



# Fairfax County Animal Shelter NEWSLETTER

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

April 2023

## Letter from the Director

This is my favorite time of year. We have a large cherry tree in our front yard that delivered beautiful, delicate blooms earlier this month and now the azaleas are displaying their vibrant colors. As we begin our Spring cleaning, raccoons, skunks, opossums and rabbits are hard at work too, burrowing and building nests for their offspring. It's easy to take simple precautions to avoid harming wildlife as you clean around your home and yard.

Before mowing or trimming trees, look to see if there are any nests. Rabbits and other animals build nests on the ground, and lawnmowers can easily injure a young, defenseless animal. Inspect your yard, paying particular attention to the areas around trees, shrubs, and grassy areas. Do not attempt to mow near a nest. Within a few weeks, its occupants will move on.



*Baby rabbits hiding in a nest.*

The book *Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife*, by Nancy Lawson is an amazing resource on not only coexisting peacefully with wildlife, but on the importance of creating wildlife friendly yards. Nancy's work has taught me the roles of our wild neighbors as natural gardeners and habitat creators. Nancy lives in the DC metro area and her blog [Humane Gardener - Cultivating compassion for all creatures great and small](#) provides a wealth of knowledge.

- Reasa D. Currier, Director, Fairfax County Department of Animal Sheltering

## Do Our Pets Affect the Environment?

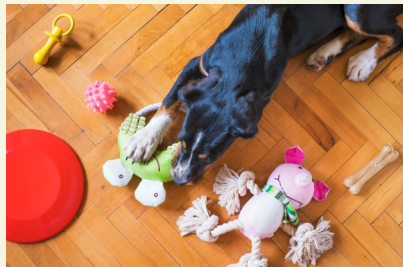
Our four-legged friends don't drive gas-guzzling SUVs or use energy-sucking appliances, but [research](#) has shown that pets play a significant role in the climate crisis. Their food consumption, their toys — even cat litter is something we should give special consideration to on this Earth Day, April 22nd. **Here are four suggested ways to reduce your pets' environmental impact:**

### Be Thoughtful About Pet Supplies

While items like toys, bowls, litter, poop bags and leashes are considered necessary items for your pet, looking at their durability, supply chains and whether they can be recycled is equally important as the product itself.

### Cut Out Waste

While it may be tempting to dress up your pet for the holidays or to buy the inexpensive 20-pack of plush dog toys, it's important to buy items with your pet's genuine welfare in mind. In other words, ask yourself: What does your pet really need and what are you buying just to fulfill the urge to shop?



### Choose Biodegradable When Possible

For dogs, choose biodegradable waste bags and always pick up after them no matter where you are. [Research shows](#) that not scooping up poop could cause harmful micro-organisms such as roundworm, E. coli and giardia to survive in your yard for up to four years, which is a health risk for humans.

### Litter Options

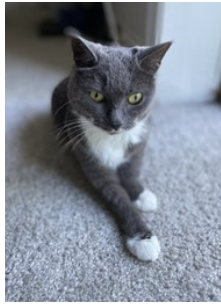
For cats, seek the most environmentally friendly litter option that they will use and that is financially feasible for you. Although clays are naturally occurring soil minerals, they must be mined, which contributes to soil erosion, habitat destruction and groundwater contamination.

No matter what you choose to do, the important thing to remember is that every little bit helps and that it's not necessary to make too many changes all at once! Set yourself up for success by doing what is manageable. Happy Earth Day, 2023!

## After The Loss of a Pet: One Staff Member Shares Their Story of Heartache & Healing

By Anna Wilson, Administrative Coordinator

In May of 2018, I was driving home from work when I saw the tiniest grey blob on the side of the highway. Something told me to pull over, so I quickly parked my car and hopped out.



Satin

Turns out I made the right decision, as the “blob” was actually a 2-week-old kitten! She had a large bump on her head and barely seemed conscious, so I hurriedly took her to the veterinarian, where she received treatment and got a name—Satin.

Satin needed to be bottle fed, which I had never done before, and she needed constant supervision,

as she had seizures due to head trauma. It was touch-and-go for a long time, but she eventually stabilized and led a semi-normal life. She was mostly blind, had the occasional seizure, and had to be fed in a special contraption I had made. This didn't stop her from zooming around the house and giving tons of snuggles, though!

Unfortunately, Satin's health deteriorated, and she passed away in 2021. It hit me hard. I had devoted every day to caring for her, and I didn't know what to do without her. For a long time, it felt wrong to bring another animal into my life, because I didn't want it to feel like I was replacing Satin.

