

Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care

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Making Fostering a Community Value

One of the most important things you can do to create a community culture that values fostering is to bring foster care into the conversation as much as possible in your organization's marketing. If you want foster care to become the norm in your community, you need to make it a part of your community's vocabulary first. Work a photo, a story or even just the word 'foster' into at least 20% of your social media posts—ideally, 30% or more. Make sure your community knows that when it comes to saving lives, fostering is just as important as adoption.

Here are some examples of ways your organization can bring foster care into the conversation on social media:

Posting photos and videos taken in foster homes



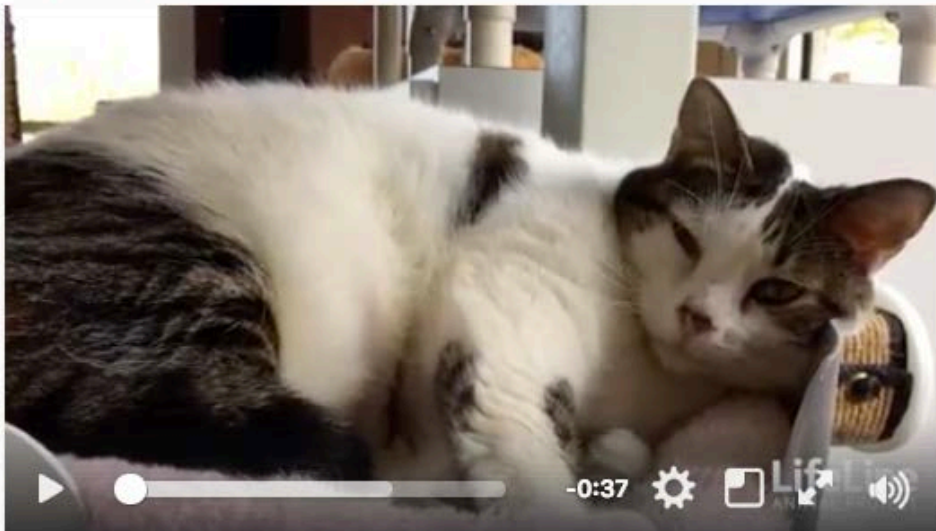
LifeLine Animal Project

January 20 at 9:00am · 🌐

...

There's nothing better than making biscuits on Saturday morning ❤️

Nami is loving life in her foster home, but dreaming of her forever. Email adoptions@lifelineanimal.org for more information!





kcpetproject • Following

kcpetproject What a great night to be snuggled up inside next to a dog. Bruno is enjoying his time in his foster home, watching YouTube videos and cuddling with the kids in the home. If you're interested in meeting Bruno, email us at Fostering@kcmo.org.

littleledfoot ❤️❤️❤️

mckinneykiersten That is the cutest dog ever

baylordd @momtonoah I thought this



682 likes

JANUARY 7

Add a comment...

...



Fulton County Animal Services

January 17 at 4:15pm · 🌐

...

Rico isn't a fan of the cold.
#Fostered #Adoptme



Telling the stories of pets in foster care



Fredericksburg Regional SPCA

January 24 at 2:00pm · 🌐

...

Molly came to us as a transfer from another shelter to give her the love and support she needed to flourish. It turns out what Molly really needed was a home! She became so stressed and shut down in the shelter that we knew she needed extra attention and care. She became the first candidate for our FREDSPCA S.W.A.T program (Saving With Animal Training) and has since become a completely different dog! She is in foster care with another confident dog to show her the ropes. Here she is playing up a storm with the foster family dog, wagging her happy tail and doing play bows! We would love for Molly to be adopted straight from foster care to make her transition to a forever family successful! If you are interested in becoming a member of our foster FSPCA S.W.A.T team, or would like to meet Molly, please email foster@fredspca.org



NOVA Pets Alive added 4 new photos.

January 12 · 🌐

...

When a large amount of dogs entered a rural Virginia shelter from a hoarding situation earlier this week, we knew we needed to help. The dogs had lived outside their entire lives, many on chains. Those who were able would huddle together for warmth at night. To his credit, their owner willingly surrendered the dogs to the shelter where they could begin new lives.

This morning, we set off on a road trip to rescue Cassie, a gorgeous girl. Though the hairless spot on her neck tells the story of the chain she lived on, she's outgoing, playful, and friendly with other dogs.

While we were there, we spotted Henry, another dog from the same home. Huddled at the back of the kennel shaking with fear, he was too scared to even take a treat from our hands. We looked at one another and decided on the spot: we absolutely could not leave him behind.

Earlier this afternoon, Cassie and Henry stepped foot inside a home for the very first time. After a lengthy romp in the yard, Cassie laid down in her very first dog bed. These two are getting braver by the minute, and we couldn't be more excited to introduce them to you!

As a 100% foster based organization, we can only help dogs like Cassie and Henry if we have foster homes to place them in. And we have many different foster opportunities available to fit just about any lifestyle!

If you want to foster Cassie or Henry, or other pets just like them, apply now!

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_.../s/yQ2jzS5BLelOPXTCu28xng...



The foster care montage



LifeLine Animal Project added 7 new photos.

January 19 at 11:25am · 🌐

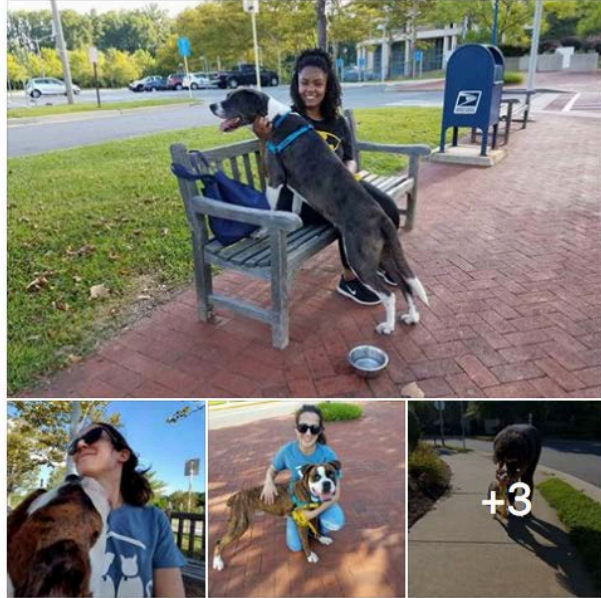
Happy #FosterFriday! Our foster pets had a blast during their snow (ahem snuggling) days this week. Click on a photo below to learn more about them!



Fairfax County Animal Shelter added 6 new photos.

