

**Issue Five:**  
**March**  
**2014**

**87:** the number of dogs adopted in February.

**43:** the number of cats adopted in February.

**37:** the number of small animals adopted in February.



# Homecoming

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

## Shelter Art Foundation Comes to FCAS



The nonprofit Shelter Art Foundation recently traveled to FCAS to teach more than 25 staff and volunteers how to use portrait techniques to show available animals in their best light. The Shelter Art Foundation, with funding from Purina, has conducted workshops at 19 shelters in eight states.

Steve Sloop, the organization's founder, explains that many people first connect with animals through photographs that they see online, on adoption websites or in social media. "When you have that animal that looks at you and grabs your attention, you'll go to the shelter. That may not be the one you come home with, but we've got you into the shelter so you can find the one you connect with," says Sloop.

The Shelter Art Foundation didn't just leave FCAS with a whole new set of skills, they gave the shelter the backdrop and specialty lighting required to take studio portraits. The staff and volunteers who attended the event are energized and ready to take the shelter's photography program to a new level. In the words of Shelter Director Tawny Hammond, "A strong photography program coupled with a strategic social media program is paramount to success. Because of this training, we have several new teams of photographers and animal handlers who can create incredible images that will save lives."

What's next for the shelter photography program? More volunteers bringing their unique skills to help save homeless pets, a post-adoption photography program where a photographer will take pictures of your new pet at home, photography workshops for adopters, a focus on taking pictures of hard-to-adopt animals and those who need rescue placement, and more volunteer opportunities for photographers.

## Rosenthal Automotive Supports FCAS and Other Local Shelters

Throughout March, the Rosenthal Automotive Group is donating \$15 from every car sold at their Northern Virginia dealerships to the FCAS and two other animal welfare organizations. Rosenthal has guaranteed a minimum donation to the shelter of \$8,000.

## Amazon Wish List

Amazon Wish List: Visit our wish list at <http://amzn.com/w/96AEL1WS4QHR> to donate much-needed items to the shelter and foster program. It's easy! Just choose the items you want to donate, purchase them and they'll be shipped directly to the shelter.

Register at Amazon Smile by visiting <http://smile.amazon.com/> and choose the Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter as your charitable organization. .5 percent of the price of your eligible purchase will be donated to the FFCAS. To learn more about the Friends, visit [www.ffcas.org](http://www.ffcas.org).



## Dog Adoptions More Than Triple!



It's hard to believe! This January and February, the shelter adopted out 161 dogs versus 48 dogs adopted in the same period last year. How did we do it? For one, we move animals more quickly through the shelter, making sure they are evaluated as soon as their hold date is up. The overall length of stay for all animals in the shelter has decreased by more than 50 percent since last year.



Another way we're getting them adopted faster is through marketing and adoption promotions, using social media to spread the word about available pets and to bring people in the shelter.



The cat adoption rate has remained steady from 2013 – 2014. This is mostly because there have been very few young cats and kittens available. One of the shelter's goal for 2014 is to increase cat and kitten adoptions by 25 percent. We'll need your help to do it, so be sure to tell your

friends and family to consider the shelter when they're ready to add a new feline friend to their family.

## New Room Will Give Social Cats a Happy Place

The shelter reconstruction and renovation project is nearly finished. Once it's done, there will be six new holding spaces for cats not yet available for adoption.

Two of the rooms will hold cats that are or may be sick with a contagious illness, and four of them will hold healthy cats that are just not ready to be adopted.



Currently, all cats that are not ready for adoption are held in the room next to the small animal adoption area. Once the temporary cat area is moved, this space will be transformed into a free-roaming room for available cats.

There will be four, nine-tier cat trees, supplied by the Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter along with toys, beds, and decorations that will make our feline friends purr with happiness. This room will house up to 12 cats at a time and will



house cats who are friendly with other cats and who might have a long stay at the shelter, due to factors such as age, color and appearance.

"Some cats, through no fault of their own, wait several months to find their forever homes," says Director of Communications and Outreach Kristen Auerbach. "Until now, the only option for these cats was to live by themselves in one of our kitty condos. That can be hard on cats who are social and enjoy the company of people and other cats."

The room is expected to be ready for use in early April. Visitors, escorted by a staff person or volunteer, will be able to go in the community cat room to visit with cats they might want to adopt.

