

Friends of the Animal Shelter

the Scoop

Summer • 2014



Save the Date!
Dog Wash
 July & August
 See Inside
 for Details



Mission Statement

Friends of the Animal Shelter is a nonprofit organization that supports the programs of the Jackson County Animal Shelter. Our mission is to increase pet adoption, to improve the quality of life for the Shelter's animals, to promote spay/neuter and participate in outreach and educational activities regarding responsible pet guardianship and animal welfare.

www.fotas.org

JOSIE... BEAUTIFUL CALICO GIRL

By Rabbitt Babbitt

When Josie arrived at the Shelter several months ago, it was obvious she had been doted on by her owner during their eight years together. Sadly, her owner was being moved to an assisted-living facility where pets were not allowed.

This striking girl started off quietly in her kennel. Then we watched as she moved through the stages of grief. At first she was withdrawn, then depressed and finally angry enough that she started nipping. Clearly she was mourning the loss of her owner.

The cat room volunteers appreciated Josie's need for their patience and support while she adjusted to life without her long-time human companion. For many shy and surrendered cats, the best recipe for their successful transition includes a measure of time and a serving of understanding, combined with the opportunity for the cats to "call the shots" during the process.

In early February, she was advertised as Pet of the Week, but there was still not much interest in her. It was decided she might do better in foster care, so two of our wonderful foster parents, Linda and Robert, took her in. She gradually started to relax to the point where she would lay on her back and expose her belly. She also really liked to be brushed, and would present her hind end for that purpose. She didn't care for head rubs or scratches, but that was soon about to change.



Photo: Brooke Bell-Turner

Time, patience and committed volunteers proved to be the magic formula for Josie to blossom from the trauma of losing her long-term home.

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JOSIE

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In March she was promoted again, this time as one of our Fabulous Featured Felines, and by the end of that month it looked like she had an adopter. Unfortunately the woman changed her mind the next day due to some of her own ongoing health issues. At that point we decided to try Josie back at the Shelter where she would have more exposure to the public.

On April 13th a woman named Jenny came in to look at her. It was my pleasure to be there that day and watch Josie's reaction to this cat-savvy human. Josie was allowed to take her time, and by the end of the visit she was asking to be brushed. Jenny decided to take her home right then! Ironically Jenny herself had been through some difficult changes this last year and felt she was finally ready for the perfect pet companion.

By the time I got home later that afternoon, there was already a voicemail waiting for me from Jenny. Josie was having nothing to do with her 'safe' room and instead chose to explore her surroundings. She was right at home!

When Jenny came to the Shelter a week later, she was delighted to tell us that Josie now does "head butts" (a sign of comfort and love), and loves to be scratched behind the ears. You go girls! Happiness to you both! 🐾

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

by Peggy Moore, FOTAS President

As you know, several animal welfare organizations exist in Jackson County. Sometimes we get confused with each other, so the purpose of this article is to explain the similarities and the differences between:

- Jackson County Animal Services
- Friends of the Animal Shelter (FOTAS)
- Southern Oregon Humane Society (SoHumane)
- Committed Alliance to Strays (C.A.T.S)
- Spay Neuter Your Pets (SNYP)
- Sanctuary One

Ultimately we all have the same goals: to promote spay and neuter and to adopt animals in our shelters to good, loving homes. The road to those goals may be a little different, given the private or public nature of our organizations, but our destination is the same.

All of the "shelters" have a spay-neuter-before-adoption policy. Some organizations also inject a microchip into the animals, so that the new owner can register their pet, which results in many lost animals being returned to their owners faster.

Jackson County Animal Services

Let's start with Jackson County Animal Services, commonly referred to as "the Shelter" (we don't like "the pound" but some people refer to them that way). The Shelter is at 5595 South Pacific Hwy 99 in Phoenix, and is owned and run by the County under the auspices of the sitting County Commissioners. They receive only 10% of their operating costs from the County;

Jackson County Animal Services is the **only** animal welfare organization that "takes all comers." That means the strays picked up by police and animal control come to the Shelter, as well as dogs and cats found by members of the public.

the rest of their budget is funded through licensing and other fees, individual donations, grants, bequeaths, and FOTAS.

