



Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care



Maddie's Fund

Table of Contents

Marketing Pets from Foster Care	3
Traditional Marketing	4
Marketing vs. Adoption Counseling	5
Marketing is Not Adoption Counseling: Keep ‘Em Separate, Save More Lives	5
Traditional Marketing vs. Lifesaving Marketing	12
Your Goals	14
How it Works	16
Volunteer- and Foster- Driven Marketing	17
Volunteer & Foster Social Media Group	18
<i>Sample Guidelines:</i>	19
Volunteer-and Foster-Driven Marketing: The Next Level	20
<i>Volunteer- and Foster-Created Social Media Pages</i>	20
<i>The Shelter Pet Project</i>	21
<i>Media Sponsorships</i>	22
Appendix A: Resources	24
Marketing shelter pets.....	24
Photography, Videography and Writing	24
Volunteer-driven marketing	25
Boosting your marketing efforts	25



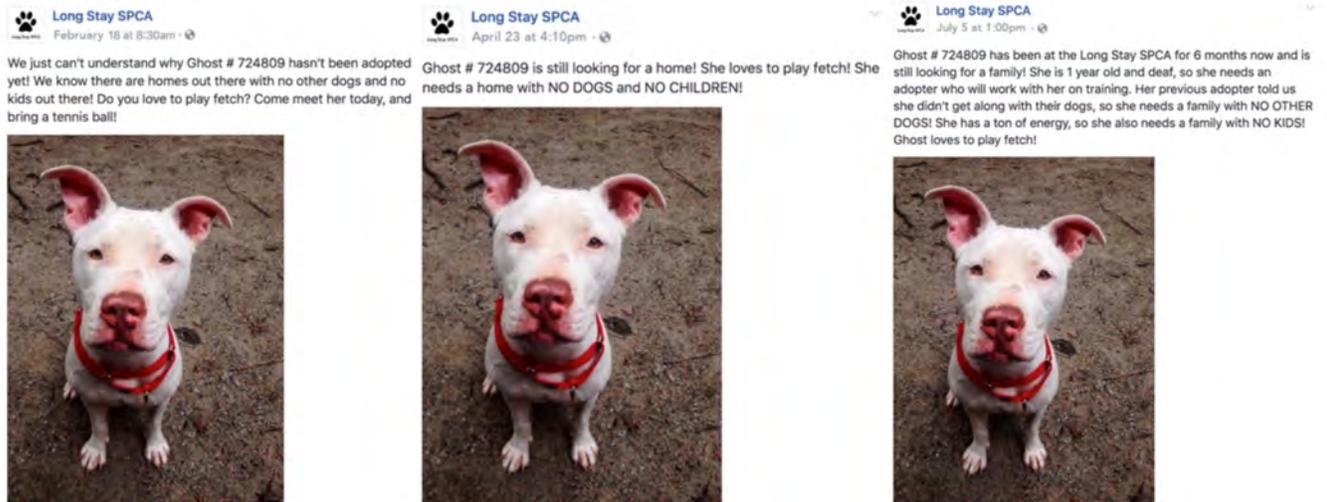
Marketing Pets from Foster Care

Let's say you have 3 great foster caregivers for adult dogs. All of them are full. Yesterday, you had two adult dogs beginning to show signs of kennel stress, and you were waiting for a spot in foster to open up. Today, there are two more. What do you do?

One might think that since a dog in foster care is "safe," they don't need to market them, concentrating instead on the ones still at the shelter. Exactly the opposite is true. The best way to get long stay dogs into forever homes is to aggressively market them once they're in foster care and available for adoption. There will always be another dog waiting for foster at the shelter, so the best way to ensure that you have enough fosters is to do everything you can to shorten their length of stay in foster care.

Traditional Marketing

Traditional shelter marketing often consists of posting the biographies of available pets on social media. Often, due to time limitations, the same biography is posted more than once when a pet has a long stay in the shelter.



Why doesn't this work?

