

## Making a Difference, One Life at a Time *The Bittersweet Joys of Fostering*

I don't consider myself a writer. But when the opportunity came for me to tell others what it was like to be a foster parent to the lost animals of Prince George's County, I felt I could manage the task. This is my story.

I joined the SPCA/Humane Society of Prince George's County about three years ago and took on my first foster—a two-month-old lab puppy—soon after. I remember thinking to myself, "This will be easy; I've already raised my own dog." Well, what a shock...I had completely forgotten what it really was all about: the little accidents on the floor, the shredded rugs, the chewed furniture. Still...I made it through.

Since that first little puppy, I have been privileged to foster many dogs (and one cat), each with his or her own something special. There was Scruffy, my little Energizer Bunny®, who just kept going and going and going; Queenie, who was adopted from us as a puppy and then returned as an adult because her people could no longer care for her; and more recently JJ, an adorable little terrier mix whose sweet, gentle nature entranced everyone who met him.

I have experienced so much while caring for these and other dogs: kennel cough and the

accompanying greenish goop that adorns my walls, adoption shows where I talk with people who have come to meet the animals in my care; applications from families or individuals looking for a special new member of the family.

Once I've received an adoption application, the real work begins. I call complete strangers—personal and veterinary references given by an individual interested in adopting my foster. If the conversations go well, I schedule a home visit. I take this process very seriously because I am the one who the animals are depending on to make sure they will find a warm place to be loved and cared for forever.

Fostering involves many emotions: heartache when you can't help an animal because someone has hurt him so badly that he can't trust again; anger when you think about the animal cruelty of which some

people are capable; frustration when you think about the number of animals you can't save; and joy when one comes along that touches you in such a way that when you place him you cry...both for losing him and for knowing that his new life is just beginning.



*Sophie*



*Priscilla*



*Prudence*

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United Way #8977

CFCNCA #7439

The SPCA/HS of Prince George's County is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to animal welfare. All activities are funded solely through contributions, dues, and special events. To learn more, visit our website at [www.pgspca.org](http://www.pgspca.org) or call 301-262-5625.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Money Well Spent

*If someone gave you \$100 for animal welfare work, how would you spend it?* You could help pay the medical costs of a sick or injured animal. You could print and distribute animal welfare literature. Or you could rescue and re-home a dog or cat. That's the real feel-good choice for an animal lover: giving a second chance to a sweet creature who might otherwise die. Money well spent, yes?

Of course. Animal rescue can be tremendously rewarding and is certainly a worthwhile investment. I've fostered rescue animals in my home for years, and I know firsthand the appeal of fighting this county's animal-related problems one furry face at a time. But "slow and steady" will not win this race: The United States is literally overflowing with companion animals. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) estimates that 3 to 4 million companion animals are euthanized in shelters each year because there aren't enough homes.

*So how would I spend my \$100?* The same way I choose to spend money on my car, my home, and my health care: I'd rather invest in preventing a problem than pay to fix it. It's simply smarter. When Benjamin Franklin said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," he easily could have been talking about animal welfare.

*So I'd spend the \$100 on prevention,* to surgically sterilize one female dog or two female cats at **our low-cost spay/neuter clinic in Forestville, MD**. And the value for dollar would be tremendous: According to HSUS averages, that \$100 could prevent the births of 12 to 22 puppies or 24 to 36 kittens, all in the first year alone. If each altered animal had only six good breeding years (and many have more), that \$100 would prevent the births of up to 132 puppies or 216 kittens. And that's only counting the offspring of the originally altered females. Each unborn puppy or kitten would also never reproduce, and so the number of prevented births skyrockets in only a few years. Amazing, isn't?