Decisions about the animals are ultimately the responsibility of Shelter management and staff. Adoption fees, treatment of sick animals, and ultimate care and responsibility for the animals belong to the Shelter. The Shelter has fewer than a dozen employees, including Animal

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Jackson Co. Animal Shelter

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 Phoenix, OR 97535
 (located between Talent and Phoenix)
 541-774-6654
Visiting and Adoption Hours
 Monday-Friday
 11:00 am-4:00 pm
 Saturday and Sunday
 Noon-4:00 pm



Continued from previous page

Control. The Shelter is open to the public for adoptions, surrenders and licensing seven days a week.

Jackson County Animal Services is the ONLY animal welfare organization that “takes all comers.” That means the strays picked up by police and animal control come to the Shelter, as well as dogs and cats found by members of the public. All stray animals are scanned for microchips, so that they can be returned to their owner faster. Because the Shelter cannot “refuse” an animal, many arrive hurt and/or unadoptable. And some owners ask the Shelter to humanely euthanize their pets due to major health or behavioral issues.

Each animal is evaluated for adoptability, housed at the Shelter or in foster homes, and promoted by FOTAS through social media, advertising and outreach events. Unfortunately, some of the animals have to be euthanized, but the Shelter staff and FOTAS volunteers do all they can to save as many as possible. The Shelter has partnerships with other animal rescue organizations in Jackson County and throughout Oregon, so some animals are transferred to locations where they have a better chance of getting adopted faster.

Friends of the Animal Shelter

FOTAS is a separate 501c3 non-profit organization that is dedicated to saving animals — we are NOT owned or governed by the Shelter. We have no animals, because all of the animals “belong” to the County. We are true partners of the Shelter in that we provide volunteers and funding to help support their animal welfare efforts. FOTAS maintains an office on the Shelter property, has only a few employees, and hundreds of loving, dedicated volunteers. Our mission is to increase pet adoption, improve the quality of life for

Shelter animals, promote spay and neuter, and participate in outreach and educational activities regarding responsible pet guardianship and animal welfare.

Website: www.fotas.org
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/fotas

Southern Oregon Humane Society (SoHumane)

SoHumane is a non-profit organization located at 2910 Table Rock Road in Medford. The staff and volunteers all work for SoHumane, and the animals “belong” to them. For the most part, they only accept animals with a “history” — meaning they are surrendered by the owner, or they have been brought in from another geographic area. They are a “full adoption” shelter, so animals remain there until they are adopted. They are privately funded and do not receive public funding.

Website: www.sohumane.org

Committed Alliance to Strays (C.A.T.S)

C.A.T.S. is a non-profit organization at 104 N. Ross Lane in Medford. It is also a “full adoption” shelter, but they take cats and kittens by appointment only, based on capacity. They are a “full adoption” shelter, so animals remain there until they are adopted. C.A.T.S. is privately funded and does not receive public funding.
Website: www.kittensandcats.org

Sanctuary One

Sanctuary One at Double Tree Farm is a non-profit organization at 13195 Upper Applegate in Jacksonville. It provides a safe, comfortable home to rescued farm animals and house pets, and provides lifelong care to elderly, disabled, and chronically ill animals. In addition to farm animals, they also have dogs and cats available for adoption. They are privately funded and do not receive public funding.
Website: www.sanctuaryone.org

Spay Neuter Your Pets (SNYP)

SNYP is a non-profit organization that has no “office.” SNYP helps members of our community who otherwise cannot afford to have their pets spayed or neutered through a subsidized spay/neuter assistance program.

