



Calendar of Events

ONGOING EVENTS

Every Day: Cat adoptions at the Petsmart Luv-a-Pet Center in Bloomingdale

Every Saturday from 11-3: Cat and dog adoption shows at Petsmart locations

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please visit our website at www.almosthomefoundation.org for more information about these events.

Every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in April 2011: Dine to Donate at Rocco Vino's

April 29-May 1, 2011: National Adopt-a-Thon at Petsmart locations

September 18, 2011: Annual Run/Walk for Animal Rescue (details pending).

December 3, 2011: 7th Annual Holiday Party

Have you seen our new website?

Thank you to everyone who helped create such a wonderful tool to help raise awareness for animals!

Don't forget, you can also view our Paw Prints Newsletter online in the "Events & News" section!



ADOPT-A-THON WEEKENDS

AHF is participating in an upcoming Petsmart Charities National Adoption Event. The event will be held from **April 29-May 1, 2011** at our Petsmart locations.

The adopt-a-thon lasts for three days, during which every adopter receives freebies from sponsoring companies. This includes a special adoption packet with extra information and coupons.

We have lots of cats, dogs, kittens, and puppies in need of forever homes.

We hope to see you there!

SPECIAL THANKS TO ...

Heather Lydon (Co-Editor/Lead Writer)

Laura Ellingsen (Co-Editor/Designer)

Deanne Blenkle

Paul Blenkle

Kathi Rose

**All AHF volunteers
and donors**



It's Raining Kittens & Puppies!

It's definitely springtime ... and with those April showers and May flowers comes litter upon litter of kittens and puppies! This is Almost Home Foundation's special "Kitten Edition" and "Puppy Palooza" issue of the newsletter. We hope the information provided is helpful, and even inspires some of you to lend a helping hand.

Kittens and puppies are born year-round, but it's during the spring and summer when the number of them becomes overwhelming. This time of year is referred to as "kitten and puppy season" by animal care workers and volunteers.

These little ones require special care. They eat different diets. They have very specific veterinary needs. They also need extra handling to become well-socialized. Pregnant cats and dogs also fill our foster homes at this time, and they need special care, too. Other kittens are orphans and require bottle-feeding.

There's no doubt about it—kitten and puppy season is a very busy time of the year. These little guys really know how to keep us on our toes!

Are you interested in helping the kittens and puppies in our care? Please take a peek at our kitten and puppy wish list. Donations of food, supplies, and toys are hugely appreciated! Also, be sure to check out our current fundraisers and

upcoming events. Money raised from these efforts benefits all of our animals, including the kittens and puppies.

If you're completely smitten with kittens and looking to learn more, you're in luck! Please read the article about why kittens should be adopted in pairs. Or are you new to the world of puppies? Our article about puppy mills should shed light on the meaning behind the "Adopt, Don't Buy" philosophy. We hope our housetraining tips are also helpful to you!

The arrival of kittens and puppies is a reminder of why spaying and neutering needs to be promoted. Part of this newsletter is dedicated to that issue. Please read about the effects of animal overpopulation and learn about the importance of spaying and neutering your pets.

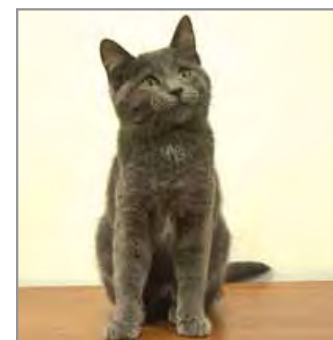
Summertime also brings out the need for certain pet safety reminders. Don't miss the lists of materials, plants, and foods that are commonly found in the summer but are poisonous to cats and dogs. Please protect your pets from the listed items.

So, are you ready to dive into summertime's kitten and puppy season?

Here we go!



Cognac



Willow



Brogan



Keiko

Take it from Andy: Adopt, Don't Buy!



Last winter, AHF volunteers met a tiny Yorkshire terrier named Andy. At five years old, he was already missing every tooth in his mouth. How did this five-year-old dog wind up toothless?

