a chain in a rural part of Virginia. In late January, an unknown stray dog attacked her. Bianca's owner came outside and in an attempt to stop the attack he hit both dogs with a shovel, striking poor Bianca over the head and injuring her. Rather than pursue vet care, the owner drove Bianca to the local pound and surrendered her.



Bianca, above, after her injury; and below in her new forever home!

For the next 36 hours, Bianca had no medical care, until a sympathetic staff person called our rescue partners at the Highland County Humane Society (HCHS).

Highland immediately went to the pound, and picked up Bianca, to transport her to the vet. Her wound was too old to be sutured, but the vet was able to clean and treat it so that it would not become infected. Bianca seemed to know she was in good hands, and she put up no resistance to what must have been a painful experience. She later received laser surgery, which helped her to finally heal.

On Valentine's Day, just two weeks after her traumatic ordeal, she was transported to FCAS, and five days later she found her forever home.

Bianca's life was saved and her bright future made possible by the partnership between FCAS and HCHS.

Since October 2013, FCAS has been working to help Highland County dogs and cats get a second chance at life. More than 100 Highland County animals have been transferred in to FCAS in just five months! Some

are highly adoptable young animals, but most are cats and dogs who would be euthanized in rural pounds because of lack of space and adopters.



We're on Instagram!



@fairfaxcountyanimalshelter



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