



Letter from the Director

Like nearly every shelter around the country, Fairfax County Animal Shelter (FCAS) has seen an increase in the number of animals coming into the shelter. In this last quarter, we saw 25% more animals coming into the shelter over the same period the previous year. Simultaneously, **animals are staying in the shelter longer** than they have in previous years as adoptions decrease.

The data we've gathered around why families are surrendering their pets reveal **complex social and economic circumstances influencing the decision to surrender**. Housing, including moving, is a leading reason for families relinquishing their animal. Approximately 70% of renters in Fairfax County have at least one pet. Yet, there is an inadequate supply of affordable, pet-inclusive housing to meet the need. Many families struggle to find housing that will allow their dog due to size or breed. Others are unable to afford the costs of a pet deposit and monthly pet fees.

Families with pets also **struggle with accessing the services needed for their pets**. According to a 2022 [Forbes survey](#), 42 percent of pet owners said a vet bill of \$999 or less would cause them to go into debt,

and 44 percent said they used their credit card to pay for a vet bill. The costs of pet supplies are also on the rise, with pet food costs increasing by as much as 15%.

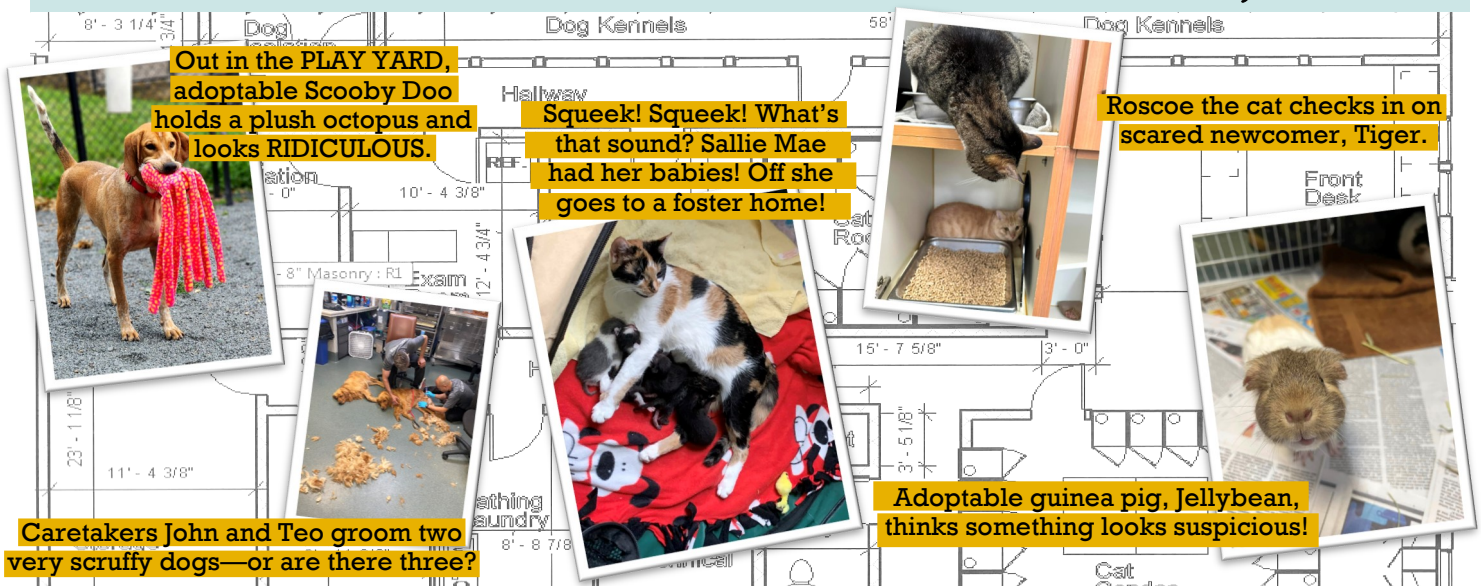
Fairfax County Animal Shelter is doing everything we can to get our shelter pets into homes, including working to expand the marketing and promotion of our available pets and examining our adoption processes to **minimize barriers to adoption**. We are also **expanding the resources and support** we provide to pet owners in their homes in effort to prevent surrenders. This includes free temporary boarding for families in crisis and free and low-cost veterinary care and other pet services.

There is not one easy solution to the increase in homeless animals, but it is something we must tackle through multipronged efforts. We appreciate the support we receive from our generous community who keep our pet food pantry stocked and our team of dedicated volunteers and fosters who allow us to continue to provide exceptional, individualized care to every animal who come in the shelter's doors despite the growing need.

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

AROUND THE SHELTER

There is always something happening at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter—and yes, it's usually something cute!



The Truth About Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

The feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is a common virus that affects millions of cats every year, with approximately 2.5-5% of healthy cats infected with FIV. But don't be deterred from adopting an FIV+ cat. Recent research reveals that FIV positive cats have normal life expectancies – and FIV positive cats need loving homes, too!