Until his rescue, Andy was used for breeding at a puppy mill. Puppy mills are inhumane dog breeding operations. The dogs are kept in small wire cages with barely any space to move. Conditions are unsanitary.

Andy's health needs from basic nutrition to mange and colds are neglected. These dogs never play, they never experience companionship, and they never go out for walks or receive belly rubs. Their one purpose in life is to breed. Once they can no longer reproduce or mate, they are discarded as useless.

The pet stores that sell the puppies allow the puppy mill business to thrive. It's an industry that promotes animal cruelty and abuse, all in the name of greed and profit.

The cruelty and suffering are only part of the issue. Puppy mills also add to the animal overpopulation problem. There are more dogs right now than there are homes for. As more and more puppies are bred at puppy mills, millions of puppies already being born are euthanized due to the lack of homes.

Heartbreakers

Sometimes puppy mills are discovered and destroyed by authorities. The dogs found are rescued and sent to shelters or rescue groups. Over the years, many puppy mill dogs have been accepted into AHF foster homes. These rescues are particularly heartbreaking. Puppy mill dogs have never been loved or treated with kindness. They always need rehabilitation and special medical care.

Fostering or adopting a puppy mill survivor is a major commitment. It's your job to nurse them back to health and to teach them how to love and trust humans. Patience is a necessity, because they need to come to you on their terms, not on yours. This typical puppy mill dog is fearful and submissive. They avoid eye contact. They don't know what stairs are, and many have never seen grass or the sky. They shudder at your touch. They are not housetrained. Sometimes they are even afraid of their food and water.

It takes a lot of work to gain their trust. But once the bond is there, it lasts forever. To that dog, you are their hero! In fact, Andy's story involves just such a hero—his foster mom. She adopted him a few weeks after he was rescued.

What's the difference?

When you buy a puppy from a pet store, you're still giving a deserving dog a home, right? There is actually a very big difference between buying and adopting. When you buy from a pet store, the money paid enables puppy mills to continue running. When you adopt from a shelter or rescue group, you are directly supporting rescue. The adoption fee is considered a donation, because that money enables more animals in need to be rescued. Which would you rather have your money go toward—animal abuse, or animal rescue?

How can you help?

Simply raising awareness about the issue is a major help. Make an effort to educate people who don't know about puppy mills.

Most importantly, the next time you add a puppy to your family, take a tidbit of wisdom from Andy—because he knows what he's talking about: **Adopt, don't buy!**

Please do not support the puppy mill industry. Adopting instead of buying truly makes a world of difference.



Andy

TIPS FOR HAPPY HOUSETRAINING

- Housetraining a puppy can be a frustrating process, but it doesn't have to be. Follow these tips for a happier housetraining experience!
- Patience is a virtue! Remember that housetraining can take weeks to months to complete. It doesn't happen overnight.
- Establish a routine—not just for housetraining but for meals, walks, and playtime too—and stick to it like glue.
- Learn to love the outdoors! Take your puppy outside often, especially right after he or she eats or drinks.
- Praise and reward your puppy immediately after the desired behavior occurs.
- Things are bound to go wrong on occasion. Don't punish your puppy when he or she has an accident. It's much more effective to use positive reinforcement when things go right.

Good luck to you and your new puppy!

Almost Home Foundation 2012 Calendar

New Design

EXTRA spacious arrangement!

SINGLE photo on each monthly page with biography!

ADDED room on each daily square to write notes!

BORDER made with your pet's photo & name!

FREE "In Memory of..." page!

Donation: \$20

www.events.org/ahf2012calendar



Large picture for one of the 12 months of the year

Donation: \$100.00 includes one copy of calendar

Select the month of your choice.
Submit pet's name.
Submit a short biography with date of adoption from Almost Home Foundation.
Submit one picture of your pet alone.
www.events.org/ahf2012calendar

Example:



Small picture for one of the 12 months of the year

Donation: \$8.00 per pet

Select the month of your choice.
Submit pet's name.
Submit one picture of your pet alone.
Any pet...dog, cat, bird, ferret...
www.events.org/ahf2012calendar

Example:



In Memory of . . .