- Same picture = boring
 - Your supporters are less likely to share the same picture twice
- Photo quality
 - Though Ghost is adorable, the photo's background is unappealing
- Template text
 - Ghost has been in the shelter for 6 months, and the shelter appears to know nothing new about her. The implication: Is she boring? Do they not like her enough to find out more?
 - The text doesn't give much of a way to make an emotional connection
- Stop signs in text
 - "No kids" and "no other dogs" often scares off potential adopters who would be a good fit (see article)
- Inclusion of ID number
 - Says, "This dog is just a number to us."
 - Discourages emotional connection

Marketing vs. Adoption Counseling

Marketing is Not Adoption Counseling: Keep ‘Em Separate, Save More Lives

Posted on [February 18, 2016](#) by [Animal Farm Foundation](#)

Guest post written by Kristen Auerbach, Deputy Chief Animal Services Officer at [Austin Animal Center](#) in Austin, TX.

Shy dog Derek had been at Austin Animal Center, waiting for a family for several months, but was timid and scared in his kennel and didn't seek out attention. There were no sparks with potential adopters.

As I sometimes do with dogs who need some extra attention, I brought him into my office and got to know him over the course of a few days. I saw him around other dogs, kids, and cats. I learned that he was very well behaved, but seemed unsure of the world, and sometimes became nervous. I observed his back legs seemed to bow out and he walked a little funny.



Derek was super shy in his kennel and was one of those dogs we sometimes call "shut down."

With this new information, it was time to do some marketing. I wrote a silly little description of my experience with Derek and stuck it on his kennel.

I brought him in my office and got to know him over a couple of days. I made a silly flyer and put it on his kennel.

STAFF PICK! Derek!



"I admit it. I'm usually drawn to the naughty ones but Derek is an exception. He is just about perfect and he's one of those dogs who has had virtually zero life experience so everything is magical to him. He met what may be the first kids he's seen and he just kept staring at them like they couldn't possibly be real, nudging them ever-so-gently with his nose. He doesn't bark or make any noises at all and he's happy to lay in my office all day long. Today, he had his first really excited moment when he thought I was going to take him outside and he spun in slow-motion circles around my office. He will silently play bow at you and he's sometimes pretty scared you're going to hit him, so he likes it when you tell him it's okay in a happy voice." –Kristen (Deputy Chief)

After just two days with the new sign, a woman wanted to meet him in the play yard. Once they got to meet, she saw there was a spark between them and said, "I want to take him home."

At that point, after that initial magic connection had been made, we began the adoption counseling.

I described everything I had observed, including that he seemed to like the children he met, but also seemed unsure of them. I also told her that he needed his back legs checked out and that he might have some issues because of his conformation. I was honest and disclosed everything we had assessed and observed about Derek.

The adopter asked a lot of good questions. She considered if he was the right fit for her.

At the end of the counseling process, she was still convinced Derek was for her. She adopted him that day and when we followed up, she told us she is 'completely in love' and he's the perfect dog for her.



This family saw the flyer, met Derek, bonded with him, went through the counseling process and adopted him. Derek was so proud!

Dogs like Derek are typically marketed to the public with information like:

“Shy, needs home with adults only” or “Probably a backyard dog and not well-socialized.”

These statements, used during the marketing phase, act as STOP signs which prevent potential adopters from asking to meet dogs (even ones that would be a great fit for them!). To help send more pets home, shelters need to separate the marketing from the adoption counseling.



Too often we mistake social media marketing as the place for adoption counseling. Can you spot the ‘stop signs’ in these posts?

“Elsa is a gorgeous, two-year-old pit bull who loves people and loves to snuggle and go on walks. She must be the only dog in the house. She’d do best in house with no kids. Elsa has been waiting more than two years to find a new family to love her. Could she be the one for you?”

“Sam is fun-loving dog with tons of energy who is looking for an active home. He is really good with most people, but he prefers women over men. He is reactive and has mild separation anxiety, but with the right person, he’s going to make an awesome pet!”

I know what you’re thinking: “We have a *responsibility* to our adopters/fosters/rescuers/public to tell them everything we know about that animal! Are you saying we should intentionally hide the truth?”

No. As animal welfare professionals and volunteers, we owe it to our community and our adopters to disclose everything we know about one of our animals.

However, we share all of that information during the adoption counseling portion of the process...not in the marketing.

Marketing is meant to grab attention and open a door. Adoption counseling is for full disclosure.

Marketing is what GETS people to the adoption counseling process by piquing their interest in meeting the animals. But you can’t do the complicated business of adoption counseling if NO ONE is there for you to talk to. Marketing: it’s what makes the full conversation happen!