*“For a long time, it felt wrong to bring another animal into my life, because I didn't want it to feel like I was replacing Satin.”*

It wasn't until one day, when a group of kittens came to the Shelter for vaccinations, that my heart was swayed. There was one little kitten that I instantly fell in love with; his name was Bikini. Every week I would pester Melanie, the Foster Coordinator, for updates, hoping to adopt Bikini. Eventually, my wish came true and I adopted him. Little did I know that Bikini was about to change my life—completely.



Bikini, as a kitten.

I say this lovingly: Bikini was a jerk! He was a confident, intelligent, high-energy dude that needed lots of stimulation. He was nothing like Satin, but I was determined to give

him a fulfilled life. I had done intensive research on the care of my previous pet (Satin), so once again, I dove headfirst into research. This time, I was learning about cat behavior, training, and enrichment techniques.

I am happy to report that Bikini and I got into a rhythm, and he is the smartest cat I have ever met! He knows Sit, High Five, and so much more! He even gives me lots of snuggles—on his terms, of course! I will always miss Satin, but I like to think she picked Bikini to be her successor, and I am so glad I adopted him.●



Bikini — all grown up.

To see pictures of more FCAS staff pets, check out page 3 of the FCAS Newsletter!

## ADOPTION UPDATE of the month!

“Penny (f.k.a. Mona) is doing great adjusting to her new home. We love her so much! She has already met several of our friends and family members. While still timid about new things, she is very affectionate and LOVES being pet.”





## The FCAS Family — of Pets!

Meet some of the pets that our staff go home to every day after a long day of work with Shelter pets! In fact, some of these guys and girls were adopted from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.



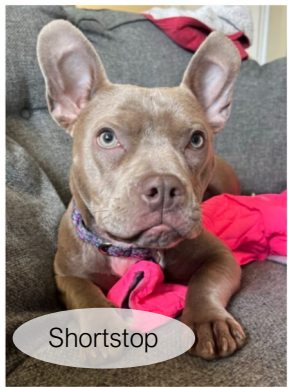
Nessa



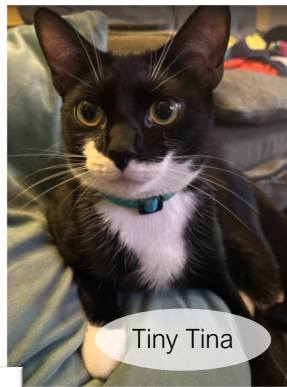
Nolan



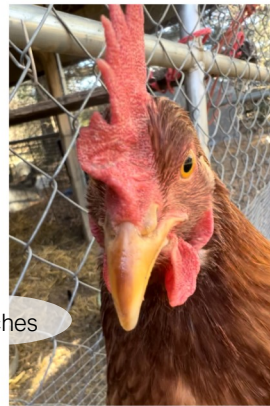
Owen



Shortstop



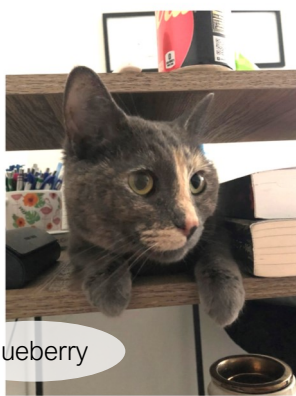
Tiny Tina



Peaches



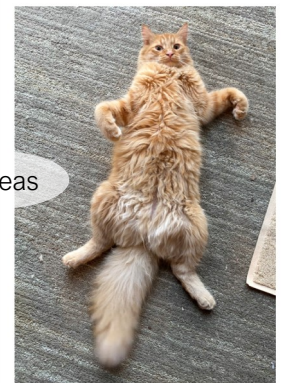
Guinness,  
Apache, Clover,  
& Daisy



Blueberry



Bender & Yuki



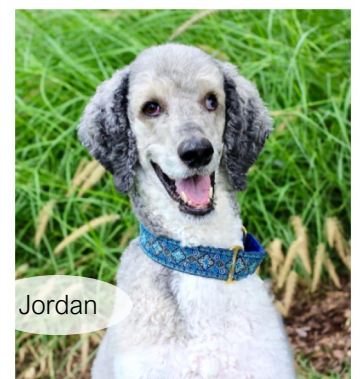
Phineas



Jake



Annie



Jordan