The Shelter, SoHumane, C.A.T.S. and Sanctuary One are all spay-neuter-before adoption organizations, so the resources of SNYP are provided to animal owners who have obtained their pets through other sources.

To obtain a voucher, you contact SNYP via telephone, and you can buy vouchers at various locations throughout Jackson County during one of their three seasonal low-cost campaigns. Vouchers are available year-round. The needs-based program works on a sliding scale, with the ultimate goal of preventing litters, resulting in much lower birth rates of unwanted, unplanned animals.

They also offer a “Fix-It Ticket” to help kind individuals who rescue stray and abandoned tame cats. SNYP also works with Feral Cat caregivers to trap-neuter-return feral (wild) cats. Whenever possible the animals are tamed and adopted. They are privately funded and do not receive public funding.
Website: www.spayneuter.org
Phone: 541-858-3325

More Similarities than Differences

As you can see, we are all “bleeding hearts” who want to reduce the number of unwanted litters; strive to treat animals with the love and respect they deserve; and find loving fur-ever homes for them. We are more similar than different, and work together cooperatively to achieve our mutual goals.

And, we all have similar needs ... funding and your time. Please consider donating and volunteering! 🐾

CUCINA BiaZZi

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The generous owner and staff of **Cucina BiaZZi** offer a four-course dinner on the last day of the month throughout 2014 to benefit **Friends of the Animal Shelter**.

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Photo: Nancy Uravich Freeland



There's no need for a
piece of sculpture in a home
that has a cat.

*Wesley Bates,
American writer*

WHAT'S NEW AT THE SHELTER

by Barbara Talbert, Manager, Jackson County Animal Services

As is usually the case during the winter months, fewer dogs and cats entered the Shelter, compared to other seasons. This gave us a little respite to catch our breath, clean up some clutter, work on some projects, and prepare ourselves for kitten season, which is now upon us in a big way. Unfortunately, nursing moms and litters of kittens started coming to us in early April, which was a month sooner than last year, most likely due to stray cats breeding as soon as it warmed up. Therefore, we are desperately looking for new foster families to help us save more kittens through the summer and early fall months. We currently don't have enough foster homes to save them all and it will only get worse!

If you can help, please contact Diane Novak, FOTAS Foster Coordinator, at di-sped.head@gmail.com or 541-941-3677.

Here are some of other highlights of other happenings at the Shelter during the last few months:

- We will be moving part of the Animal Control operation into the Tactical Operations Center at the Sheriff's office on Highway 62 in order to provide better access to technology for our Animal Control dispatcher, which will enable her to communicate more easily with her officers and provide better safety for them in the field. This opens up space off of the lobby area to create a quiet room for potential cat adopters to meet cats and kittens. We are hoping to get this in place by the end of June, before kitten season kicks into high gear.
- Another change has been to convert one of the cat rooms into a free-roaming room for fully-vaccinated cats. We are hoping an environment without kennels will be less stressful on cats and encourage more adoptions.
- In early April, three of our staff members, Rebecca, Claudia, and Donna, attended an animal behavior seminar in Reno, Nevada, and came back with many ideas to enrich the lives of our dogs and cats while they are waiting at the Shelter for homes. The key is to provide mental stimulation and comfortable surroundings to keep our animals from getting frustrated, thus making them more adoptable. When you enter the dog kennels, you will now see some of the dogs resting comfortably on lounge chairs in their kennels, which tends to keep them quieter. Changes in feeding and clicker training have been introduced to volunteers in the cat rooms. A group of volunteer dog handlers recently teamed up to provide daily treats for every dog, including those in holding. (See related Enrichment article.)
- Animal Control was recently involved in cleaning up two different cat hoarding situations, each involving more than 30 cats. FOTAS volunteers helped the owner in one of these cases, so that she could retain some of her cats. Unfortunately, most of the cats in these situations could not be saved due to sickness and asocial behavior. Working these cases is difficult, but it reminds staff and volunteers of the consequences in our community when cats are not spayed/neutered, even when taken in by caring people who thought they were doing the right thing by "saving" them from shelters.