Donation: free

Honor those dear pets who will remain in our hearts forever by submitting their name(s) to be placed on our

In Memory of page

www.events.org/ahf2012calendar

Ask Freddy



Ahh...the gentle breezes and warm temperatures of summer are coming soon! Since this newsletter includes a great deal of educational material, I thought I would throw in some firsthand information from my assistant—who happens to be heavily involved with flowers, plants, garden trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals. She also knows a thing or two about fertilizers and pesticides! Many of you may already be aware of this, but it bears repeating that there are many materials and plants found in garages and gardens that are poisonous to animals. These are some quick reminders:

Common poisonous MATERIALS include:

- Antifreeze and coolants (*even though new standards have a bitter additive now, they are still fatally poisonous*)
- Plant/lawn fertilizers
- Weed killers
- Ice melting products (*hope we don't need those anymore!*)
- Gasoline
- Some plant foods and herbicides
- Certain soil additives

There is a long list of PLANTS, TREES, AND SHRUBS that are poisonous to animals. These ones are used the most in gardens:

- Certain types of lilies
- Lily of the valley
- Oleander
- Yews
- Foxglove
- Delphinium
- Kalanchoe
- Azalea
- Rhododendron
- Tulips bulbs
- Daffodil bulbs
- Castor bean

Common poisonous HOUSE PLANTS include:

- Cyclamen
- Amaryllis
- Chrysanthemums
- Pothos
- English ivy
- Philodendron
- Corn plant
- Mother-in-law's tongue
- Hibiscus
- Hydrangeas
- Peace lily
- Dieffenbachia
- Schefflera



For additional information, please visit www.asPCA.org or www.humanesociety.org.

Keeping our four-legged companions safe is a full-time job and they are grateful for all that we do for them. Thank you from all of us at Almost Home Foundation for being such wonderful and watchful guardians! Enjoy your summer!

xoxo Freddy

MEWS N NEWS

As you are reading this newsletter, summer is fast approaching...and with it comes thoughts of outdoor parties, barbeques, and family get-togethers. Please remember that there are several items at summer events that can be poisonous to cats and dogs. While enjoying summer with your four-legged companions, don't forget that the following foods are poisonous to them:

- Chocolate
- Macadamia nuts
- Onions (*cooked or raw*)
- Raisins
- Grapes
- Alcohol
- Coffee (*including coffee grounds*)
- Tea
- Cocoa

- Cooked bones
- Hops (*like those used by home brewers*)
- Moldy or spoiled food
- Raw eggs
- Raw fish
- Mushrooms
- Tobacco
- Yeast dough
- Artificial sweeteners
- Pits and seeds from fruit
- Green parts of potatoes
- Avocado
- Salt
- Garlic (*both fresh and salt*)

Should your cat or dog ingest any of these items, immediately contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 (a consultation fee may apply). Needed information includes pet breed, age, weight, any symptoms, and the type of poisonous material

ingested. Please keep the product container with you to assist in identification so that the appropriate treatment recommendations can be made.

Also, please remember that family and guests should not feed table food to pets. Unbeknownst to you, there could be poisonous items in the recipe.

Lastly, please keep your pets safe. Our beloved companions count on us to protect them from harm. Dogs should only be loose within a fenced yard and cats should never be outside. It only takes a second for a trauma to occur. **A special thanks to Dr. Christopher Pauly, DVM, Roselle Animal Hospital and his wonderful staff for their help with this information.**

We're wishing upon a star for donations... OUR KITTEN & PUPPY WISH LIST

With a meow and a bark, our rescued kittens and puppies are letting everyone know that they could use a few donations! Food, supplies, and toys top their list of little wishes. Can you help?

Food

- Wet kitten food, in cans
- Dry kitten food, in bags
- Wet puppy food, in cans
- Dry puppy food, in bags
- KMR—Kitten Milk Replacement (used for orphan kittens)

Supplies

- Small kitten and puppy beds
- Small-sized pet food and water bowls
- Kitten and puppy feeding bottles
- Kitten and puppy collars
- Kitten and puppy toys (washable toys preferred)
- Clay kitten litter
- Puppy pens

Toys, toys, toys...