Here are some simple tips for keeping your marketing separate from your adopting counseling process. If you do this, you’ll increase your adoptions, make better matches, and get more pets out of your shelter or rescue and into permanent homes.

DON’T include every single detail about an animal’s entire life or try to explain every possible flaw or challenge this pet may have in one post.

Imagine writing a job resume where you list every mistake you’ve ever made, all the projects that didn’t go well, and all the things your coworkers find most annoying about you. You’re probably never going to get the call to come in for that job interview, even if you are a great prospect!

RESUME FOR MR. INEEDA JOB

Call me ASAP! If you don't give me this job, my landlord is going to evict me by Monday!!

Overview: I've been unemployed for the past year, through no fault of my own. I am uncomfortable working with the opposite sex and I require a perfect working environment, but I hope you'll still give me a chance to come in for an interview with your company because deep down I'm a good person and I promise I'll work hard! I just need one special boss that will be patient with me as I learn how to do my job, but I swear I'm worth it. PLEASE GIVE ME A CHANCE!!!

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MY OLD COMPANY (WHO DUMPED ME FOR NO REASON) 2010 – 2015
Social Media Manager

- Occasionally I post really inappropriate things on my company's Facebook page, but overall I've built and managed our brand's growing 250,000 member online community which has led to a 127% increase in sales through our online store.

While this is an extreme example, it makes an important point. Every person (and dog) has a variety of personality traits and behaviors. We all have a history of highs and lows that makes us who we are. If we put it ALL on the table, before a prospective employer gets to meet us and form a connection with us, we're not going to get the call to even come in for the interview.

For dogs, they're probably not going to get the opportunity to meet the person who could change the course of their lives!

Think about it like this: Your resume is a way to land the interview where you have a chance to discuss your strengths and weaknesses. The social media post or bio is the way to get adopters to meet your dogs and have a discussion with you about all of their needs.

DO tell a story! Dalton, pictured here, was a wild child in the shelter. He barked and whined while kenneled and had tons of energy. His behavior in the shelter sent adopters running. Dalton was passed over many times.

In the past, we might have posted that Dalton was a 'high energy' dog looking for an 'active' family who would take him running and hiking. But we've learned potential adopters *read through the lines*, even when we try to be subtle about potentially negative traits.

Instead we sent Dalton to a foster home for a few days, so we could learn more about him. His foster mom shared a quick story about something he did while at their house.

 **Fairfax County Animal Shelter** added 2 new photos.
February 27 at 2:27pm · 🌐

Here's what Dalton's foster mom had to say about her amazingly intelligent foster dog:

"We've been learning a lot about Dalton during his stay here, and I'm now positive that one major reason he had such a hard time in the shelter is his intelligence. Dalton is not merely smart; he is knock-your-socks-off, almost-human intelligent. The evidence: He knows the commands sit, stay, down, and paw, and he actually rolled over for Annie the other day. He lets us know when he doesn't have enough water left by lifting the bowl and bringing it to us (his carrying technique could be improved, as the remaining bit gets all over the floor, but still).

The other day I was cleaning, so my son was hanging out with the dogs in another room. The door had a normal round knob and opened inward (so it needed to be pulled, not pushed). He opened the door twice. His most amazing feat yet was on Wednesday, when I was getting ready to walk the dogs. I started putting on my boots. He instantly got excited and started whining a little, like he wanted me to hurry up. Then he inexplicably ran from the room. I heard noises down the hall, so I went to investigate. Dalton was standing there, holding my coat in his mouth! Then he looked at me and shook the coat. I still can't believe that he was able to go into the closet, select my coat from the 15 or so that are in there, and get it out."

Dalton is available for adoption. E-mail us at animalshelter@fairfaxcounty.gov to learn more!



15,456 people reached Boost Post

Like · Comment · Share · 👍 529 🗨️ 61 ➦ 82

That story, posted on Facebook, brought in dozens of interested adopters. Marketing him this way allowed us to find a family from this group who was perfect for this young, exuberant pooch. Everyone else that was interested adopted other dogs. Win-win!

For more information on writing descriptions that create connection and draw in adopters, check out Animal Farm Foundation's [E-Book](#) about marketing and advertising.

DON'T focus on restrictions. Restrictions are articulated either as a directive statement, as in "no kids" or as a passive statement such as, "would do best in a home with no kids." A restriction like this means different things to different people. It leaves a lot of room for people to imagine why you've included it in your marketing.