**So my money's on spay/neuter. And I think yours should be too.** We deeply value the other parts of animal welfare work and we'll keep funding them too. The choices I listed in the first paragraph represent some of our most important programs: emergency medical assistance, humane education, cruelty investigations, and rescue/adoption. But we've also invested heavily in spay/neuter over the last several years—most notably in our low-cost spay/neuter clinic, which opened five years ago and **has altered almost 20,000 animals**. We're proud of those numbers, and every surgery was subsidized with generous funding from you, our members and donors.

We had to close our clinic temporarily in September, due to some staffing and operational issues. But thanks to dedicated volunteers and the support of some incredible veterinarians, we are rebuilding the program. By the time you read this, our clinic will have opened again on a limited basis, but much work is needed to make it a successful and sustainable venture. We really need your help. Please consider donating to help keep our clinic running. (You can use the form on page 7 or donate online.) I promise it will be money well spent.

Tamela Terry, president

## The Votes Are In

**E**lections were held for two board positions at the June 2006 meeting. Judy McClain was re-elected as board member at large with responsibility for cruelty issues and Mary Bayless was re-elected as board member at large responsible for adoptions. McClain and Bayless will continue their active volunteer support for the animals of Prince George's County with the rest of the board: Tamela Terry, president; Janel Brennan, vice president and treasurer; Ginny May, secretary; and at-large members Jenn Evoy (fundraising), Pam Townsend (newsletter), and Sandy Twigg (medical).

## Park Goes to the Dogs at Adoption Reunion

**F**ood, friends, and fun in the sun! What more could you ask for? For once, the Annual Dog Adoption Reunion (held in June) welcomed sunny skies...and our largest attendance yet. Humans ate pizza and reminisced with friends; the dogs frolicked, made new canine companions, and took part in contests, such as best tail wagger, highest jumper, and fastest hot-dog bobber.

The Dog Adoption Reunion has grown each year and we hope this trend continues. When you are able to see firsthand all the lives that you've touched, it makes all the time and effort you've devoted to this cause worthwhile.

We wish to extend special thanks to the following businesses for their generous support of this year's reunion: Build-A-Bear Workshop, Chipotle, Hartz, PetSmart, University of Maryland Athletics, and the Washington Redskins.

See you next year!

*Jenn Evoy*



**It's About  
the Animals**

## Not Just 'ABC' (Another Black Cat or Canine)

### CALL US!

**301-262-5625**

*Our 24-hour voicemail service receives over 1,500 calls each month. If you need our help, leave a message and we'll get back to you as quickly as possible. Emergency calls are routed to an on-call volunteer for immediate response. We help with animal emergencies, cruelty/abuse and neglect cases, volunteer inquiries, vehicle donations, lost/found dogs and cats, spay/neuter inquiries, and other miscellaneous issues.*

**B**lack is beautiful...except apparently when it comes to animals. People involved in rescue work will tell you that black cats and dogs are often the last to be adopted, if they ever are at all. While their more brightly colored counterparts find forever homes, these canines and felines linger in kennels or, if they're lucky, foster homes... passed over for reasons involving superstition, prejudice, or simply because they're "too ordinary" or blend into the shadows in the back of a cage.

This unfortunate phenomenon has been described in several ways, including the ABC—Another Black Canine (or Cat)—Syndrome. And BBDs (big black dogs) are the hardest of all

to place—even if they're friendly, well trained, and in perfect health!

"I've had to turn away many black dogs because I can't fill the place up with them," says Jill Wimmer, shelter manager at PAWS Atlanta, that city's oldest and largest no-kill shelter. "And every one I turned away had a great temperament." Unfortunately, Wimmer

knows that she can probably adopt out three other dogs in the time it takes to find a home for one BBD.

To have any real possibility of adoption, most black cats and dogs rely on shelter staff and volunteer rescue groups to steer potential adopters their way. And indeed, many groups do make a special effort to make these animals more adoptable. Creative website descriptions (i.e. fur that shines like

black satin, a soulful face that just begs to be kissed, etc.) help pique the public's interest.