August 5, 2017 · 🌐

Volunteers make a world of difference, and we saw that first-hand this morning! Two of our volunteers, Kendra and Heather, spent their morning walking dogs offsite in this beautiful weather. They did two 'mini Power Hours,' with two dogs each time. First up was Loki and Princess Ariel of Atlantica, then Ms. Klump and Mrs. Joy Butterworth. The dogs came back from their walks relaxed and tired, and ready to meet potential adopters! Here's what Kendra and Heather said about each... [See More](#)



Short-term foster recap



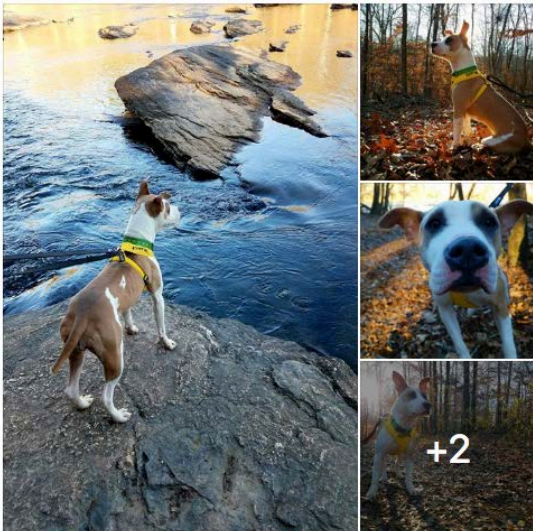
DeKalb County Animal Services added 5 new photos.

January 9 at 12:00pm · 🌐

Jane had a blast exploring the Chattahoochee with volunteers!

"Miss Jane went to the Chattahoochee for her day out! She went for a hike along the riverside and got to watch geese. She walked along the trail and enjoyed the view of the winter leaves. This sweet girl was well behaved and even made friends with the park ranger. I hope Jane finds a forever adventurer to take her to new and exciting places to explore!"

Adopt Jane at LifeLine's DeKalb Animal Services!



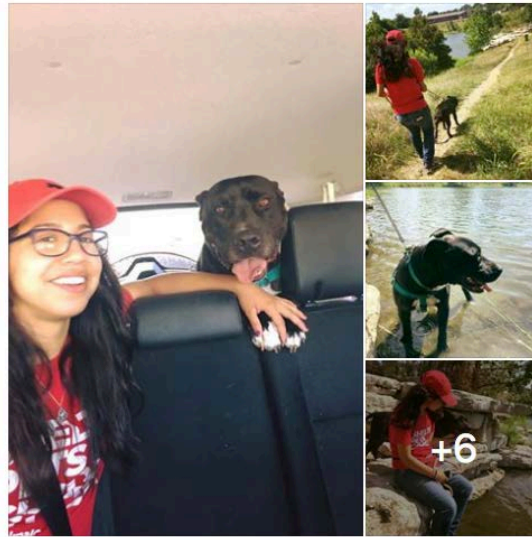


Austin Animal Center added 9 new photos.

July 10, 2017 · 🌐

If you don't know Papa Chino, you are missing out! Everyone who meets him can't help but love him. He's a big boy with the cutest little feet and little teefers. He smiles, too! Especially when he presents his belly to rub!

Volunteers took Papa Chino for a day on the town and they said, "Papa loves to ride in the car...he jumped right in and off we went to Mueller. We took him down to the water but we know from previous field trips this handsome boy only likes to dip those little paws of his. We went on a nice walk where he got lots of sniffs in...you could tell he was just so happy to be out of the shelter! We then went to PetSmart where he was very well-behaved...even though there are lots of treats and toys at Papa level, he politely sniffed and didn't put anything in his mouth. We got some squeaky toys for him and some of his friends and then headed back to the shelter. Upon our return, Papa did not want to get out of the car. He has done this before...he knows he's back at the shelter, and as one of our longest stay dogs, he is growing weary of living at the shelter. We tried to make things more pleasant for him back in his kennel with a cheeseburger and fries, which he gently took from us. Papa Chino, we know your family is out there. The most perfect people for you who are going to be so lucky to be able to call you their own. ❤️❤️❤️"



Working foster care into all kinds of posts



LifeLine Animal Project added 4 new photos.

January 16 at 5:00pm · 🌐

Posh spent the last few weeks decompressing from the shelter in a wonderful foster home. This time in a family home environment helped her find her perfect match! Over the weekend, Posh left the shelter life behind for good with her new forever home ❤️

Fostering saves lives >>> LifeLineAnimal.org/foster





Fulton County Animal Services

Yesterday at 12:25pm · 🌐

With the support of our adopters, amazing foster homes and rescue partners we are able to help dogs like Chester.

Learn what you can do to help at Fultonanimalservices.com



Mentioning foster care alongside adoption

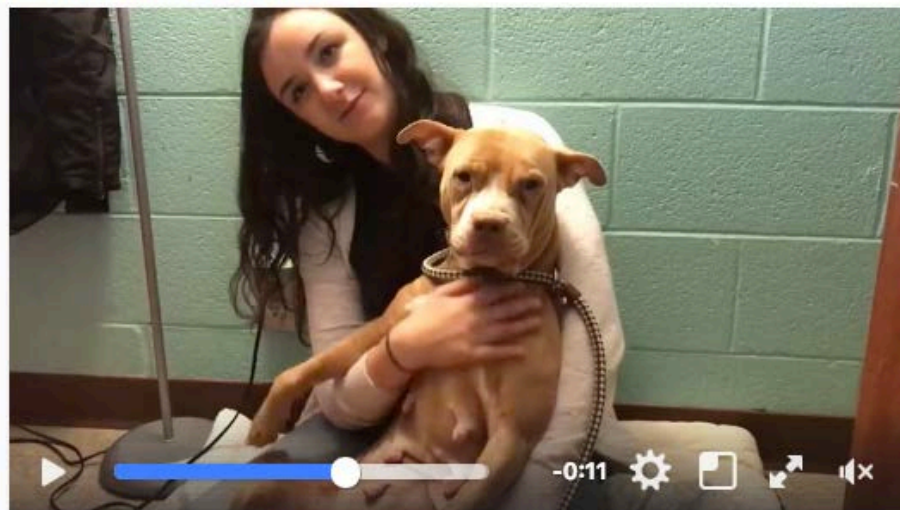


Fulton County Animal Services

January 20 at 8:02pm · 🌐

Lexis lost her dad and her home several weeks ago and she is one sad pup. We try to give this sweet girl that little extra attention that she needs, but nothing compares to a loving foster or forever home.

Fultonanimalservices.com



Foster pleas



kcpetproject • Follow

kcpetproject Foster dog Diamond is ready to brave the cold temperatures in her new booties and warm coat. It's freezing out and we're thankful to our foster community for providing a warm home for our dogs as they wait to find new families. Our shelter is filling up fast with these cold temps, and we need fosters to help us care for these cuties. Email Fostering@kcmo.org if you would like to take one of our dogs into your home or if you'd like to meet Diamond.



674 likes

DECEMBER 29, 2017

We love how LMAS used information learned from field trip fosters to help them find a longer-term foster here:



Louisville Metro Animal Services added 7 new photos.

May 16, 2017 · 🌐

FOSTER NEEDED!

Will you please welcome this house-trained boy into your home until he finds an adopter? This will not only free-up space in the shelter, but it will give him a much-needed break from stressful shelter life.

Two-year-old Kevin Hart is a volunteer favorite! He has raving reviews from field-trip fosters. Check out what everyone's saying about him:

-Would you take Kevin Hart out again? Why or why not?

"Yes! He was so good and fun and easy going. He loves attention and is so handsome, he received lots of it."

-How did Kevin Hart react to strangers?

"He never met a stranger, and by that, he acted as though he was friends with everyone."

-How did Kevin Hart react to children?

"He only met one child, but he did great with her."

-How did Kevin Hart react to other dogs (in view)?

"He was interested, but not overly so. We did have one accidental encounter at Feeder's, a dog darted out from around the corner to greet him and he did great. Just wagged his tail and allowed me to redirect him."