Risk and Transmission

FIV is primarily transmitted by bite wounds from an infected cat. Casual, non-aggressive contact, such as sharing water bowls or mutual grooming, does not appear to be an effective method of transmission. As a result, cats in houses with stable social structures where housemates do not quarrel are less likely to transmit FIV. There is currently not a commercially available FIV vaccination in North America, and the best strategy to prevent risk is to manage interactions when FIV positive cats are involved, keep cats indoors, and test all cats in the home.

Clinical Signs

There are three phases of infection with FIV: the acute phase, the asymptomatic (or latent) phase, and the progressive phase. The acute phase of infection generally occurs 1-3 months after initial infection; this phase of infection may be very mild and is often missed by owners or attributed to other causes of fever. Next, cats enter an asymptomatic phase, which may last for months to many years; during this phase cats will not show any outward signs of illness. Some cats will remain in this stage and never progress to more severe disease.



The progressive stage occurs when the virus continues to spread through the immune system, and in this stage secondary infections may occur. FIV weakens the immune system of infected cats, making them susceptible to other diseases; most illness related to FIV is not from the virus itself, but from these secondary infections or problems with the immune system.

Treatment and Management

Unfortunately, there is currently no definitive cure for FIV. However, it is important to realize that while it is impossible to predict the survival of a cat infected with FIV, cats infected with FIV can live very normal, healthy lives for many years if managed appropriately!

Wellness visits for FIV positive cats should be arranged regularly so that a veterinarian can run a thorough physical examination, paying specific attention to the gums, eyes, skin, and lymph nodes. Vigilance and monitoring of FIV positive cats' health and behavior is even more important than it is for uninfected cats. Because secondary infections cause most of the sickness in FIV-infected cats, it is critical that cats be assessed and treated as soon as any signs of illness appear.

Adopting an FIV Positive Cat

Our Shelter sometimes has cats who test positive for FIV. Most of the time these cats are otherwise healthy, and we move them along towards adoption like any other cat! FIV positive cats are housed in our main Cat Adoption room (with some additional information on their condos), volunteers play and snuggle with them, and visitors and potential adopters meet them. And, they get adopted into loving new families, too, which is our goal for all our wonderful available pets. ●

To the Rescue!

Saving Even the Littlest of Animals in Need of Help

Late last week, over one thousand eggs were recovered from a dumpster in a West Falls Church shopping center. Many of these eggs were starting to hatch, and Fairfax County Animal Protection Police rushed the chicks and eggs to the Exotics Department of Pender Veterinary Centre, the contract veterinary clinic of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. Over the next 24 hours Pender staff triaged the eggs, utilizing an incubator for viable eggs and helped vulnerable, tiny chicks hatch successfully.

Because of the exceptional care provided by Pender veterinarians and staff, almost 20 chicks survived this terrible situation. The conditions the eggs were in before being pulled from the dumpster are unknown, and we are grateful that all the chicks got the best chance possible under the care of Pender Veterinary staff. The surviving chicks all have adoptive homes lined up – with Pender staff!

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter takes in all species of animals, including chicks and chickens, who need care. The Shelter even has a small barn for animals like chickens, where they can live comfortably and safely while they wait for new families to adopt them. For more information about Shelter programs, visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter









Meet the Staff: Frankie Kachur, a True *Swiftie*

Few people have held as many positions in the shelter as Frankie Kachur. Prior to her current stint as an **Adoption Counselor**, Frankie worked on the other side of the counter as an **Intake Counselor**, helping patrons with lost and found, pet surrenders, and providing resources to pet owners in need. Before that, Frankie was an **Animal Caretaker**, working hands-on with Shelter pets



every day, providing care for them and overseeing their wellness.

Frankie *also* happens to be a **die-hard Taylor Swift fan** — like, the kind who makes their own embellished outfits for T.S. concerts — *concerts*, plural. But look, we're not among the haters that are gonna hate, hate, hate, hate, hate. See what we did there? Instead we're going to combine Frankie's love of Taylor and her experience in three departments at the Shelter and let her summarize those experiences in Taylor speak. From assigning one of Taylor's beloved cats as a mascot to one of the aforementioned departments, to choosing which of Taylor's former beau's would be best-suited for answering adopter's questions, see it all below!

	Intake Counseling	Adoptions	Animal Caretaking
Which of Taylor's Cats Would Be the Department's MasCAT?	Olivia Benson. Cool as a cucumber, Olivia takes it all in stride. She can handle anything thrown her way! 	 Benjamin Button. The new kid on the block. He's bright-eyed, positive, and ready to go!	 Meredith Gray. The O.G. She's tough as nails and gets the job DONE.
Which of Taylor's Songs Would Be the Department's Theme Song?	"Begin Again" <i>"On a Wednesday in a café I watched it begin again"</i>	"Mine" <i>"You are the best thing that's ever been mine"</i>	"Ready For It" <i>"Let the games begin Let the games begin Are you ready for it?"</i>
Which of Taylor's Exes Would Be the Best Fit for Each Department?	 Taylor Lautner	Tom Hiddleston 	Calvin Harris 



Fee-Waived Dog Adoptions
Every Friday During Summer!

**FREE
DOG
FRIDAYS**

Friday Hours:
12 to 7 p.m.