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- Fifteen volunteers and staff participated in a Disaster Response exercise in late April to practice setting up a companion animal shelter for dogs and cats, which would be located next door to a Red Cross shelter for humans. This will allow dog and cat owners in our community that may need to evacuate their homes during a wildfire or earthquake disaster, to take their pets with them. We learned a lot during the exercise to refine our planning efforts and expect to repeat the exercise at least once a year.
- In March, we finalized an agreement with Petsmart Charities that now allows us to adopt our animals at their store. We have been transporting 2–3 cats at a time to “live” in Petsmart’s cat room until they get adopted. This strategy has been mildly successful so far in finding homes for our cats, but it helps to expand our capacity for housing cats when we are full. Volunteers are taking our dogs to Petsmart for a few hours at a time on some weekends, resulting in getting some of our hard-to-adopt dogs into good homes.

Finally, a repeat of an earlier message: As our shelter becomes increasingly filled with homeless dogs and cats at this time of year, we need more families willing to foster nursing mothers and kittens until they are old enough to be spayed/neutered OR dogs who are shy or timid (usually small dogs) OR stressed-out pit bull mixes who are lingering at the Shelter until they find the right home. Your help as a foster parent will greatly increase the number adoptions of Shelter animals. 🐾



Easy chairs were placed in the kennels to create a more comfortable space for the dogs. Benny, pictured here, shows his approval.



One of the cat rooms at the Shelter was recently transformed into a free-roaming space after Shelter staff attended a national conference on animal behavior. This space has quickly become a favorite hangout for cats and people alike.

Photos: Leslie Huntington



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ENRICHMENT EQUALS ADOPTIONS

by Norma Wright

Each morning, just after the kennels are cleaned and before the public arrives, a FOTAS volunteer DEN (Dog Enrichment) Mother arrives at the Shelter

with a lot of

love and a little surprise to give to each of the dogs. Starting the day with a smile, a kind word and a treat is something the dogs appreciate. We would too, particularly if we were confined in a small space day and night.

Stress can become a serious issue for the dogs, resulting in fence fighting, biting and other forms of aggression, preventing otherwise perfectly acceptable dogs from being adopted. To curb this problem, FOTAS and

the Jackson County Animal Shelter contacted the Oregon Humane Society (OHS) to ask for suggestions to make life easier for the dogs and help them to become more adoptable.

OHS recommended the addition of programs that provide mental, tactile, visual and auditory stimulation as an important first step, with the goals to challenge the dogs to solve problems, build an awareness of interesting stimuli both in and outside the confines of their kennels, and train them to perform simple exercises. One key aspect of the program included enrichment, which entailed a visit to each dog every morning with a little tidbit that offered some entertainment.

Initially, the staff took on the task of preparing and delivering these daily treats, but with the over-

whelming demands of the office, it quickly became obvious this was not a workable plan. A call was made for volunteers, and Brandy Carson, Marnie Norvell, Dee Clary, Kendra Lawrence, Norma Kruse, Judy Whitney and Norma Wright stepped up, forming the enrichment team known as the DEN Mothers.

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Stress can become a serious issue for the dogs, resulting in fence fighting, biting and other forms of aggression, preventing otherwise perfectly acceptable dogs from being adopted.



The dedicated DEN Mothers dish up all kinds of treats for the dogs. Brandy Carson (left) and Marnie Norvell (right) prepare to serve Kongs filled to the brim with canine delectables.

Photo: Ada Kirkman

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"We needed the consistency of the DEN Mothers to make and deliver the treats. Having the program in place has made a difference in the lives of the dogs. You can tell they know when the DEN Mothers have been here by how much calmer the dogs behave," reports Barbara Talbert, Jackson County Animal Services Manager.