-Any other observations about Kevin Hart's behavior around other people and animals?

"He rode well in the car. Tolerated a bath. Enjoyed walking in the park."

Please give Kevin Hart a chance! Get started today, and email the LMAS foster coordinator at Stephanie.Jackson@louisvilleky.gov

THANK YOU for your COMPASSION!

#FosterMeLouisville

#SaveAShelterPet

#FosterLMAS



Conveying the urgent need for a foster caregiver in a positive way

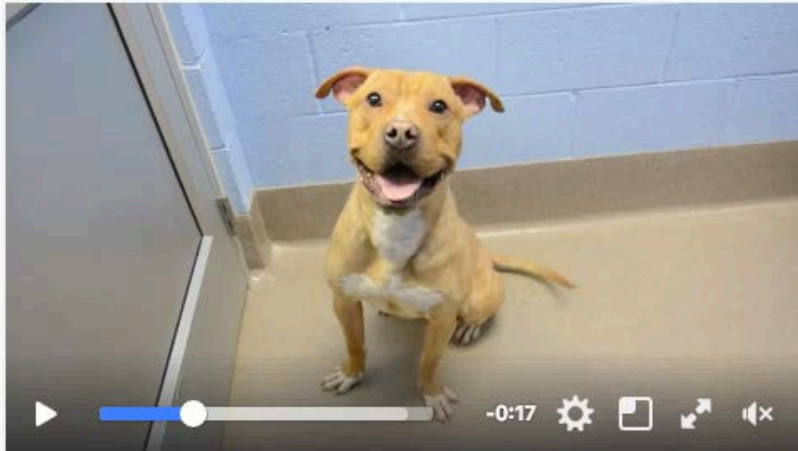


DeKalb County Animal Services

January 10 at 8:00pm · 🌐

Alfalfa can't wait to win you over with his zest for life and adorable smile! This happy one-year-old dude would love to be your right-hand man wherever you go. Alfalfa has been hanging out at the shelter for a while now and is really over kennel life. He is in urgent need of an adopter, foster or rescue group. Can you help Alfalfa? Meet him at LifeLine's DeKalb Animal Services!

DeKalbAnimalServices.com



DeKalb County Animal Services

January 7 at 8:00pm · 🌐

This is Anna's before. Can you help her reach her after? She came to us missing nearly all her hair and is on the road to recovery, but would much rather heal in a comfy foster home than the shelter. Can you foster this sweet puppy while she heals? Email foster@dekalbanimalservices.com for more information.

DeKalbAnimalServices.com



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.
- Sometimes I waste an hour on Facebook when I should be working, but I am

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.

####

Removing Stop Signs: Fine-Tuning Your Marketing

When we talk about removing stop signs from marketing, the first question we're usually asked is, "Doesn't that mean you'll bring in a whole bunch of interested people who aren't the right match for the dog?"

The short answer is yes. However, having more people contact your organization, even if it's initially about a dog that may not be ideal for them, is a great way to open the door to introducing other pets that are a good fit. We've also found that there's a lot you can do to fine-tune your adoption marketing in order to find the right adoption candidate.

Consider the story of Sweet Jane. Her fosters worked hard at marketing her; while they believed her ideal placement was with older or no children, this stop sign was not included in the marketing. Several months later, they began to get frustrated because it seemed as though the only families inquiring about her were ones with small children. They looked back at their marketing to see if they could identify a problem:



The problem is pretty obvious, no? Sweet Jane was very attached to their 20-year-old daughter, Annie. They'd used many adorable pictures of the two together in their marketing. The thing was, Annie looked much younger than 20, which meant that they were accidentally marketing her to families with children.

While they were certainly not going to scrap any photographs that would be good marketing material, they began to make a concerted effort to market Sweet Jane to adults. This time, the results paid off!



And what of the families with children who inquired about Sweet Jane? This was the perfect opportunity to show them the shelter's great customer service and get some exposure for other dogs in the shelter's care who might be a better fit for them. This need not be time-consuming for fosters. In Sweet Jane's case, her fosters identified several dogs in the shelter who were known to be good with children and then crafted an email template that they sent to potential adopters who had kids:

Hi John,

It's very nice to meet you! My husband and I are fostering Sweet Jane, and we heard that you had inquired about her. While she is an awesome dog, we'd love to see her placed in a home with older or no children. However, the shelter does have several amazing dogs that are good with kids! Rick has lived with kids before and is a really nice dog. I took him to an event a

few weekends ago and he loved meeting all of the people and other dogs. Here's a link to his online profile: <http://www.petango.com/Adopt/Dog-Terrier-American-Staffordshire-23694671>. Also, [Maia](#) has been with kids while she was in foster care with her puppies; she did very well with them.

Keep your eye on the shelter's Facebook page--- fosters take some of the dogs on weekends, and the shelter is able to learn much more about them during this time. They usually post photos and information about weekend foster dogs on Sundays and Mondays.

Thanks!
Lee

Removing Stop Signs: Adoption Counseling


Another thing we're often asked is, if we don't do adoption counseling in our marketing, when will it be done? Are we lying to people?

Absolutely not. This strategy is just for marketing; complete transparency about pets' history and behavior with fosters and adopters is critical.


The great thing about marketing shelter pets from foster care is that there are now two possible levels of adoption counseling: the foster and the shelter's actual adoption counselor. If fosters have access to a dog's history and in-shelter notes, they can do the counseling themselves without sending the dog back to the shelter. If not, the foster can show and tell the adopter everything they know about the dog, and the adoption counselor will go over the dog's complete history and notes at the shelter.


Traditional Marketing

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


**Long Stay SPCA**
February 18 at 8:30am · 🌐


We just can't understand why Ghost # 724809 yet! We know there are homes out there with n kids out there! Do you love to play fetch? Come bring a tennis ball!




**Long Stay SPCA**
April 23 at 4:10pm · 🌐

Ghost # 724809 is still looking for a home needs a home with NO DOGS and NO CHI



**Long Stay SPCA**
July 5 at 1:00pm · 🌐

Ghost # 724809 has been at the Long Stay SPCA for 6 months now and is still looking for a family! She is 1 year old and deaf, so she needs an adopter who will work with her on training. Her previous adopter told us she didn't get along with their dogs, so she needs a family with NO OTHER DOGS! She has a ton of energy, so she also needs a family with NO KIDS! Ghost loves to play fetch!



Why doesn't this work?

- The same photograph is used multiple times
 - Your supporters are less likely to share the same picture twice.
- Photo quality issues
 - Though Ghost looks 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
 - May imply, "This dog is just a number to us."
 - Discourages emotional connection

Lifesaving Marketing

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



One might think that since a dog in foster care is "safe," one doesn'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. In this manual, we'll give you the marketing tools you need in order to do this.

Compared to traditional marketing, lifesaving marketing is more inclusive, more dynamic and easier on shelter staff! Take a look at some of the differences between the two:

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.• All posts created by shelter staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoughtful rule-breaking<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 4-5 posts a day? Sure, if you have great content!• Highlighting a specific pet's adorable quirk, a scene or story about their day, or an interaction with other dogs or people• Biographies are also used, but not exclusively• Leave the adoption counseling to the pet's foster and your adoption counselors• Community-creating language: <i>you, us, we</i>• Use only posts relevant to your agency• Shelter relies heavily on Volunteer- and Foster-Driven Marketing for innovative content

When you're marketing a pet for adoption, your ultimate goal is to find an adopter. While you're in the process, your secondary goal should be to make the pet a local celebrity. There are several reasons for this. First, when a pet becomes a household name, it's more likely that their family will find them via word of mouth. Second, it gets people talking about your shelter and the plight of long-stay pets in general.