For most adopters, a statement like this will act as a stop sign because they don't know why you're using it and it may sound scary. Even for potential adopters who don't have

kids, they may think, “Well, my neighborhood has kids and so I guess this dog won’t work for me,” or alternately, “I don’t have kids, but who wants a dog that doesn’t like kids?” or even, “I wonder if this dog has hurt kids?” By placing restrictions in your marketing, you may have turned off some really great adopters who are the right match.

Even if you are firm about the restriction and will not adopt the dog to a home with kids or cats, you can save that conversation for the in-person adoption counseling process. This is when you will explain the dog’s full history and why you are going to use the restriction. Your adopters will appreciate your transparency and information and trust in your adoption process.

To read more about restrictions, check out Animal Farm Foundation’s [E-book](#) about adoption best practices.



Ghost, pictured here, is a deaf dog. We marketed her by talking about how despite her inability to hear, how happy and joyful she always is. Without any special criteria or restrictions, we found her the perfect family.

DO stick to positive marketing that inspire adoptions and will create the opportunity for adopters to meet the dog, before beginning the counseling process.

DON'T feel bad if the marketing doesn't lead to the right match. If someone comes to meet a pet because of your positive marketing and they can't adopt that particular pet, because of a medical or behavioral issue that you discuss with them, that's ok...

DO see this as opportunity to make the right match. All of our staff makes an effort to always know some information about six or seven different animals in our shelter. That

way, if the pet the adopter saw on social media wasn't the perfect fit, we have several other potential matches already in mind!

DON'T use industry language, or 'shelter-speak' in your marketing efforts. Terms like 'barrier reactive' and 'resource guarding' might be everyday lingo for you, but to adopters that are both frightening and confusing. Even terms like, 'jumpy/mouthy' mean something different to you than what they might mean to a person who is unfamiliar with animal welfare jargon. They may scare off adopters.

DO use everyday language in your marketing, as well as your adoption counseling, that regular people understand. And if you do use a term like 'zoomies,' make sure you explain what you mean!

Want to keep it simple? Remember that marketing gets people in the door who are excited to adopt and creates the opportunity for honest, open adoption counseling to happen at the shelter, where the best possible matches can be made.

Commit to a positive-only marketing approach combined with a [conversation-based adoption counseling process](#) and you'll start to send more pets home, right where they belong.

Traditional Marketing vs. Lifesaving Marketing

Innovative marketing is different than traditional marketing. Innovative marketing takes risks and breaks rules. It sees every animal as an individual and focuses on highlighting every dog – through sharing an adorable quirk, a story about their day, a notable interaction with a person or other animal. Innovative marketing avoids putting stop signs into posts and doesn't try to capture a dog's entire personality in one post, because it recognizes the shelter is a tremendously stressful place and we probably have no idea what the 'true' personalities of any of our dogs really are until they're in a home with a family. Innovative marketing engages people, using community language like *you*, *us* and *we*, not third person language like *they* and *them*.

Traditional Marketing	Lifesaving Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the “rules”• Pet marketing via biography• Stop signs in text:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “NO CATS”○ “must be the only dog”○ “needs a home with no children under 12”• General animal care posts, funny pet videos, foods to avoid at Thanksgiving, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoughtful rule-breaking<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 4, 5 or more posts a day? Sure, if you have great content!• Highlighting a specific pet’s adorable quirk, a scene or story about their day, an interaction with other dogs or people, etc.• Leave the adoption counseling to the pet’s foster and your adoption counselors• Use community-creating language: <i>you</i>, <i>us</i>, <i>we</i>• Only use posts that are relevant to your agency



Long Stay SPCA
April 5 at 8:18am · 🌐

Sweet Jane 5 years, housebroken, heartworm negative.



Fairfax County Animal Shelter
March 17, 2014 · 🌐

Poor Sweet Jane needed a break from the shelter so we sent her home with one of our foster families so she could get some TLC. She's doing fabulously and loves to play with the people and other dogs in the home.

Sweet Jane gets very worried when her foster family leaves and she wanted us to make sure that her new family can still find her, even though she is in foster and not at the shelter. We promised her we would get the word out that she is looking for her new family and that we'll have her come to the shelter whenever it's open so potential adopters can find her.

Come and meet this lovely lady when we open tomorrow at noon!