Adorning them in colorful collars or bandanas and, in the case of dogs, teaching them tricks encourage that all-important second look

from potential adopters. Another strategy is to avoid kenneling black dogs or cats next to one another.

So the next time you're looking for the special canine or feline friend—with us or another rescue group—remember that black is indeed beautiful!

*Pam Townsend*



*Editor's note: For more information about black cats and dogs, including how to photograph them effectively, check out [www.blackpearldogs.com](http://www.blackpearldogs.com)*

## Meet Our Black Beauties at an Adoption Show!

With fur like velvet or satin and eyes of chocolate brown or gleaming gold, our current black fosters are sure to steal your heart. Come meet Diana, a young spitz-mix, and Midnight Louie, a young domestic shorthair cat, at one of our adoption shows.

**Second Saturday of the Month:** 11-2 pm, White Flint PETSMART, 301-770-1343

**Third Saturday of the Month:** 12-3 pm, Columbia Petco, 410-290-1313

**Fourth Saturday of the Month:** 12-3 pm, Bowie PETSMART, 301-352-7286

\* Schedule subject to change! Check our website—[pgspca.org](http://pgspca.org)—for the latest information.

## *Fostering, continued from front page*

I can still remember the day that I was asked by Mary Bayless, our adoption coordinator, to join her at the shelter, where she walked me through each row of cages and talked about the little paper attached to each cage and what it meant: dogs found on the street, given up by their owners, or even taken away from their owners. I was just devastated, thinking how can a pet—a member of somebody’s family—end up here?

As we walked around that day, we saw three little puppies not more than two months old. A shelter employee told us that their time had come and I asked what that meant. Mary explained that all animals brought into the shelter have a limited time: a dog found as a stray has five days, while those given up by their owners usually have three, although the time mainly depends on the shelter’s current capacity.

I was so shocked by this that I blurted out, “I’ll foster them.” And Paris, Chanel, and Coco

came into my home, my life, and my heart. Another volunteer eventually took Paris and Chanel after we discovered that Coco had an



*JJ*

inoperable heart condition and was therefore “unadoptable.” She remained in my home, where she ran around, made me laugh, and just did what puppies do, until at the age of eight months she walked over the Rainbow Bridge. I

still think about Coco often and thank her for helping me learn and giving me the strength to go on and save others just like her.

Through it all—the heartaches and the happiness—when all is said and done, the most rewarding and heartwarming moment is seeing the faces of people when they open their door and there you are with their new friend for life! I’d like to think that all the fosters that pass through my care take with them a

small memory of me. I can say with assurance that they have each left many strong memories with me.

*Tina Grunstra*







*Queenie*

## **Get Connected!**

*Would you like to receive alerts on events, fundraisers, legislative issues affecting animals in our region, and news of interest for pet lovers in the DC Metro area? Then join our email list! We promise not to spam you or inundate you with emails...and you can opt out at any time. Just go to [pgspca.org](http://pgspca.org) and click on “Join Mailing List.”*

## **Would You Like to Help? Learn How**

**If you’re up for the exciting experience of fostering and want to help a needy cat or dog find a fantastic forever home, let us know. But even if you can’t foster, there are many other ways you can help. We need volunteers to:**

-  **check for cruelty or negligence at area pet stores and report it to our cruelty coordinator;**
-  **assist with fundraising and outreach efforts;**
-  **maintain computerized volunteer, contributor, and adopter lists;**
-  **and more!**

**Just email [info@pgspca.org](mailto:info@pgspca.org) or call 301-262-5625.**

**It's About  
the Animals**

## The Benefits of Keeping Cats Indoors

Cats are America's most popular pets, with 73 million felines living in homes in the United States. An estimated one-third of these cats are allowed to roam outdoors...to the detriment of both the cats and area wildlife.

Free-roaming cats face many hazards themselves. Among them:

- **Cars.** They kill millions of cats each year in the United States alone and injure countless others.