With any adoptable pet marketing, your most basic goal is to create an emotional connection between your supporters and the featured pet. Emotional connections are what drive us to act (sharing a post, advocating for a pet, adopting, etc.).

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.

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

👍 Alyssa Williams, Shanon Orlop and 699 others

75 shares

Write a comment...

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

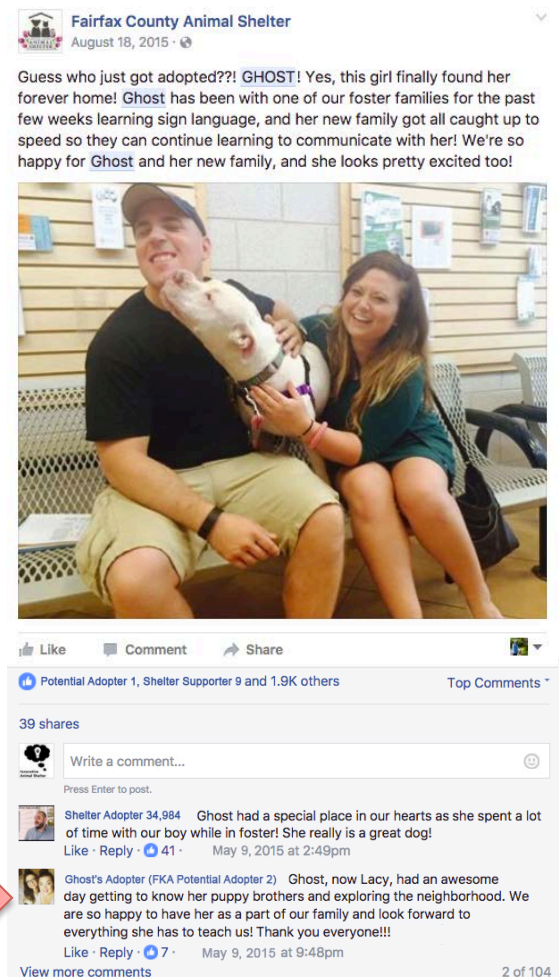
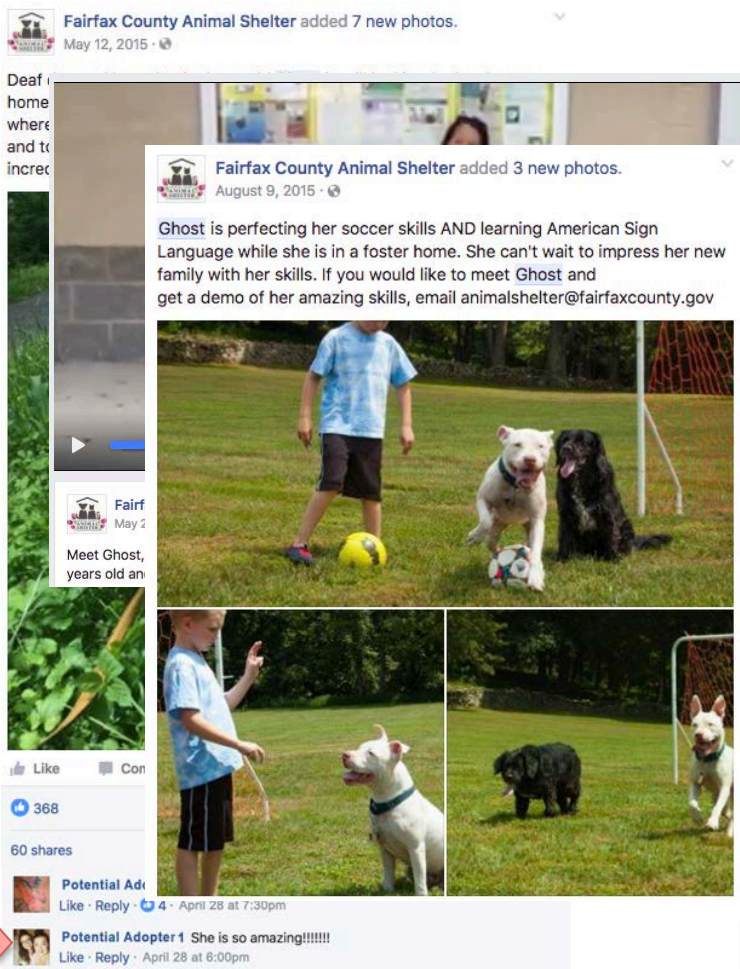
Fairfax County Animal Shelter Yay!!! Glad you saw this, and thanks again for giving French Fry some love!
Like · Reply · 1 · January 1, 2016 at 11:56pm

Shanon Orlop 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

Ghost, a young, energetic dog that the Fairfax County Animal Shelter transferred in from another county, 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 put her into foster care to lower her stress and marketed her heavily, utilizing content created by volunteers and fosters. Her adoptive mom followed her from Day 1, developing an emotional connection with her along the way, leading to her adoption!



Volunteer- and Foster- Driven Marketing

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

To do this, foster families need to commit to creating marketing material (photos, videos, write-ups on outings the dog has been on, etc.) at least every 7-10 days. When this material is posted regularly on social media, it creates 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 pet was adopted by someone who had been following their story from the very beginning.

This type of marketing works perfectly with a volunteer & foster social media group, because volunteers love to get updates on what pets have been up to in foster and how they're doing. The shelter can pull marketing material, get ideas and even quote the foster directly straight from what's been 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 create 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 even better!

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.

Marketing: Things to Consider Featuring

- The pet's behavior in the home
- Skills learned
- Cute quirks or stories
- Great photos, videos and writing

Other things foster caregivers might want to consider are:

- What new ways does this dog reveal who he or she really is outside the shelter?
- What adorable things does this dog do?
- What situations can you put this dog in to get great photos?
 - Consider backgrounds
 - How can you get photos of this dog looking relaxed and happy?
 - How you can get this dog to look at the camera?