In the first example above, template text and a mediocre photo make it difficult for viewers to form an emotional connection. The second is a clear photograph in which Sweet Jane is looking directly into the lens; with compelling text and a clear call to action it becomes an engaging post.

Your Goals

1. Find an adopter for the pet.
2. Make the pet a local celebrity.
3. Create an emotional connection between the pet and your supporters.

Your ultimate goal is to find an adopter for your long-stay dog. While you're in the process, your secondary goal should be to make your long-stay pet a local celebrity. There are several reasons for this. First, the more people who recognize and talk about a pet, the more likely it is that their family will find them. Second, it gets people talking about your shelter and the plight of long-stay pets in general.

Fairfax County Animal Shelter
December 31, 2015 · 🌐

French Fry makes friends wherever he goes! This nice UPS employee took a few minutes to say hello to French Fry while he was out on his latest walk. She recognized him from our Facebook page, which basically means **French Fry** is famous, right? We hope she sees her photo with him here! Thank you for saying hi! **French Fry** is available for adoption, and you can come in and meet him today until 5pm!



Like · Comment · Share

and 699 others · Top Comments

75 shares

Write a comment...

That's ME and French Fry!!!! 🤗🤗🤗
Like · Reply · 20 · December 31, 2015 at 2:50pm

Fairfax County Animal Shelter Yay!!! Glad you saw this, and thanks again for giving French Fry some love!
Like · Reply · 1 · January 1, 2016 at 11:56pm

I'm glad and extremely BLESSED that I was able to meet such an amazing, fuzzy faced sweetheart 🤗🤗 I got so excited when I noticed him, I forgot that I still had deliveries to make. Lol
Like · Reply · January 2, 2016 at 12:55am

How it Works

Fairfax County Animal Shelter added 7 new photos.
May 12, 2015 · 🌐

Deaf dog and best dog in the world Ghost is still looking for her forever home. Ghost came to us from our friends at Prince George's County, where there is a ban on and to go for walks with incredible dog shouldn't



Fairfax County Animal Shelter added 3 new photos.
August 9, 2015 · 🌐

Ghost is perfecting her soccer skills AND learning American Sign Language while she is in a foster home. She can't wait to impress her new family with her skills. If you would like to meet Ghost and get a demo of her amazing skills, email animalshelter@fairfaxcounty.gov

Fairfax County Animal Shelter
May 27, 2015 · 🌐

Meet Ghost, one of our dogs transferred for years old and is tons of fun. She's proof Deaf

6.8K Views

Like Comment Share

You, [@fairfaxcounty](#), [@fairfaxcounty](#) and 365 others

60 shares

Write a comment...

[@fairfaxcounty](#) Ghost is very smart, and with co really sweet pup!!!!
Like · Reply · May 27, 2015 at 9:58pm

[@fairfaxcounty](#) She is so amazing!!!!!!
Like · Reply · May 27, 2015 at 12:46pm

Red arrows point to the comments and the soccer field photo.

Fairfax County Animal Shelter
August 18, 2015 · 🌐

Guess who just got adopted??!! GHOST! Yes, this girl finally found her forever home! Ghost has been with one of our foster families for the past few weeks learning sign language, and her new family got all caught up to speed so they can continue learning to communicate with her! We're so happy for Ghost and her new family, and she looks pretty excited too!



Like Comment Share

[@fairfaxcounty](#), [@fairfaxcounty](#) and 1.9K others

Top Comments

39 shares

[@fairfaxcounty](#) Thank you everyone!!! Ghost, now Lacy, had an awesome day getting to know her puppy brothers and exploring the neighborhood. We are so happy to have her as a part of our family and look forward to everything she has to teach us!
Like · Reply · August 18, 2015 at 9:48pm

Ghost, a young, energetic dog the shelter transferred in from another county with breed-specific legislation in place, had a very hard time in the shelter. She was also deaf. Her high energy level combined with not being able to communicate with her made it hard for volunteers to work with her.

At many shelters, a dog like Ghost could have waited for years for an adopter, or been euthanized when kennel stress made it nearly impossible to work with her in the shelter. Instead, the shelter marketed her heavily. Her adoptive mom had followed her from the beginning, developing an emotional connection with her and leading to her adoption!