- **Poisoning.** Cats can find and consume poisons such as rat poison, lawn pesticides, and anti-freeze; they also face the risk of deliberate poisoning and cruelty.

- **Animal Attacks.** Cats can be attacked by free-roaming dogs, wildlife, and other cats, suffering injuries requiring veterinary care, and contracting serious, even fatal, diseases (such as rabies, distemper, FIV, and feline leukemia). Even cats that have been vaccinated are not completely protected from infection.

Scientists estimate that free-roaming cats kill hundreds of millions of birds, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals, such as rabbits, squirrels, and chipmunks, each year. Even well-fed cats kill birds and other wildlife because the hunting instinct is independent of the urge to eat. And studies have



shown that bells on collars are not effective in preventing cats from killing birds or other wildlife. Other animals don't necessarily associate the sound of a bell with danger, and cats with bells can learn to silently stalk their prey.

Free-roaming cats can also become the victims of animal cruelty; transmit parasites and diseases such as rabies, cat-scratch fever, and toxoplasmosis to other cats, wildlife, or people; and add to the population of millions of homeless, unwanted felines if not spayed or neutered.

Given the risks facing free-roaming cats, it's not surprising that they typically live less than 5 years, while cats kept exclusively indoors often live to 17 years or more, according to the Humane Society of the United States. And despite common misperceptions, cats do not have to go outside to live a full, happy life, especially if you make an effort to keep them stimulated and exercised. Perks that any feline will adore include a cat tree, cat run, or kitty condo; access to a screened-in porch or window seat for bird watching; potted cat grass or catnip; and toys designed to act out their natural instincts to chase prey. Many cats also appreciate a feline friend.

*Pam Townsend*

*Editor's note: For tips on making the most of your relationship with an indoor cat, check out the HSUS website [www.safecats.org](http://www.safecats.org).*

## Fun Holiday Fundraisers!

**Franklins Fundraiser (Monday, November 13).** Dine or shop at this popular restaurant/microbrewery/general store and give your receipt to the hostess/cashier. The SPCA/HS of Prince George's County will receive 20 percent of the sale. Franklins is located at 5123 Baltimore Avenue in Hyattsville. For directions, please call (301) 927-2740.

**Tresses & Shears Fundraiser (Sunday, November 19).** Get in the holiday spirit at this salon at Savage Mill. Purchase baked goods, meet some adorable adoptables, and vote for Tresses & Shears Parade of Trees entry supporting the SPCA/HS of Prince George's County. For more information, go to [www.savagemill.com](http://www.savagemill.com).

**Pet Pictures with Santa (Sunday, December 3).** Have your pet's picture taken with Santa at the White Flint Petsmart between 1p.m. and 4 p.m. You'll get two photos and two frames for \$10, and the SPCA/HS of Prince George's County will receive half.

**Shop to Care (November through January).** Westfield Shopping Centers will be launching Shop to Care in November. Just register for a membership card under the SPCA/HS of Prince George's County and shop at participating Westfield Shopping Centers (Wheaton, Bethesda, and Annapolis) November through January. For every dollar you spend you'll earn points for us; based on points earned, Westfield will reward us with a cash donation. Details on obtaining your Shop to Care loyalty card will be available on our website ([pgspca.org](http://pgspca.org)) under "Events" in late October.

## SPECIAL THANKS

# Memorials & Honorariums

*Special thanks to  
Antharia LLC for website design  
services and the following veterinary  
hospitals for providing low-cost spay/neuter  
services for adopted Prince George's County  
Animal Shelter animals while our clinic was closed:  
VCA Squire Veterinary Hospital in Upper Marlboro,  
Al Lynn Animal Hospital in Camp Springs, Clinton  
Animal Hospital in Brandywine, and College  
Park Animal Hospital in College Park  
(where our furry fosters also are so  
well cared for).*