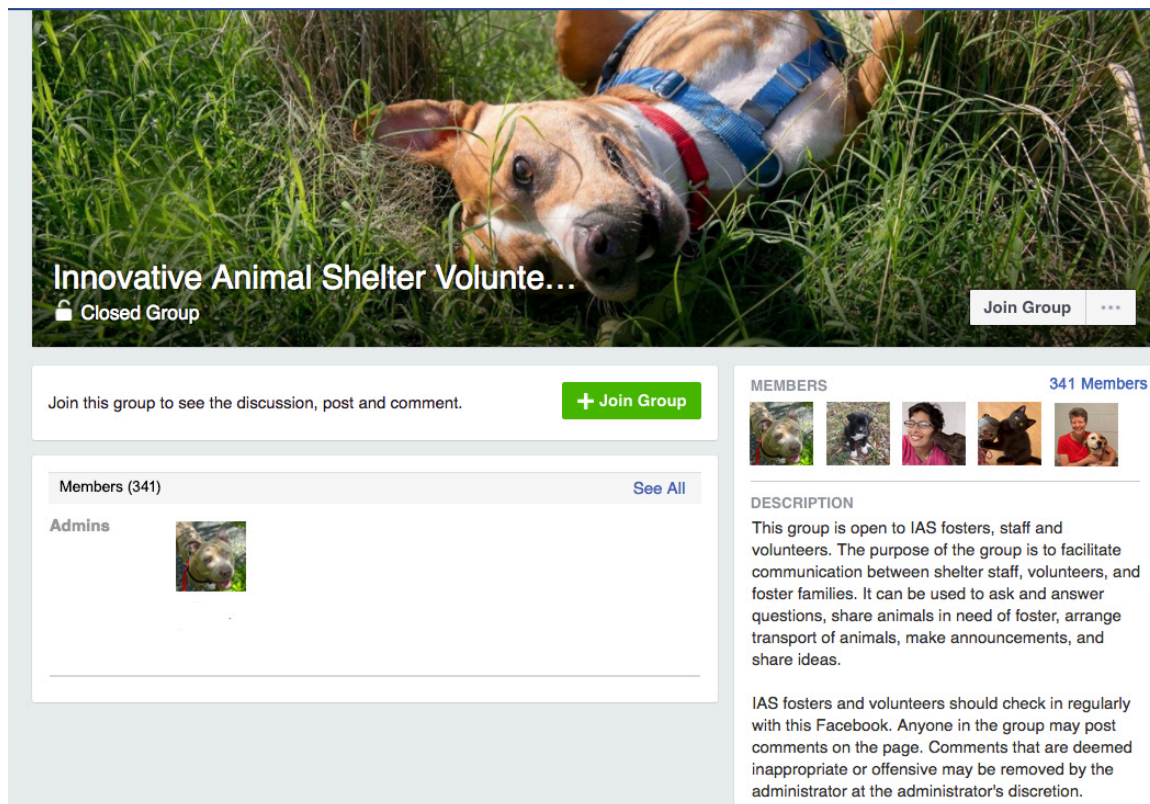
It is especially important to note any behavior that is different outside the shelter, not only for marketing purposes but to help the shelter better assess the dog's behavior.

Volunteer & Foster Social Media Group

These types of groups are generally open to volunteers, fosters, & staff members. There are many 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 positive 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.



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

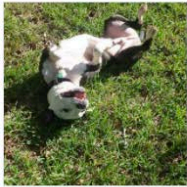
- All group members are expected to conduct themselves with respect and compassion towards everyone else on the page.
- Inflammatory or aggressive comments, which can lead to misunderstandings, misinformation and hurt feelings, should be avoided.
- The shelter reserves the right to moderate comments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

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.

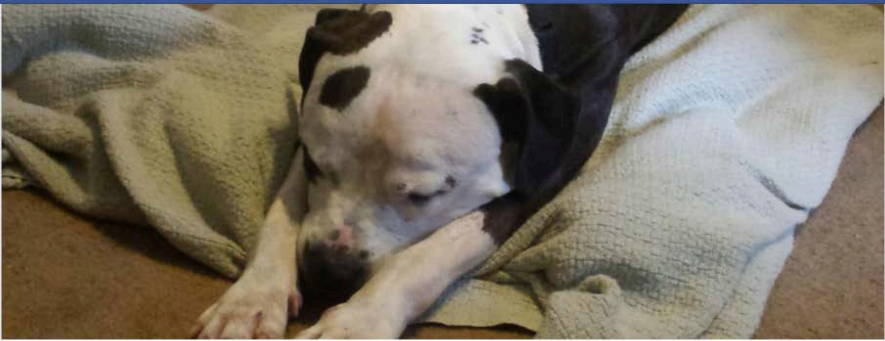
Advantages to this are that the pets posted on these pages will be seen by a wider audience and that more people will become familiar with your shelter. A discussion of ground rules may be helpful first to ensure that the volunteer/foster understands what content and photos it is ok to post.



The Adventures of Emmitt, Austin's Panda Dog

- Home
- Posts
- Videos
- Photos
- About
- Likes

[Create a Page](#)



[Like](#) [Follow](#) [Share](#) [...](#)

[Send Message](#)


Featured For You

[Get in touch with The Adventures ...](#)

[Save The Adventures of Emmitt](#)

Pet

[Invite friends to like this Page](#)



[Recommend this Page to friends](#)



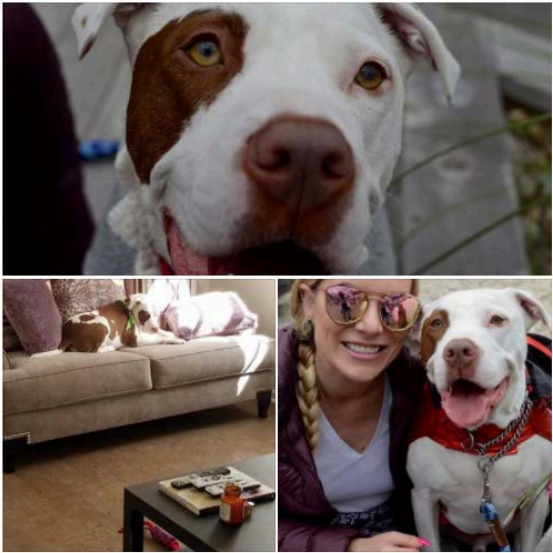
Hard Luck Hounds added 3 new photos.
March 3 at 8:57pm · 🌐

Your next best friend is here...Sweet Pete!

Staying up late at night, or going to bed early,
Watching tv on the couch, or running around the yard,
Hiking through the woods or snuggling for hours...Petey is your guy!

He's a mature, calm, quirky guy looking for the same qualities in his new best human friend.

Share Petey so we can get this guy into his forever home.



How Starting from Scratch and Thinking Outside the Shelter Can Get Long-Stay Dogs Adopted

In this guest post, Kelly Duer, Maddie's® Foster Expansion Coordinator at Austin Animal Center, shares how the Ventura County Animal Shelter is getting all of their long-stay dogs adopted. Read the post, and then try some of the creative ideas for yourself!



The Ventura County Animal Shelter was in a tight spot: The busiest time of year had barely begun, and they were already dangerously close to hitting capacity in their dog kennels. Worse, the shelter had a slew of long-stay dogs that desperately needed to get out of the shelter and into homes. What could they do?

They got creative. In addition to asking the community for help and placing as many of their pets as possible into foster care, the shelter piloted a new – and very successful – marketing program that they called the Long Stay Challenge. They started with a group of 20 dogs who had been at the shelter for the longest amount of time – a collective 6,181 days. Many had been living there for over a year.

Two months later, half of these dogs were settling into their new forever homes, efforts to market those who remained were well underway, and many other stressed-out dogs who were marketed had also been adopted or rescued. Here's how they did it:

They focused on their neediest dogs. The shelter looked at their data to find the 20 dogs who had been there the longest. They created a list and asked their volunteers for help. They resolved to market these dogs heavily for a minimum of 60 days. Many other dogs who were suffering from shelter stress, no matter how long their stays, were also targeted.