Volunteer- and Foster- Driven Marketing

Writing the biographies and finding the right photo can be time-consuming for shelter staff. Foster families can reduce this burden by supplying the shelter with ready-made marketing material.

To do this, you need foster families to commit to creating marketing material (photos, videos, write-ups on outings the dog has been on, etc.) at least every 7-10 days. With this marketing material, you create a story about their life in foster care. Every post is a new chapter. People following your page get to know the dog over weeks or months, creating an emotional attachment both to the dog and to your shelter. We know of many cases where a long-stay dog was adopted by someone who had been following their story for weeks or months.

This works perfectly with a volunteer & foster social media group, because volunteers often love to get updates on what the dog has been up to and how it's doing. The shelter can often pull photos, get ideas and even quote the foster directly straight from the material posted on the page.

The more original and professional the content, the better it works. However, fosters don't need to be professional photographers or expert writers to be successful at creating marketing material. There are lots of easy things they can do to provide material, such as taking the dog on a short trip to the park, providing photos and a short write-up, take a video of the dog doing training exercises, etc. Of course, if they'd like to ask a volunteer photographer to take professional photos of the dog, that works too!

Teach families how to do write about their foster pets, improve their photographs and find new ways to market them. Better yet, *let them teach one another!* Utilize other volunteers to help teach workshops on everything from creating memes to taking selfies to writing biographies.

Volunteer & Foster Social Media Group

These types of groups are generally open to volunteers, fosters, & staff members. There are several ways this group can be used:

- Encourage fosters and volunteers to take candid, cute photos and videos of shelter pets. Use these, along with stories and observations, to construct posts for the shelter's external Facebook and other social media pages.
- Posting non-urgent medical or behavioral questions about foster pets. If they ask the group, they're likely to get immediate responses.
- Sharing happy stories or informative articles. There are so many great resources out there!
- Need help filling a volunteer shift? Post a message!
- Your volunteers and fosters can get to know one another, creating a sense of community and making it easier to locate substitute foster care.

What's great about these types of groups is that fosters and volunteers can see what one another are doing with their fosters, and often end up giving one another great ideas for marketing. Additionally, the group's support is often very rewarding to fosters, making it more likely that they'll consistently send in great marketing material.

Innovative Animal Shelter Volunte...
 Closed Group Join Group

Join this group to see the discussion, post and comment. + Join Group

Members (341) See All

Admins

MEMBERS 341 Members

DESCRIPTION
 This group is open to IAS fosters, staff and volunteers. The purpose of the group is to facilitate communication between shelter staff, volunteers, and foster families. It can be used to ask and answer questions, share animals in need of foster, arrange transport of animals, make announcements, and share ideas.

IAS fosters and volunteers should check in regularly with this Facebook. Anyone in the group may post comments on the page. Comments that are deemed inappropriate or offensive may be removed by the administrator at the administrator's discretion.

Sample Guidelines:

There are certain things you may not want posted on the Facebook group page, as they may be better addressed with an appropriate staff person. Two of these are:

- Concerns or complaints about a staff member, another volunteer or an issue at the shelter.
- Complaints, suggestions or concerns about shelter policies and procedures.

Sample Group Rules:

- All group members are expected to conduct themselves with respect and compassion towards everyone else on the page.
- Inflammatory or aggressive comments, which can lead to misunderstandings, misinformation and hurt feelings, should be avoided.
- The shelter reserves the right to moderate comments and posts.
- Posts may be removed from the page at any time. The author of the removed post will receive an e-mail or message from the moderator, explaining why their post or comment was removed.
- People may be removed from the group temporarily or permanently if they repeatedly post inappropriate content.

Volunteer-and Foster-Driven Marketing: The Next Level

Want to take your marketing to the next level? Here are a few great ideas that will help get your long-stay dogs out the door!

Volunteer- and Foster-Created Social Media Pages

Volunteer- and Foster-Created Social Media Pages require little to no work from shelter staff, other than perhaps setting some ground rules on the use of photos posted to the social media group. The pages can be created and maintained by volunteers, and can showcase a particular niche within your shelter. NoVa Cats and Hard Luck Hounds are two examples of these types of pages. Foster families can also create their own social media pages, on which to showcase their current fosters.

Social media pages created and maintained by volunteers can be immensely helpful in getting animals adopted and require very little effort by shelter staff. These social media pages can focus on adoptable animals from your whole shelter or certain types of animals within it, your entire community, a particular family's foster pets or even a particular dog.