Each dog is given a unique gift, from peanut butter treats (Tuesdays and Saturdays), stuffed Kongs (Mondays and Thursdays), rope toys with enticing smells (Fridays and Sundays) or a pig ear (Wednesdays). The gift gives them a little something to occupy their time and comes with a special reward of human affection during the delivery.

The gifts are prepared with care. For instance, the peanut butter treat is mixed with kibble and wrapped at the home by the volunteer and brought to the Shelter. Opening toys filled with goodies takes time and concentration, and the reward is tasty.

"These nearly invisible angels, the DEN Mothers, are working behind the scenes, helping to make the

life of the dogs in the kennels more tolerable, and even enjoyable, each and every day," said Sally Rosenthal, FOTAS Assistant to the Volunteer Manager.

Randi, Shelter Technician, adds, "It's our dream to expand the Enrichment Program to two visits per day to the dogs. We hope to stimulate their thinking and help them occupy their time while here at the Shelter in ways that will make them more adoptable and better pets once they have found their homes. Whether it's walking dogs, cuddling, Train-To-Adopt exercises, or dog enrichment, the

Each dog is given a unique gift, from peanut butter treats (Tuesdays and Saturdays), stuffed Kongs (Mondays and Thursdays), rope toys with enticing smells (Fridays and Sundays) or a pig ear (Wednesdays).

goal we all have is to fill their days with diversions from being kenneled and help them experience humans giving them love and kindness."

So how can you help?

Consider the opportunity to volunteer at FOTAS and join the DEN Mothers Enrichment Program.

Bring empty soda cartons, tissue boxes, and one-liter plastic bottles to the Shelter.

Volunteers can ask Randi for a "Busy Box" if they see a dog that can benefit from extra entertainment and enrichment during the day. The dog will like it and the volunteer may find it as a fun activity, too. 🐾

POST-ADOPTION UPDATES




Photo: Brooke Bell-Turner

Black lab RAMBO was adopted in late April, 2014. Jacob, his owner wrote, "Rambo adjusted very quickly to his new life and now enjoys playing with his favorite toy hedgehog." Recently Rambo was certified as an Emotional Support Animal service dog. Jacob adds, "Rambo is one of the family and we're very lucky to have him. Thank you again to the staff at the Jackson County Animal Shelter for helping us get matched up with our perfect forever four-legged friend."



Photo: Elena Elsom

Elena writes, "I'm so absolutely grateful for what you guys do! I adopted MINI last August and we have been completely inseparable! I love her so much! She is a spoiled princess. She's full of attitude and so much personality. Thanks so much for bringing this angel into my life."



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**THE PIT CREW:
A YEAR OF
PITTIE PARTIES**

by Leslie Huntington

Smart, silly, fun and sweet dogs. Those are the words you will hear from FOTAS Pit Crew members when they explain their reasons for working with the pit bull mixes and other power breed dogs at the Shelter. You can appreciate

need to protect the dogs' sweet personalities from the stressful effects of extended kennel life, and accomplishing this task takes on many forms.

Each morning at the Shelter the dogs are treated to extra unhurried time of walking, training and play with a Pit Crew member. The dogs learn many basic skills such as heel and come; behaviors they

Davies to work alongside the Pit Crew to train the dogs and to hone the skills of these volunteers. With Bridget's help, the dogs learn to become more attentive to the handler and build life skills that will serve them well as a permanent family member.

These intelligent dogs often develop proficiency in a short time frame. The Pit Crew "ups the ante" of training to improve specific behaviors in the dogs or to further refine the dogs' skills during off-campus with walks in Talent or Ashland.

Not all outings are focused on training, however. Sometimes the dog just wants to check out new smells, hang out with people or sit and watch the world go by. Several members of the Pit Crew provide wonderful opportunities for the dogs to enjoy quality time away from the Shelter.