### In Memory of an Animal...

**In memory of Brandy:** Elizabeth Jay  
**In memory of Holly:** Eugene and Jean Robertson  
**In memory of Sugar:** Sonya Euell  
**In memory of Wolfy and Winston:** Lisa Diggs  
**In memory of Amelie and in honor of Peg Buckley:**  
Julie Schweitzer  
**In memory of Pumpkin:** Deborah Forespring  
**In memory of Shorty, Lesa, and Odie, and in honor of  
Sparkle and Moby:** Robert McGuire  
**In memory of Davy:** Margaret Dowsett  
**In memory of Daisy and Eenie:** Virginia May  
**In memory of Cashew:** Julie Walker

### In Memory of a Person...

**In memory of Mr. Buzzelli:** Presidential Airlift Group  
**In memory of Fran Carson:** Travis and Nancy Knight; AA and  
JD Stover; Stephanie and Eric Reynolds  
**In memory of Marcia Cowans:** Niharika Sharan  
**In memory of Bettie Liguori:** Benjamin Straus; Mary Pratt-  
Hena; Bob, Vicki, and Jerry Triano; Thomas and Elizabeth Hess  
**In memory of Mary Maclem Peak:** College Park City Clerk's  
Office  
**In memory of Judi Richardson:** John and Rita Boller; John  
and Margaret Henninger; Herman and Jean Arvin; Joyce  
Edgington; Arthur and Pauline Lee; Helen Peck; Juanita Soares;  
Donald and Margaret Hall  
**In memory of Captain John Smathers:** Elizabeth Dietz  
**In memory of Ray Stokes:** Faith Lapidus Weiner  
**In memory of Robert Willing:** Emmy-Lou Dev. Sleeper;  
Dorothy Brown; the Doyle family

### In Honor of People and Pets...

**In honor of Toby O'Shanesy:** Jennifer Donovan  
**In honor of Jim (formerly Tickle):** Victor and Irina  
Yakovenko  
**In honor of Tamela Terry:** Lynn and Chris Desautels

**The SPCA/HS of Prince George's County relies on contributions. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. If you want to help, just fill out and return the form below.**

## Membership Application/Donation Form

SPCA/HUMANE SOCIETY OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, INC. \* P.O. BOX 925, BOWIE, MD 20718 \* 301-262-5625

PLEASE CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

**MEMBERSHIP (circle one):** Single (\$20)      Family (\$30)      Lifetime (\$100 per person)

**RENEWAL:** Please check here if this is a renewal membership.

**ADDITIONAL DONATION:** I am enclosing an additional gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose the additional donation **IN MEMORY OF:**

A person: \_\_\_\_\_ A pet: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose the additional donation **IN HONOR OF:**

A person: \_\_\_\_\_ A pet: \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER:** I am willing to help in the following capacity:

**TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ (PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE SPCA/HS OF P.G. COUNTY, INC.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

All donations and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please complete this form and mail with payment to the address above.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Former Pound Pup Excels at Agility

**F**ormer foster Picasso has become quite the athlete—not surprising given her border collie parentage. Earlier this year she made her competitive debut in the 12-inch jumpers category of a NADAC (North American Dog Agility Council) trial. Despite human “mom” Terry’s jitters... and the distraction of some alluring mid-course aromas on the ground that required immediate investigation, Picasso ran the course perfectly (if over the allotted time). She even placed second in her group!

Proving that she’s no flash in the pan, Picasso earned the first “leg” (or Q as they call it) of the three legs required for her novice title during her first trial with the USDAA (United States Dog Agility Association). She came in well under the allotted time, had no faults, and finished second. So let’s hear a round of “ap-paws” for Picasso!



## HEADS & TAILS

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Editing and layout:  
Pam Townsend

Individual membership to the SPCA/HS of Prince George’s County is **only \$20** and includes a subscription to Heads & Tails. Your vital support will help us reduce animal overpopulation, homelessness, and mistreatment in Prince George’s County. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

## It's About the Animals

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