Top 20 Long Stay Dogs

Name	Days in Shelter	Kennel
Mugzy	516	60
Daisy	503	42
Voltaire	477	54
Violet	385	12
Snoopy	336	45
Kuyo	331	94
Gretchan	324	97
Blue	308	1
Lellani	301	81
Rocky	285	907
Zeus	282	2
Chico	280	129
Ruby	265	30
Dalton	247	50
Zina	241	901
Chauncey	230	21
Duke	230	67
Eddie	222	24
Luci	215	908
Bayou	203	78



“It made us as volunteers continually check for dogs falling through the cracks,” said shelter volunteer Darrell Berdine.

Everyone participated in marketing the dogs for adoption. At many shelters, the organization’s Facebook page is the only way pets are marketed. This puts stress on the shelter’s staff and leaves out a huge group of people who are often more than happy to contribute: the shelter’s volunteers. Using [volunteer- and foster-driven marketing](#), the shelter was able to feature a much wider variety of photos, videos and stories about the dogs in their care.

In addition to taking the dogs on outings, volunteers worked together to create new and innovative ways to showcase the dogs. They not only shared this material with the shelter, they shared it with the community by posting on their own social media pages and creating new pages to market these pets.

They got their dogs out of the shelter. A few went to foster for a week or more, but the majority? They only went off-campus for half a day at a time: on group walks, lunch dates, visits to the beach and outings to the park. It may not seem like a lot of time, but even a few hours in foster care was enough to capture these dogs looking relaxed and happy in different settings.



The adventures of Jake added 3 new photos.
June 5 · 🌐

Yesterday Jake went on another big adventure, to downtown Ventura. With the help of other dogs being around, one of them being Kuyo (who is also up for adoption), Jake started relaxing around all the people walking around. He is making huge strides and is definitely smiling more!

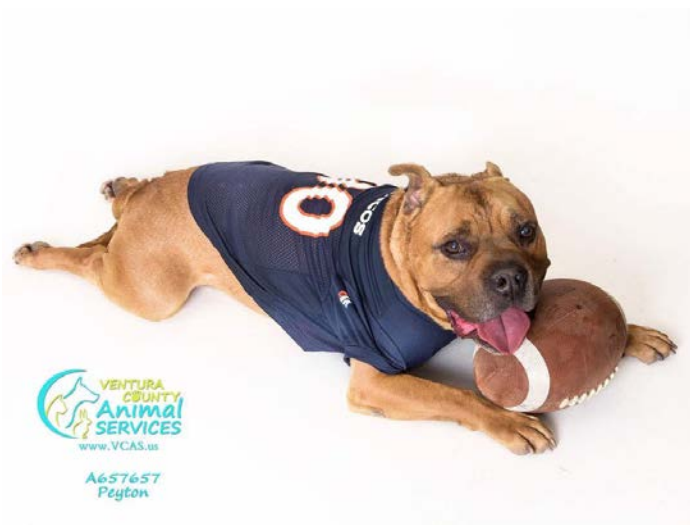
#adoptdontshop #vcas #vcasfoster #cutedoggies



In the shelter, marketing opportunities can be limited. For example, it can be difficult to get photos of pets looking relaxed when they're stressed out in a shelter setting. Adopters want to know what a pet would look like in a home, and this is not often possible to show in the shelter.

"Not only is this different marketing material than photos and assessments done in shelter, it reaches an audience that may not be following us on Facebook," said Kim Flavin, the shelter's behaviorist. "The dogs meet the people where they are. It is also a vital stress reliever for the dogs and helps gather important information about the dog's behavior in the 'real world.'"

They got creative. Volunteers and staff worked together to come up with innovative new ways to market the dogs. Photographers, fosters and other creative volunteers teamed up to generate ideas, make [videos](#), take pictures and create themed photo shoots.



They made it into a fun game. Several gift cards were donated as prizes for participants. Prizes were raffled off to day trip fosters and the first two people whose marketing led to a dog's adoption. A list of those who took dogs on outings was posted next to the long-stay list in order to keep track, and updates on winners were given in the shelter's internal social media groups.

Berdine, whose advocacy on behalf of long-stay dog Snoopy led to his adoption, was the contest's first winner. Snoopy had lived in the shelter for nearly a year, and his behavior was beginning to deteriorate. Berdine not only helped to market him, but also worked with Flavin to create and implement a plan and a training protocol.

"He blossomed very quickly with the consistent training. We took pictures and videos and marketed the heck out of him," said Berdine. "The more I took him offsite the better he got with his manners. I think a lot of his issues were kennel stress. He turned out to be one of my all-time favorites."

That gift card he won? Berdine spent it on enrichment items for his new favorite long-stay dog, Bayou!



"I think the most important part of this project was bringing attention about these dogs to everyone," said Sarah Aguilar, the shelter's foster coordinator. "Getting them known, increasing awareness, having them ready to go — all of these things contributed to the number of these dogs that have gotten adopted."

When the two-month trial period was over, the shelter reassessed. In just two months, the average length of stay for their 20 longest-stay dogs decreased from over 300 days to 235. Not only had half the shelter's longest-stay dogs been adopted or rescued, but working together to achieve this goal brought renewed vigor to the whole organization.



Building on their success, the shelter's staff developed some additional marketing tools such as the new bulletin board of long-stay dogs that is now displayed prominently in their lobby. Then they printed out a new list of long-stay dogs and started over!

####

Other Great Platforms for Marketing Pets

There are dozens of ways to market shelter pets other than Facebook. Some of the platforms that shelters and rescues are finding success with are:

- Twitter
- Instagram
- Imgur
- Reddit
- Craigslist
- Nextdoor

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.

























Post Reach: Media Sponsored vs. Not Sponsored

Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter

Reach: Organic / Paid

Post Clicks

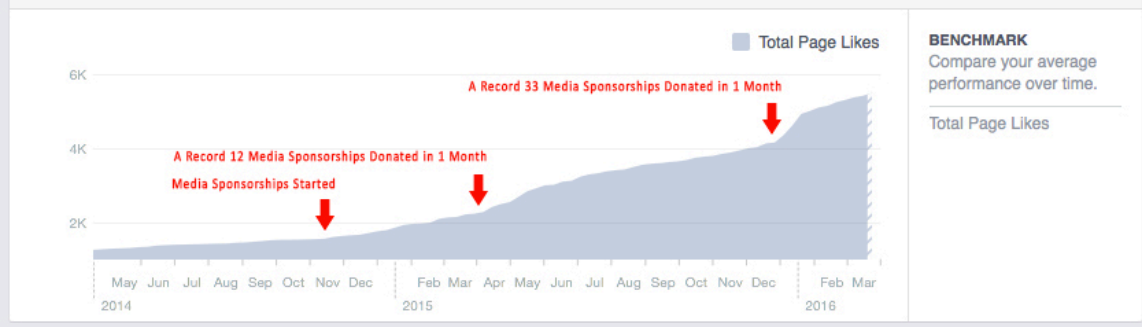
Reactions, Comments & Shares

Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Sponsored	Engagement
02/22/2016 2:00 pm	 Let's take a poll. Reasons why Hooch is still waiting to be adop			22K		3.4K 1.9K
02/21/2016 2:59 pm	 Love shopping AND animals? S hop at AmazonSmile and a % o			1.5K		30 10
02/20/2016 12:17 pm	 Nedra came to the shelter in ne ed of hernia surgery. Yes, she d			551		59 39
02/19/2016 12:40 pm	 It's going to be a gorgeous wee kend! Why not bring home a ne			1.5K		259 157
02/18/2016 2:18 pm	 Leonardo is one loveable lug of a kitty. Shelter volunteers have f			1.4K		160 112
02/17/2016 8:55 am	 Get your 10,000 steps in and he lp homeless animals while you'r			2K		31 18

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 LOS = 3 days!) and a long-stay senior kitty.

