



# Fairfax County Animal Shelter

# NEWSLETTER

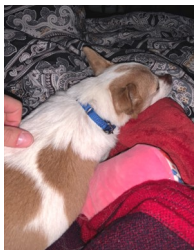
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter)

May 2022

## Letter from the Director

Fairfax County Animal Shelter provides care and support to animals in every season of life, including the final stages. Sometimes animals come into our care who are very elderly or have a terminal illness. FCAS created a program to meet the specialized needs of those animals called "Fospice Care." Instead of those animals spending their final few months in a kennel at the shelter with little hope of adoption, we place those animals in fospice, and a specially trained foster parent provides care for the animal for their remaining days in their home. Although these animals may only have weeks or months to live, being in a loving home environment can be transformative.

KeKe, an elderly chihuahua, was recently surrendered to us when her family could no longer care for her. Our veterinarian discovered that Keke had several complex medical issues that were untreatable. Keke was refusing to eat in the shelter and had to be carried outside by our staff to use the bathroom.



One of our animal caretakers, Jack, agreed to provide fospice care for KeKe. Jack lives with his grandmother and he thought having KeKe as company would be beneficial to his grandmother. A few weeks later, Jack reported, "Keke is doing great, she does little dances when I come home and is a wonderful companion to my grandmother while I'm away at work. She's also eating like a champ!" We are grateful for our wonderful fospice parents who open their hearts and home to this special population of shelter animals.

- Reasa Currier, *Director*

## The Question We Have Been Getting Asked a Lot:

### Has the shelter gotten an influx of "pandemic pets" being returned?

The short answer: nope! Remember way back in early 2020 when the pandemic started, and so many wonderful people reached out to offer support for animal shelters via foster and adoption? We were so thankful that even at the height of many activities and events being curtailed, our community was ready to adopt a pet! Many shelters across the country had that same experience, and the prevailing thought was that with more people "stuck" at home, folks just had the time to really think about adding a pet to their lives. And what wonderful companionship those adopted pets have provided these last couple of years!

There was a worry that someday those pets would be returned to shelters when families' schedules changed again. But... we



just haven't seen that happen. Which honestly makes sense! Pets were adopted, provided joy and love during a rough time, and are now just a part of their families' daily lives and routine.

In early 2021, we had an incredibly high number of small animals surrendered, to include rabbits, guinea pigs, and mice. It could've been that these smaller pets were easier to acquire from pet stores, friends, or online. We rallied our foster families, set up so many extra habitats, at one point having small animal cages filling multiple rooms and lining the walls of both our lobbies! Eventually, we adopted our way back to a more manageable number—phew!

Not that we don't have pets who need to be surrendered or even returned from adoption. That does happen, and it is why we're here—to help pets and their people. And we will continue to be here to help all pets who come through our doors find their next family!

If you would like to get more information about becoming a **foster volunteer** for the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, visit:  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/foster](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/foster)

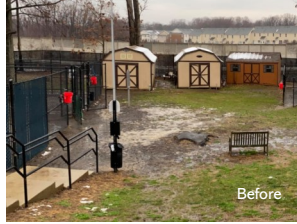


## Mulch vs. Mud—Mulch Wins!

Staff, volunteers, friends, and family came together on a beautiful Spring day to not only help beautify the play yard, but to help mud-proof it too. It involved taking a massive heap of mulch and strategically spreading it out over the walking trails that weave throughout the yard. The trails get some heavy foot traffic from staff and volunteers while



they're out walking dogs! During rainy season, the trails get especially muddy and slippery so the intent is to have the mulch give the humans better traction. No dogs were involved in spreading mulch because they much prefer the mud.



### Betty “The Hot-Mess Express” Bulldog

You can't judge us for calling Betty a “hot mess” because, a) we love her and use the term endearingly, and b) she *was* a mess when she came to us. Stray Betty had overgrown toenails, thick green mucous oozing out of her nose, exceptionally dirty ears, and odiferous skin.

All attempts at finding an owner were unsuccessful. Betty, we discovered, was not only very sweet, but she was also in need of soft palate surgery. Thanks to Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Betty would be able to have that surgery! So, off she went to Pender Veterinary Centre.

During recovery, Betty found herself a best friend in George, a sweet hound mix who belonged to Pender Veterinarian Dr. Rebecca Spears. We're not sure if Betty and George conspired to get her adopted by Dr. Spears but that is what happened! Betty, who is now recovering at home, hit the jackpot! And Dr. Spears has homework! Cute homework, that is!



## Animal Behavior: Playing Detective in a Multi-Cat Home

The slightest change in routine or home environment can have a big impact on a cat but in a *multi*-cat home, that one change—such as an owner's recent return to work or the addition of a new baby — can create chaos; when until then, all was peaceful.

Sometimes, though, the disrupting event is not so obvious, and it may require some sleuthing to determine why your cats are suddenly hissing at each other or getting into all-out brawls. Ask yourself questions like, “When did I notice the behavior changes? What do the behavior changes look like? What was happening around the time I noticed my cats behaving differently?”



Those are just a few examples, but the purpose is to gather as much information as possible. Even information about diet changes and recent vet visits are important to make note of.

If you're left with more questions than answers, you may need the help of a behavior consultant to help you identify the issues and begin a behavioral management plan. You can also join the Fairfax County Animal Shelter for its free live webinar: **Hiss & Make-Up: Bringing the Love Back to Your Multi-Cat Household** on Tuesday, May 17th at 6:30 p.m.

### Upcoming Happenings

**Hiss & Make-Up: Bringing the Love Back to Your Multi-Cat Household** Webinar,  
Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m.

**Info Session & Virtual Tour with  
Neighborhood & Community Services  
Virtual Center for Active Adults**  
Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1 p.m.

FCAS will be at **Braddock Bark**,  
Lake Accotink, Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1 p.m.

### Friends' Events

**Wine, Whiskers, and Wags (& Beer!)**  
Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 p.m.