Advantages to this are that the pets posted on these pages will be seen by a wider audience and that more people will become familiar with your shelter. A discussion of ground rules may be helpful first to ensure that the volunteer/foster understands what content and photos it is ok to post.

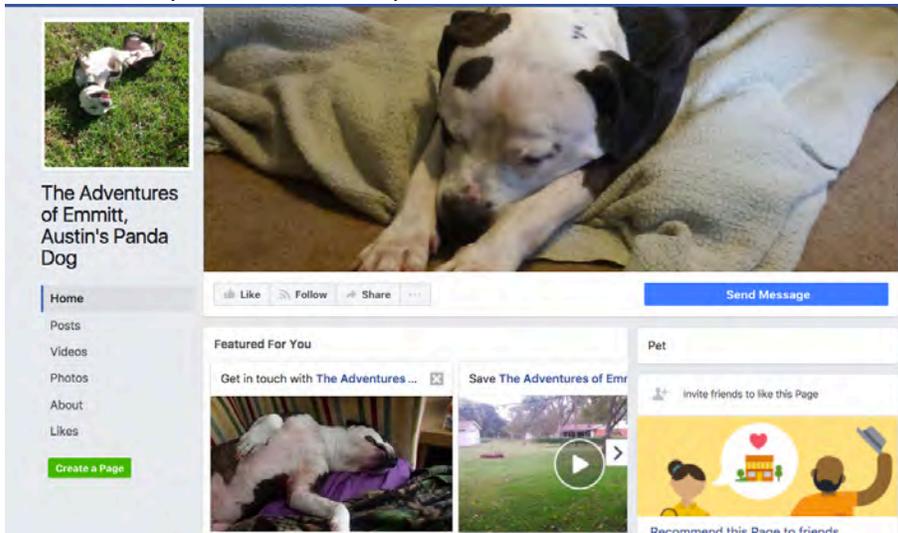


Figure 1. Foster-created Facebook page focused on a single dog



Figure 2. Volunteer-created Facebook page focused on a specific group of shelter dogs

The Shelter Pet Project

The Shelter Pet Project is a free resource that can put a long-stay pet in front of a much wider, national audience. Anyone can submit a pet to be featured. Here's how it works:

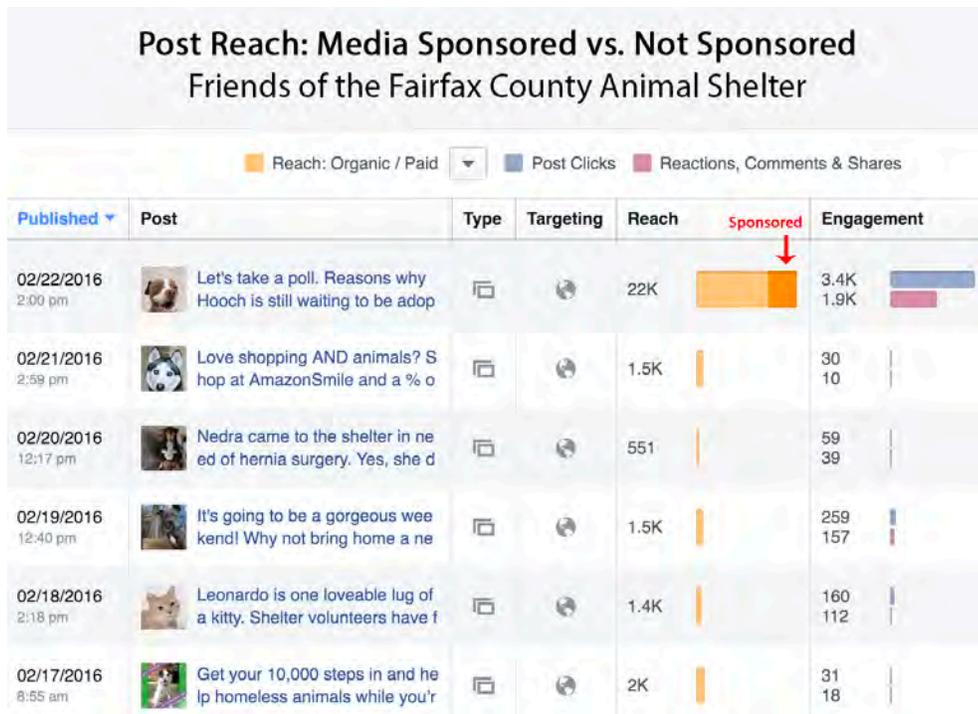
1. Find:
 - The animal's Petfinder url
 - The animal's biography (make sure to use the exact one the shelter is using)
 - The email address interested parties can write to at the shelter
2. Email this information to contact@theshelterpetproject.org
3. When you receive a reply, make sure the shelter knows. Post a message in your Volunteers & Fosters Facebook group with the date and time the pet will be posted. This way, other volunteers will know ahead of time and will be able to help promote the post and answer additional questions about the pet.