Appendix A: Resources

Marketing Shelter Pets

Marketing rules to increase adoptions

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

Using Social Media to Maximize Your Lifesaving Potential

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/using-social-media-to-maximize-your-lifesaving-potential.htm>

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/>

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, PR and Social Media

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

Don't Be Boring and Other Secrets to Finding Dogs Homes

<https://animalfarmfoundation.blog/2017/05/04/dont-be-boring-and-other-secrets-to-finding-dogs-homes/>

Social Media: Six New Things

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

2 Weeks to Adoption Tips

<http://aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspca-2WeekstoAdoption.pdf>

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>

Appendix B: Shelter Pet Marketing Checklist

Shelter Pet Marketing Checklist a.k.a Steps to Find that Forever Home!

Here is the simple checklist. Cross off each step to help your pet get closer to finding their adopter. For explanations and examples, read below!

1. Good quality, recent photo
2. Good quality video
3. Write-up a summary
4. Make a flyer
5. Post on Facebook
6. Post on Craigslist and Nextdoor.com
7. Main AAC FB page
8. Out of the box social media
9. Go out into the world/Field Trips
10. Attend adoption events
11. Word of Mouth
12. Be Creative

THE BASICS

1. Good quality, recent photo

This photo will be uploaded to our database and will show on the animal's kennel card and online profile. Headshots are usually best, but full body can work too. Photos should be taken in landscape and be cropped to 3x4 ratio for best website display. If you need help getting your photos to come out, ask for help on our Facebook page... we have a lot of volunteers who are also talented photographers! Check out [this short article](#) which offers some more photography tips.

2. Good quality videos

Videos should always be shot in landscape (wide) so hold your phone sideways when taking video. Any number of videos can be uploaded and embedded into an animal's website profile, but video links are also great for other methods of sharing. Try to make your video 1 minute or less, unless the content is *really* engaging.

3. Write-up a summary

Write a short and sweet summary that includes your animal's behavior, likes and dislikes, and the best things about them, like an author's biography at the end of a book. This summary can be the text for a social media post but it can also be added to the website profile. Leave out negative details (*Stop Signs*) such as "no other pets," "needs training," etc., as these can deter even the perfect potential adopters and are best discussed 1-on-1 during adoption counseling. Aim to create a positive emotional connection with the reader.

4. Make a flyer

You can use Word or any editor you want to create a flyer for your animal. Simple is best! One or two awesome photos plus your short and sweet summary from above. If the animal is in foster with you, include your contact info. If the animal is at the shelter, you don't have to include their kennel number because those can often change. These flyers can be hung at your office, your school, the local café, Starbucks, Half Price Books, anywhere that will let you hang a flyer! At the shelter, there is a board that shows foster dogs who are looking for adopters so share your flyer with the foster coordinator. If your flyer was made for an animal still at the shelter, you can send it to the volunteer coordinators who print and laminate it (or you can learn how to print and laminate in the volunteer office!).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Just a few notes on social media:

- When describing an animal on social media, make sure to leave out *Stop Signs* like, "working on leash skills" or "can't live with children". While these may be facts or real safety concerns, they're not the thing you want to market with and they can be a turn-off for potential adopters, despite glowing notes in the rest of the post. Read [this article](#) and then write your posts as positive marketing material, so you can do the adoption counseling later during a 1-on-1 conversation.
- The best way to get shelter pets, especially long-stays, into forever homes is to market them vigorously (at least every 7-10 days).
 - Post on each animal regularly - Think outside the 'pet bio box', and highlight a specific pet's adorable quirk, a scene or story from their day, an interaction with other dogs or people, etc.
 - Regular posting creates an emotional connection between pet and your supporters. Together, the posts tell a story, and the happy ending is the adoption!

5. Post on Facebook

You can create posts from your own FB page, regularly share your animal on internal shelter groups (so they stay at the forefront of everyone's mind), or you can create a public celebrity page for your animal. Post regularly with new photos, videos, and stories. You can boost FB posts with money so they are seen by a wider audience than just your friends. If you want to do a BIG post, ask for donations to help create a big boost. Include how to find the animal or how to ask more questions.

6. Post on Craigslist and Nextdoor

These sites are a GREAT tool to reach your neighbors. You might think Craigslist is only for scammers, but in fact many people are looking at CL to add new pets to their family! You can post lots of photos, links to videos, and more thorough write-ups. Follow the positive marketing guidelines and change your posts so that they're not the same from week to week.

7. Main AAC FB page

The shelter's Facebook page has a ton of followers, so send a great story /write-up plus photos and/or videos to the foster coordinators who can help get your pet featured on the main page.

8. Out of the box social media: Instagram, Imgur, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter, Reddit, etc.

COMMUNITY MARKETING

9. Go out into the world/Field Trips

With dogs who like riding in cars and meeting people, taking them out when you're running errands, picking up the kids, or getting coffee is a great way to give them exposure. Make sure they're wearing an Adopt-Me vest or leash. Make some business cards with the dog's name and your info written on them and hand them out to anyone who stops to say hi. If they can handle being around crowds and other dogs, head to a farmer's market or a mall. Or visit dog-friendly stores (check out [this list](#)).

10. Attend adoption events

Anytime the shelter has organized an adoption event, bring your foster dog and join the fun! Some events are offsite, and shelter dogs are transported and get adopted from there. Those events have lots of promotion and draw in people looking to adopt, so show up and show your pet off and meet potential adopters. If your dog is extremely fearful or dog reactive, events like these might not be a great place for exposure, since they won't be on their best behavior.

11. Word of Mouth

Simply telling your friends, neighbors, hairdresser, mailman, waiter, etc. about your amazing foster pet can create potential adopters. Make sure people know how to get a hold of you (your friends have your phone number or can contact you on Facebook, but strangers might want to get in touch later, so those business cards will come in handy). You can create a team of adoption advocates this way!

12. Be Creative!

There are probably plenty other ways of marketing and getting exposure that we haven't listed here. As long as it's safe for you, your pet, and could lead them to their forever home, try out other ideas! And if your ideas are successful, share them with us so we can add them to this list!

Appendix C: Best Practices for Media Sponsorships

Best Practices for Media Sponsorships

1. **When boosting a post, make sure to boost to an area close to your shelter. Consider refining the audience to those who like the type of pet you're posting.** If you're posting a cat, you could target people who like cats. If you're boosting a pit bull type dog and I want to drill deeper than just people who like dogs, I might target people who watch Dogtown or Pitbulls & Parolees, people who like Beyond Breed, Animal Farm Foundation and breed-specific rescues, etc.
2. **Let the donor know when their post will be published and ask them for their help in sharing it.** This will help post engagement, and the sponsor will be happy to be kept in the loop.
3. **Always include a thank-you to the donor at the end of the post.** If they would like to remain anonymous, you can include just their first name or ask them if there is a special person or pet they'd like to dedicate the media sponsorship to.
 - If the pet is sponsored by a business, make sure to tag the company in the thank-you.
 - Briefly explain what a media sponsorship is and why it helps
 - Consider including a link to the pet's online profile, where potential adopters can go for more information on the pet.
 - Here are some examples:

Thanks to a media sponsorship from [Cameo Kitchens, Inc.](#), we were able to boost this post to advocate for Chance's adoption. View his online profile at <http://www.petango.com/Adopt/Dog-Retriever-Labrador-31145886> or visit him at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter today!

