



Fairfax County Animal Shelter NEWSLETTER

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter

January 2023

A Day in the Life

Animal Care Supervisor,
Jen Lumpkin

It's 5:30 a.m. on a Sunday, and while most people are sleeping in, drinking their morning roast, or scrolling through their TikTok feed, Jen Lumpkin, one of two Animal Care Supervisors, is pulling into the back parking lot of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

She's no stranger to the feeling, as it was Jen and her team of Animal Care Specialists who **worked throughout the entire pandemic**. Just like any other frontline worker Jen and her staff are **on-site, rain or shine**, taking care of the shelter pets and everything else animal-care related.

We asked Jen to keep track of everything she did at work one day, but there was no way to record every single thing! Here is what Jen's day looked like, and yes, she did a lot more than just this:

6:00 a.m.—walk through all areas of the shelter, check on all the animals, note any medical issues or behavior changes, scoop poop, and mop dog kennels.



6:30 a.m.—delegate duties for each Animal Caretaker for the day.

6:45 a.m.—WALK DOGS!

(Cont'd.)



Letter from the Director

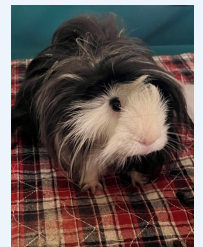
I recently read an article that says most people give up on their New Year's resolutions by mid-January. Fortunately, **resolutions that involve practicing kindness towards all animals require simple actions that are easy to stick with**. As the county's only open-access shelter, we accept animals of many species, shapes, and sizes and they inspire me every day with their joy and resilience to be a better person. This year, I've resolved to learn more about animals' intelligence, and I've started reading *What a Fish Knows: The Inner Lives of Our Underwater Cousins* by Jonathan Balcombe. I'm also planning to watch *My Octopus Teacher* on Netflix.

Last year, the Shelter was overwhelmed with small animals like rabbits and mice. Sadly, five hundred thousand mice, rabbits, guinea pigs and rats are killed every year after being used in painful laboratory testing. It's incredibly easy to **find certified cruelty-free products** that aren't tested on animals by looking for the Leaping Bunny logo (right) when you shop for cosmetics and household products.



It's also never been so easy to move plants to the center of your dinner plate. Most of the meat that Americans consume comes from animals raised on factory farms, where **industry standard practices** include cruelties such as confining chickens to cages so small, they cannot spread their wings. We are fortunate to live in a community where grocery stores and restaurants offer an overwhelming number of delicious vegetarian and vegan options. Twenty-two years ago, I switched to a plant-based diet and instead of feeling deprived, I'm always discovering new foods that I enjoy.

Every animal that enters our shelter doors has a distinct personality and a desire to live a life that is free of pain and suffering. On behalf of Kevin the chicken and Oreo the guinea pig, two of our recent residents, thank you for considering the welfare of animals as you set about reaching your goals and dreams for this year.



Oreo

Happy New Year!

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

Trina at
the shelter



Adoption Update: Trina



Trina spent eight months at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter waiting for someone to adopt her. **Everyone at the shelter knew Trina and her affinity for tennis balls.** There were enough photos of Trina and tennis balls to publish a coffee table book. Our volunteers alone would have purchased enough copies to make it a *New York Times* Bestseller.

We're not exactly sure why Trina was overlooked for so long. Maybe it was the combination of shy-dog with high-energy that didn't appeal to many potential adopters. Others might say that **she was just waiting for the right family to come along**, and that they did.

Her adopted family wrote to us and said, "[Trina] continues to delight us with her personality and we are so grateful for all of the work that you and your team does!"



A Day in the Life *(Cont'd.)*

7:00 a.m.—Billie, a cat with special medical issues, needs her food at exactly 7:00 a.m. each day.

7:05 a.m.—walk more dogs! *There are about 75 dogs in our care right now!*

7:30 a.m.—alarm goes off, Billie the cat needs her insulin.

7:45 a.m.—dogs have been walked, and Care Specialists start cleaning their assigned areas. I'll be cleaning the Cat Adoption Room. *(first out of three walks for the day)*

9:30 a.m.—Cat Adoption is cleaned, and I go assist other Care Team Members in their cleaning areas.

10:30 a.m.—complete morning paperwork and run a report to verify that all new animals have been logged in properly and received all required intake exams, vaccinations, preventatives, etc.

11:00 a.m.—the Shelter is now open to the public!

Caregivers introduce the shelter pets to potential adopters.

11:15 a.m.—intake a stray dog (scan for microchip, photograph, vaccinate, administer parasite control, assess behavior for volunteer handling, etc.).



11:30 a.m.—intake a cat that came back from the vet—complete their medical charts and their intake (scan, vaccinate, administer parasite control). *They had a microchip!*

11:45 a.m.—dog behavior evaluations! Every dog must receive one before being made available for adoption, so we start working on them.

12:30 p.m.—walk through and check all areas of shelter, check medical folders for all animals who have them.

1:30 p.m.—intake a stray dog from Animal Protection Police (scan, photograph, vaccinate, administer parasite control, assess for volunteer handling).

1:45 p.m.—more dog evaluations!

2:30 p.m.—eat lunch while typing up some of the dog evaluations.

3:00 p.m.—finish up a few last evaluations, we have puppy play-time in Receiving (the Care Team's Home) for some smiles and stress-relief. We did 11 dog evals, and I typed up eight of them.

4:20 p.m.—typing up this typical, hectic day, even though it doesn't seem so bad while getting ready to leave with my dog, Girlie, and our three-legged foster dog. *Get some rest, Jen!*



Animal Behavior Terminology: Dominance

What Dominance Is

Dominance is a social relationship between species, usually associated with the issue of which animal has priority access to certain resources. In the case of dogs, when used correctly, it is used to describe healthy social interactions which are based on deference and dominance displays between dogs.

The word dominance should not be used to describe a character trait, even though we may use it when describing people (i.e., "he or she has a dominant personality"). In canines, dominance is not about who has all the power over everything, but rather about who has priority access to certain resources, e.g., food, toys, beds, reproductive partners and people, etc., at a given time.

What Dominance Is NOT

Dominance is not about a dog's desire to be head of your household or for world domination. The idea that dogs come into our homes and misbehave or challenge us because they want to be "alpha," "pack leader" or "top dog" over us is simply not true. The complex cognitive processes that are needed to strategize an attempted coup over your home and family is something that your dog, however smart, is just not equipped to do.

The tragedy of this misunderstanding can often cause huge problems. People who misunderstand dominance often attempt to stop this supposed ascent or to ensure a dog knows his or her place by "dominating" their dogs via punitive techniques in order to put their dogs into some mythical state called "calm submission". Science would argue that no such state exists, and that when dogs cease their supposedly dominant behavior and appear somewhat subdued because they are submitting "calmly" to a person restraining them or physically punishing them, inside their hormones and neurotransmitters are actually working overtime as their survival instincts take over, preparing their bodies for freeze, flight, or fight.



Adapted from Positively.com

"I'm actually really freaking out right now!" —

Around the Shelter

One Sling, One Staff Member & Many Shelter Pets

Anna



Another one of Anna



Anna, again.

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