Lorna, one Pit Crew volunteer, dedicates time each week to bring the power breed dogs to her house for separate outings on her secure property. Aptly named "Shangri-Lorna," her large, fenced space offer many perks to the dogs, from the exploration of the expansive grounds, to stretching out in the shady grass for a nap. For the more active dogs, a dip in the pool serves them nicely.

Lexi, another Pit Crew member, takes select dogs on extended hikes once a week on forest roads and trails around the Rogue Valley.

Continued next page



Photo: Leslie Huntington

FOTAS Pit Crew member Michelle rewards Hammy for his performance of "Leave It" near Kitty Korner. The Pit Crew works with the power breeds at the Shelter to ease their stress while increasing their adoptability.

their reason for spending time and energy with these dogs, too. They know the larger working dogs like Mastiffs, Rotweillers and pit bull mixes tend to reside at the Shelter longer, often for months. Pit Crew members understand the critical

may never have had in their pre-Shelter lives. They will play games to challenge their minds. And they get to burn off energy with a good romp in the agility yard. Through generous donations, FOTAS pays for professional dog trainer Bridget

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Continued from previous page

The dogs return to their kennels tired and content, with the therapeutic effects lasting for days and enhancing the work and training at the Shelter by the dog walkers and Pit Crew members. For the dogs and the volunteers, these outings are a win-win!

The Pit Crew program began one year ago from the simple desire of a few FOTAS volunteers to do something more for the stressed power breeds. Since that time, more than 50 dogs have received dedicated time, effort and attention from the group that now supports a membership of 15 volunteers. It's a labor of love that improves the quality of life for many of the Shelter's power breeds, increases their potential for adoption, and saves lives. For both the Pit Crew and the dogs, the efforts are worth it. 🐾

Photo: Leslie Huntington



Marian poses with Nemo, a pit bull mix who spent more than six months at the Shelter and was adopted by a couple from Coquille.



Photo: Brooke Bell-Turner

**Kitten Season is Here.
Become a Foster Parent and Save lives.**

With the Jackson County Animal Shelter at capacity with cats and kittens, the need for foster parents is even greater. The foster experience offers socialization, love and care for a kitten in a home environment while keeping space available at the Shelter for other cats and kittens.

Foster families are also needed for cats and dogs of all sizes. Please consider the opportunity to serve as a foster parent to our precious Shelter animals. To learn more about the foster program, go to the FOTAS website at www.fotas.org and click on the "Foster" tab at the top of the page.



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Shonna Cox	Kathleen Hilde	Dorothy McCormick	Kathleen Sullivan
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Community and National Partners

Ashland Homes Real Estate, Marie Donovan
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 Best Friends Animal Clinic, Dr. Debbie Tegarden
 Best Friends Animal Hospital of East Medford, Dr. Steve Poet
 Cucina Biazzi, who is donating the cost of late-seating dinners on the last day of the month throughout 2014
 Dianne Quarg's Students
 Groupees, Rachelle Long and Dan Long
 Inspired Pet Portraits, Dana Feagin
 SmileAmazon.com donates .05% of purchases when you designate FOTAS as the recipient
 Southern Oregon Inter-Club
 Standing Stone Brewing Company
 Teespring, LLC, Amaya and Stephen Sobhi
 Theatre Artists for Animals donated the proceeds from performances of "Far from the Zoo"
 U.S. Bones.com donates 20% of sales when you designate FOTAS as the recipient

In Memory of Karen Greenstein

Martha and Carl Angove
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 Thomas Avalos
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 Charlotte Farber
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 Michelle Hustedt
 Linda and Ray Lloyd
 Arlene Merkelson
 Akemi Migaki
 Kari Olson
 Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association
 Julia Roupp
 Joe Schirripa
 Michael Silvey

In Memory of Deborah Stein Helms

Warren Helms
 Joani and Charlie Noneman
 Jane Plotkin

SPECIAL TRIBUTES

- Anonymous**, in memory of Mollie Jones
- Anonymous**, in memory of Dancing Willie Jones
- Cynthia Clark**, in memory of Casper
- Dee Clary**, in honor of Dianne Quarg
- Rae Ellen Fields**, in honor of Tessa, a sweet lady
- Frances King**, in memory of Radar; thinking of you always, especially working in the garden
- Kimberly Koester**, in memory of Sassy



YOUR LEGACY TO THE ANIMALS

Friends of the Animal Shelter helps the shelter save thousands of stray and abandoned pets each year. Pets that have nowhere else to go for help rely on the shelter to find them permanent, loving homes.