Of course, kittens and puppies love to play! Has your adult cat or dog outgrown or lost interest in their

"baby" toys? Please bring them on over—we will gladly accept donations of gently used kitten and puppy toys.

All donations can be dropped off during our Saturday adoption shows from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. at Petsmart locations in Bloomingdale (Gary Avenue) and in Schaumburg (Barrington Road as well as Golf & Meacham Roads).

Thank you so much for helping our little ones!

It Takes Two!

Why are two kittens better than one?

A kitten alone: Meet a kitten with a home all to himself. With nobody to play with, your hands and feet become their wrestling partner. Home alone while you're at work, the kitten becomes bored—so turns to climbing the drapes and chewing on your belongings. Kittens are night owls, so come two in the morning...it's time to wake you up for attention and fun. Later, if you want to adopt another cat, this kitten probably won't be happy about it. He is used to having the run of the house.

Two kittens together: Meet two kittens sharing a home together. They engage in play fighting, wrestling, and chasing whenever the mood strikes. They don't need drapes and chewy belongings nearly as much when they've got a buddy to play with. And at two in the morning, they are both up and ready for playtime—with each other, instead of with you. Later, they're more likely to be accepting of new pets joining the family.

Simply put, kittens adopted in pairs are happier. So are their owners! With two kittens, you get double the fun and half the trouble.

Kittens are naturally curious and need constant stimulation. They are very active, especially at nighttime. Kittens also crave companionship with other kittens. They learn how to behave properly from one another. Kittens with a buddy are much better socialized, while a solo kitten is often destructive.

At Almost Home Foundation, all kittens under the age of six months are adopted in pairs, unless the adopter already has another kitten. This ensures happier kittens and happier owners!

If you're thinking of adding a kitten to your family, please adopt two instead of one. In the case of kittens, it definitely takes two to make the adoption go right!



Sampson & Sox



Lucy & Ricky

A Plea for Better Days

Before you get caught up in the cuteness and fun of kittens and puppies...before you allow your cat or dog to produce a litter of their own...and before you relinquish a litter to a high-kill shelter or the streets...You should listen to the pleas for help, and learn about the reality of animals in need.

Please think of the four million cats and dogs that were euthanized last year due to the lack of homes available to them. Millions of innocent lives were lost—including kittens and puppies. Cuteness and fun does not save them. Human responsibility and loving homes are what save them.

Every time a kitten or puppy is born, another home needs to be found for them. One pregnant cat or dog produces an average of 5-6 babies at a time—and cats can have up to four litters per year, while dogs typically have two. If the offspring aren't spayed or neutered, they can all reproduce at the same rate.

It's no wonder we have a cat and dog overpopulation problem. The babies pile up, while the homes don't.

In recent years, the problem has gotten even worse than it already was. In an economy that continues to spiral downward, people can't afford their pets anymore. They also can't afford to spay or neuter. As a result, more animals become homeless and more litters are born. More homes are needed and more animals are euthanized. It's a vicious cycle, one we have been experiencing more and more lately.

Please read the "Did You Know?" section running across the bottom of these two pages. The cats and dogs in the photos were all rescued by Almost Home Foundation. These animals are the lucky ones, because they got a second chance at life. We cannot save them all. It takes volunteers, available foster homes, funds, community support, and adopters. Every rescue involves countless people. It doesn't always happen. For every cat and dog that is rescued, even more are lost.

Please educate yourself and others about the reality of animals in need.

This is their plea, not ours. Cats and dogs desperately need people to be informed and to understand their plight. Raising awareness is the first step onto the path to better days for them.



Litters of new AHF kittens and puppies



MISSION POSSIBLE: Spaying and Neutering Our Pets

You've heard the plea. Kittens and puppies, as well as adult cats and dogs, are euthanized every day due to animal overpopulation. The number of needy animals exceeds the number of homes available to them. These animals never asked to be born, but their lives are frequently lost to overpopulation.

