

Senior Pets for Senior Folks

I would like to enter our non-profit group: Senior Pets for Senior Folks, Inc. in the Maddie's Fund competition.

I believe our model is unusual. I have not found similar models. We are a new organization, but already we are beginning to succeed at our goals. Our goals are three-fold:

1. To support seniors, or those folks with limitations, in their pet ownership.
2. To place senior pets with senior folks or those with disabilities or limitations.
3. To be a resource for Hospice or people making end of life decisions so no person has to face death wondering what will happen to their beloved pet.

We had our first community wide fund raiser and raised over \$1500.00. This was a Mega Flea Market. Can you imagine \$1500.00 selling people's cast away items? We are using the faith base communities to spread the word of our program. I am a rabbi and have a congregation of 375 and many of our volunteers come from the congregation. Many are now coming from the community due to the publicity about our program. However, I plan to go to various churches and houses of worship and get similar groups going so we can work the entire community together. Every pet that gets adopted comes with the offer of an Angel. Our Angels will call the adopter as often as appropriate, to make sure both the pet and the person have enough food, offer to find walkers for the dog, or drive the person to vet appointments. So far, none of our adoptions have required Angels, but we have a cadre of Angels standing by. Another group of volunteers are our Walkers. If we find a person who is unable or no longer able to walk their dog, we will find a walker in their neighborhood to walk their dog several times a day and check on the person when they pick up the dog. Another group of volunteers are Drivers.

We do not plan to be a fostering rescue group (with one exception discussed below). Our mission is to support current pet ownership and to make placements of senior pets. There are plenty of rescues in our area so when we find a home, I call the rescue and find an appropriate dog/cat for that person. We hope to provide money for vetting, food, and support with other issues of pet ownership. The exception to fostering is when someone is facing end of life decisions -- we have foster homes set up so we can act quickly, assuring the person prior to their death, that their pet will be loved and cared for. As I stated, we are a new group, so our numbers are not large. Here is what we have to report:

Jester, a senior terrier with spunk (he's probably 12 to 14 years old) was placed with a couple in their mid-80's. They do not require support at this time.

We placed a two year old Peke with a 77 year old lady. She was spry and needed a more active dog; he was a trouble maker in foster care because he wanted all the attention. Now he has all of her attention and they are both in love. They do not require support at this time.

Daisy, missing many of her teeth, probably 12 or so, was a foster who had been adopted and returned (as had the Peke above) -- she was just placed with an 85 year old man who lost his wife recently. She dances for him and talks back to him when he talks with her. He is supported by family members.

Ana is a 14 year old poodle, with sores on her body, found wandering the streets of Miami, so matted that her eyes were closed. She was placed with a 90 year old woman who has the support of her niece (a groomer and holistic dog lover). The 90 year may out live Ana, but her philosophy is that she will give Ana wonderful last years, and if Ana passes first, the woman will be glad to take another. This woman walks 2 hours a day and was turned down by every dog rescue she contacted. What a super adoptive home she is giving this older poodle!

As far as support -- We only have one person, who is not a senior, but who has schizophrenia and lives on a social security disability and food stamps. His cat is his only contact with a living being since he rarely leaves his home. He has an Angel call him and we provide cat food (and people food when needed).

Our organization has potential to be successful because it combines several groups in need: animals and people with limitations. We are getting referrals from doctors of humans and doctors of pets. We need funds mostly for vet care since the animals we place are elderly or have other medical conditions needing treatment. We have been fortunate in that food for both animals and people has been donated so far.

Please consider us in your competition. The idea markets itself (once it gets up and running) and meets such a valuable need.

Thank you.
Ann White