If you would like to make a special gift that will help us continue and grow our lifesaving work, please consider naming FOTAS in your will or trust.

**For more info, please call
Jeane Lind, at 541-482-6272.**

**FRIENDS OF THE
ANIMAL SHELTER
DOG
WASH**



**DIRTY DOGS
WELCOME**

The Friends of the Animal Shelter is holding its Annual Dog Washes on Saturday, July 19 at Pet Country in Medford, and on Sunday, August 10 at Ashland Food Co-op, from 10 AM to 2 PM. All sizes of dogs are welcome! Volunteers will wash your dog for only \$10. Nail trims by Land of Paws professionals are \$7. And the "spaw" package (wash and nail trim) is \$15. Please bring your own towel. See the back of the calendar insert in this edition for more details ... and tell your two-legged and four-legged friends!



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880 Golf View Drive #101
Medford, Oregon 97504

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."

— Groucho Marx

If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, call (541) 482-8172 or send an email to fotas-scoop@charter.net

FOTAS VOLUNTEER DEE CLARY

How long have you volunteered at the Shelter? I have been volunteering since January of 2013 when my husband and I started as foster parents, which we loved. We soon found that one of our canine family members did not share our gusto for fostering, so I needed to find another volunteer opportunity with FOTAS. Thanks to Sue Meyerott, FOTAS Manager of Volunteer Services, I had many options to choose from!



Photo: Leslie Huntington

Dee Clary wears many hats as a dog volunteer including enrichment, training and a Cuddle Room volunteer to comfort stressed dogs. Dee owns dogs and a rescue horse.

What are your main functions as a volunteer? After volunteering at some off-site events, I started working in the Cuddle Room, using Train-to-Adopt techniques with the dogs, and teaching those techniques to new volunteers. I have found this to be most rewarding because most of the dogs seem to appreciate the “down” time in the Cuddle Room, and it’s a nice break from the kennels for them. It’s wonderful, too, to see their personalities really shine in the 15 to 30 minutes we have with them. Eventually, even the most exuberant dogs learn to effectively calm themselves, and they also learn some nice manners. A few weeks ago, another volunteer opportunity materialized when Norma Wright created the DEN Mothers, a group of volunteer (and now friends), who bring fun and good things to eat to the dogs in their kennels.

You are an active participant in the DEN Mother dog enrichment program (see article on page 6). In your opinion, how has this program helped the dogs? The DEN Mothers place treats in each of the dogs’ kennels and talk to them—getting them used to taking treats while meeting new people and giving them something to chew on throughout the day. Since the most important part of a dog’s anatomy is his nose, we offer the dogs things that smell good (to them!). With the help of Shelter Technician Randi, the DEN Mothers implemented new ways to stimulate the dogs’ sense of smell by offering different scents (butter, vanilla, etc.) on ropes. We are often met with wagging tails and happy faces, especially from the “old timers” who know what’s coming! Many times I enter the kennels to the sound of many barking dogs, but when I leave, the kennels are quiet and every mouth is busy.

What is your favorite aspect of volunteering at the Shelter? I love being with like-minded, knowledgeable people who care so greatly for and about these animals. I am in awe knowing that there are some volunteers who spend a part of almost every day at the Shelter. Everything is done with the cats’ or dogs’ best interests in mind. What could be better than that? 🐾