The animals don't just outnumber the forever homes available to them. They outnumber the shelters and foster homes available to them, too. In rescue, keeping up with the number of lives in need often feels impossible.

The solution to the overpopulation problem is spaying and neutering. When an animal is spayed or neutered, they can no longer reproduce. This is the most effective way to stop the cycle of homeless litters and euthanasia.

At Almost Home Foundation, spays and neuters happen nearly every day. All of our cats and dogs undergo the procedure either before or shortly after adoption, based on age. The cost is included in the adoption fees.

We also promote spaying and neutering through educational efforts. Volunteers visit schools to give talks about the topic. At adoption shows, flyers and pins are distributed and posters are hung. Adoption supplies include detailed information on the topic. Donation jars specifically for spaying and neutering are set up as well.

In addition, AHF is proud to be a registered "Spay Day" rescue partner with the Humane Society of the United States. Each year, we sell Spay Day T-shirts and participate in an online photo contest. All of the money raised from T-shirt sales and the contest goes toward spaying and neutering.

On February 17, 2011, AHF hosted a Spay Day presentation at Wheaton North High School. The importance of spaying and neutering was emphasized as statistics were read, videos were shown, and postcards were distributed. Audience questions were also answered.

At AHF, new spay and neuter efforts are consistently undertaken. Fresh opportunities to raise awareness and funds for the cause are a priority. Currently, our grant team is working to obtain a Petsmart grant for a new spay and neuter program called "Little Steps, Big Changes."

Please help prevent future litters of homeless animals. Be part of the solution by spaying or neutering your pets. Educate others and spread the word about animal overpopulation. Together, we can turn what feels like the impossible into "Mission Possible!"

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Low-Cost Options for Spaying and Neutering

The main reason people don't spay or neuter their pets is because they cannot afford it. This has led to the creation of low-cost spay and neuter clinics across the country. Listed below are some nearby Chicago area clinics. Each location has different pricing, waiting times, and qualification criteria.

- PAWS Chicago near Brookfield Zoo
- The Anti-Cruelty Society in downtown Chicago
- Anderson Animal Shelter in South Elgin
- DuPage County Animal Care and Control in Wheaton (residents must have a LINK card)
- Animal Welfare League in Chicago Ridge
- A.D.O.P.T Pet Shelter in Naperville

Some vets also have discounts or sell spay/neuter certificates. You can help others by telling them about low-cost options, purchasing certificates as gifts, or by transporting non-drivers to low-cost clinic locations.

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DID YOU KNOW?

LOVIE

Did you know...that animal hoarding is a form of animal cruelty? Hoarded cats and dogs suffer from a great deal of neglect. Lovie was one of 27 dogs rescued from a hoarder's mobile home. He is on his way to a better life...



POWDERCOAT

Did you know...that over one quarter of homeless cats and dogs are pure-breds? It's true—animal overpopulation affects ALL kinds of cats and dogs. Powdercoat is a 4-year-old, declawed, purebred blue-point Siamese cat without a forever home...



O'RYAN

Did you know...that puppies are a major commitment? They need training, patience, and lots of attention in order to thrive. It takes a very responsible person to adopt a puppy. O'Ryan is a cute fluffy puppy in need of a responsible pet owner...



GEORGE

Did you know...that at high-kill shelters, animals typically have a window of 3-10 days to be rescued or adopted? The constant influx of homeless cats and dogs never seems to end. George is a buff-colored polydactyl kitten who was rescued from a high-kill shelter with his brother Joe and their sister Lizzie. They were three of the lucky ones...



CREST

Did you know...that black cats and dogs are the least likely to be rescued or adopted? When a kitten or puppy is born with black fur, their chances of finding a forever home goes way down. Crest is a mostly black dog currently up for adoption at AHF. He is waiting for someone to look past the dark fur...



LOGAN

Did you know...that it is vital to socialize kittens from a very young age? Kittens need to experience human contact sooner rather than later. Logan was born behind a restaurant and spent the first six months of his life outside. He is now safe in a foster home and, slowly but surely, he has made great strides in socialization...