Media Sponsorships

Media sponsorships are one of the most effective ways to find homes for long-stay and special needs pets. A media sponsorship is a donation that is specifically used to “boost” a post on social media to a targeted, local audience. This puts the post in front of thousands of new people who would not otherwise have seen the pet. A bonus is the dozens of new likes your own page will generate when a post is boosted.

Case Study: Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter

The Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter piloted the first media sponsorship program. Media sponsorships cost \$25. In 2016, their posts regularly were seen by between 1,000-2,000 people. Media sponsored posts received between 12,000-30,000+ views.



Their Facebook page receives between 25-50 new likes for each media sponsored post, increasing the chances that animals posted in the future will be seen by a wider audience.

The Effect of Media Sponsorships on Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter's Facebook Page Likes

Total Page Likes as of Today: 5,494



Notable adoptions that occurred as a direct result of media sponsored posts are a long-stay dog from the shelter's behavioral foster program, a 15-year-old deaf, black cat (total length of stay = 3 days!) and a long-stay senior kitty.

NOVA Pets Alive- Sending Them Home

Another new resource is [NOVA Pets Alive-Sending Them Home](#). The page posts mostly adoptable pets from the East Coast, but they will post animals anywhere in the country for free (all you need to do is message a link to the pet's Petfinder page to them). In addition, media sponsorships can be donated for animals anywhere in the country. The sponsorships target the animal's current location and can further tailor the audience to the pet. Though the page is relatively new, dozens of adoptions have occurred as a direct result of its posts, notably a long-stay pit-bull type dog who had mange.



Appendix A: Resources

Marketing shelter pets

Kennel 'Report Cards' help dogs get adopted

<https://animalfarmfoundation.wordpress.com/2016/11/29/kennel-report-cards-help-shelter-dogs-graduate-to-new-homes/>

Marketing rules to increase adoptions

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/awesome>

Marketing best practices from Animal Farm Foundation

<http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/files/Marketing-Advertising-E-Book.pdf>

Using memes to market shelter pets

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/i-can-haz-adopter>

How one shelter had people line up at 4 a.m. to adopt pit bull puppies

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/15/lining-up-to-adopt-puppies_n_7571390.html

You Might be Overlooking the Easiest Way to Help Your Shelter's Long Term Stay Dogs

<https://animalfarmfoundation.wordpress.com/2016/10/25/you-might-be-overlooking-the-easiest-way-to-help-your-shelters-long-term-stay-dogs/>

Marketing, PR and Social Media

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/topic-marketing-pr-and-social-media-social-media.htm>

Social Media: Six New Things

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/social-media-six-new-things.htm?p=0EECED7D-7E3F-4ECB-A2D8-CD9099F21539>

Photography, Videography and Writing

Better Photos and Profiles for Long-Stay Shelter Dogs

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2016/04/long-stay/>

How to Take Great Pet Adoption Photos with a Smartphone

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2015/03/how-to-take-great-pet-adoption-photos-with-a-smartphone/>

Volunteer-driven marketing

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/06/pit-bulls-fairfax-county-animal-shelter_n_4548926.html

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2014/dec/17/oakton-resident-helps-older-cats-find-forever-home/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/these-shelter-pets-are-going-back-to-school-with-worlds-cutest-adoption-pics_us_5601b34be4b00310edf8f02c

Boosting your marketing efforts

The Shelter Pet Project: submit adoptable animals, free of charge

<https://www.facebook.com/ShelterPetProject/?fref=ts>

Media sponsorships to boost social media posts

<https://www.facebook.com/novapetsaliveSTH/?fref=ts>