Thanks to a media sponsorship in memory of Callie, we were able to boost this post to advocate for Subaru's adoption! View his online profile at <http://www.petango.com/Adopt/Dog-Retriever-Labrador-23347984> or visit him at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter when it opens at noon today!

Thanks to a sponsorship from Agnes R., Peepers' adoption is FREE! We were able to boost this post to advocate for her adoption thanks to a media sponsorship in honor of Scout. View her online profile at <http://www.petango.com/Adopt/Cat-Domestic-Shorthair-28275036> or visit her at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter today!


4. **Tell your supporters how they can register for a media sponsorship for another shelter pet** every once in a while at the end of a sponsored post.

Want to help us advocate for the Fairfax County Animal Shelter's pets? Visit http://www.ffcas.org/?page_id=655 to purchase a media sponsorship that will enable us to introduce a needy pet to thousands of potential adopters!


5. **Sponsorship requests for specific animals are a great way to get media sponsors for your long-stay pets and help your page to grow (which helps all the pets posted in the future!)** Every one of this type of post we did while I was with the Friends resulted in a media sponsorship for the animal.



12-year-old Ellen is ready for her time in the spotlight! She's hoping that a generous supporter will be her media sponsor this month so she can find her forever home. Media sponsorships cost only \$25, and will be used to "Boost" a Facebook post about your sponsored pet in order to increase advocacy for his or her adoption. Register here at http://www.ffcas.org/?page_id=655!


Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter
 Published by Kelly Keul Duer [?] · May 23, 2016 ·

Nova and Orion could use a boost! This bonded pair of seniors is hoping that a generous supporter will be their media sponsor this month to help them find their forever home. Media sponsorships cost only \$25, and will be used to "Boost" a Facebook post about your sponsored pet in order to increase advocacy for his or her adoption. Register at http://www.ffcas.org/?page_id=655!



2,338 people reached

Boost Post

Like Comment Share

Marti Giella, Angela Lofton Napper and 31 others
 Chronological

19 shares

- Examples of other sponsorship requests (always work in a specific animal or two!):

BE A **SUPERHERO** FOR ANIMALS!



Wanna be a shelter pet's hero? Register for our Shelter Pet Sponsorship program! There are three ways you can sponsor: Partial or full payment of an animal's adoption fee, the donation of a gift certificate for a pet-related product or service (to be given to the adopter of a sponsored cat, dog or small animal), or a "Media Sponsorship" donation of \$25, to be used to "Boost" a Facebook post about your sponsored pet in order to increase advocacy for his or her adoption. Snowball- ahem, Batman- pictured here, is hoping to find a sponsor this month. Register now at http://www.ffcas.org/?page_id=655!

Sponsor Us!



Luna, Scratchy, and bonded pair Sam and Charlie want you to know there are still a few hours left to register for this month's sponsorships! Our Shelter Pet Sponsorship program matches local businesses and individuals with shelter pets in order to increase adoptions and save lives. Our approach is based on the principle that decreasing adoption fees and increasing advocacy will help more shelter pets- especially seniors and those with special needs- find their forever homes. Register now at http://www.ffcas.org/?page_id=655!

6. **Tell stories about pets adopted via sponsorships to get the word out** (this also makes the adopter feel great!)



Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter added 4 new photos.

Published by Kelly Keul Duer [?] · June 21, 2016 ·

With the **Fairfax County Animal Shelter** filling up fast, we decided to do some **media sponsorships** for adoptable pets in hopes of helping more of them find their forever homes. We're thrilled to announce that Koko went home on Saturday, thanks to one of these posts!!!

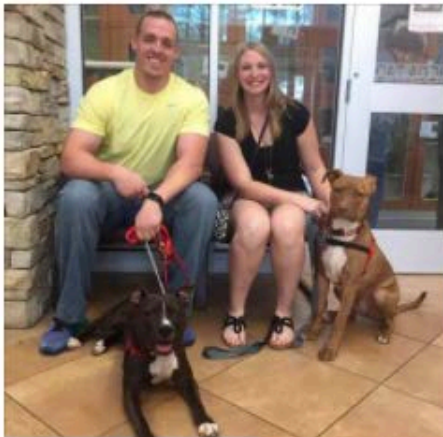
Jacob & Brandy live several hours away, but a friend shared Koko's boost and Jacob saw it. He sent it to Brandy and told her to get in contact. Brandy thought he was kidding at first because they weren't planning to add a second dog until fall, but something about Koko appealed to both of them.

Brandy chatted with Koko's foster mom, Jenny, for over an hour that day. They have an 8 mo old pup (Zeus - who looks so much like her beloved foster brother, Rocky!) and were looking for a sibling to match his playfulness. A rock star in the shelter's play groups, Koko was the perfect fit!

They met up on Saturday morning, and the rest is history! Jenny says, "Zeus and Koko played great together and I think Brandy & Jacob are going to be the best parents. I'm so happy for Koko, but Rocky and I are going to miss our Koko-tini so very much.

The moral of this story? Media boosts & sharing posts, works!"

Want to help bring a shelter pet one step closer to their forever home? Donate a media sponsorship at <http://www.fccas.org/shelter-pet-sponsorship/>



- 7. If there's a great story in the pet's background, tell it!** The emotionally engaging text in this media sponsored post made engagement skyrocket.



Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter added 4 new photos.

Published by Kelly Keul Duer [?] · March 24, 2016 · 🌐

Early one morning a few weeks ago, as Johnson sat with blistered and ulcerated paws on the shoulder of the Dulles Access Road, a taxi passed by, driven by the man who would soon save his life.

Justin noticed Johnson as he drove. It struck him as odd that a cat would be sitting there so close to the road, but he was not obviously hurt. On his way back about 30 minutes later, Justin looked for him. Johnson was still sitting there, and Justin knew something was wrong. He slammed on the brakes and ran over to him. Johnson didn't try to get away and even let him pick him up. But as Justin lifted him, he saw a little pool of blood on the pavement. He was clearly scared and probably in pain.

Since Johnson wasn't wearing a collar or tag, Justin took him to his own cats' vet, Nova Cat Clinic, to see if he had a microchip. He didn't, so he brought Johnson to the [Fairfax County Animal Shelter](#), where his healing began.

Because he already has two cats- the limit for where he lives- Justin can't adopt another, so he did something remarkable instead: he purchased a [media sponsorship](#) to help advocate for Johnson's adoption, and sponsored his adoption fee, which is now only \$25!

Johnson is feeling much better these days and is ready to find his forever home. Visit the shelter today to meet the cat that volunteers describe as "a shy guy, but gentle and sweet." Learn more about him at <http://www.petango.com/Adopt/Cat-Domestic-Shorthair-31027177>

