

Spring 2021



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Our featured pets



Meet Carlos!



Carlos is a gorgeous 1 ½ - year-old short hair tabby bobtail boy with the tiniest nub of a tail. He came to Almost Home Foundation all the way from Alabama. We do not know how or why he ended up in a shelter there because he is an amazing kitty.

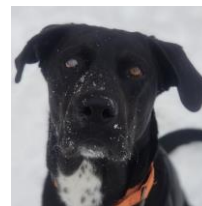
Carlos has excellent social skills. He has never met a cat he does not like, and he knows whether to be playful or peaceful with each other cat in his foster home. He would make a great brother to another kitty looking for a feline friend, although he would also be fine as an only kitty. Carlos also lives with dogs and while he does not seek out their attention they get along well together.

Carlos enjoys sitting on the top tier of his cat tree looking out the window, watching wildlife and the world go by. He is a quiet boy, rarely making a sound, and not too needy of attention—which is not to say he does not enjoy sitting next to you so you can pet him for as long as you like.

Carlos is not a picky eater and enjoys both wet and dry foods. He has excellent litter box habits. He is fond of toys with his favorite being a mouse on a spring that he bats around like it is a punching ball.

We do not understand why some lucky family has not yet snatched him up because Carlos is handsome, sweet, unique, socially adept, and an all-around great guy. If you are looking to add a BFF for an existing kitty, or are looking for an easy “starter cat”, come meet Carlos!

Meet Nelson!



Nelson is a handsome 1½-year-old Lab/Great Dane mix who is in need of a foster or forever home. He came to Almost Home

Foundation from a Humane Society in Jasper Alabama where he was “out of time”. He was picked up as a stray and never claimed. He is current on vaccinations, microchipped, neutered and heartworm negative.

Nelson weighs around 75 pounds, loves belly rubs and is playful. He is such a sweet soul and loves all people, including kids. He is very gentle, housebroken, walks good on leash and does well with basic commands. He is currently attending training classes and once adopted his new family will receive four free classes so that they can learn what he is learning.

Nelson is perfectly imperfect, but aren't we all. He has an issue with his right eye and has an appointment with a specialist in early March. At this time, we are not certain what the issue is or to what extent. His eye is “milky” in color and appears as though he has very limited sight in its current state. Once he sees a specialist, possibly surgery or medication can rectify the issue. However, there's always the chance he may lose the eye/sight completely. There is no way of knowing at this time. But this does not slow Nelson down one bit. He runs and plays and acts like any other dog with two good eyes.

The best-case scenario is if Nelson could be settled into a foster or forever home before his appointment with the eye specialist so he feels safe and comfortable to help him along with any recommended treatment..



Ask Homer and Hope



Homer, how do dogs communicate with each other?

Dogs are pack animals and will communicate with their pack members. However, their language is not structured. There is room for interpretation even within the same breed. Some dogs seek attention while others distance themselves from perceived danger. How does the message come across? Basically, dogs use action, scent, and sound to "talk" to each other.

If you watch a dog's body language, you will see numerous movements of the eyes, ears, mouth, tail, and hackles. The most recognizable is the play bow, lowered forequarters and raised hindquarters. Licking another dog's ear or body and placing a paw on the body generally shows affection, while standing straight with a stiffened tail and staring will indicate a challenge. A particularly aggressive dog will stare and bare his teeth while shifting his ears forward with tensed muscles. Peacemaking may be accomplished by tucking the tail, averting eyes, and rolling on their back.

Scent is also vital to canine communication. Dogs have fifty times as many olfactory receptors as humans, and at the base of every hair and whisker are skin receptors that activate when dogs meet. Scents will determine sex, age, and status of another dog. They will mark territory and establish rank. A dominant dog will smell a subordinate dog first. Even urine, the equivalent of a human fingerprint, is a great source of information which is why dogs sniff trees, bushes, fire hydrants, and each other.

Most dogs are vocal. Their sounds can signal their needs. For example, a low-pitched growl shows anger and aggression. Steady barking while wagging a tail says "hello". Continuous barking means potential trouble. Howling is a cry for attention. Whining and yelping communicate pain or boredom.

To avoid a situation that may end badly, dog owners need to be proactive about how their pet behaves with other dogs. They should observe body language, sniffing, and vocalization between the dogs to be certain whether the animals want to be friendly, aggressive, or just passive.

Hope, what exactly is catnip?

Nepeta cataria, or catnip, is a plant that our cute feline friends love all too much. Although cat owners are familiar with how cats act when they come across catnip, not many know a lot of the plant itself.

Here are a couple interesting things that will get you more familiar with catnip and what exactly we're giving to our furry friends!



What exactly is catnip?

Catnip is an herb that originated from Europe, Africa, and Asia. It actually belongs in the mint family and shares many similar characteristics with the mint that we're familiar with. Containing volatile oils, sterols, acids and tannins, catnip can grow up to be three feet tall! It has become very popular for herb gardens and it can also keep mosquitos away!

How does it work?

Nepetalactone, one of the essential oils in catnip, acts as a reactant once it enters the nose/mouth of our feline friends. It triggers the brain and causes the cats to respond and show behaviors that we would refer to as "high."

Cats response

Another fun fact, response to catnip is genetic! About 75% of cats react to catnip (to be more specific, the nepetalactone) and usually their behaviors are the same. They'll usually roll around, lick themselves or the owner, sniff, chew, and/or rub against things, etc. Depending on the cat, it can be either very hyper or very calm.

Are they safe?

Yes! Thankfully, catnip is not addictive and they are completely safe for our feline friends! Usually lasting around 10-15 minutes, it's completely okay to let your cat enjoy catnip every so often! It is still highly recommended that the cat is under a safe environment and under supervision but that applies to most activities with cats!

Dog parks - good or bad

If you live in an apartment, condo, house without a fenced-in yard, you may be thrilled to find that the town you live in is thinking about, or already has, a dog park. The main selling point is that dogs get to be off-leash and run free. These parks are springing up everywhere.

If you have an energetic little buddy who has no place to run and get rid of some of that excess energy without you being dragged along behind on the other end of a leash, a dog park may seem like the perfect place. You might think you could use it as a place to train your furry friend or even help him interact with other dogs and learn some manners.

If you look on the internet for dog parks near you, you will find a variety of them. Some have extensive rules, and limits on the number of dogs any one person can bring into the park with them. Some require users to get permits, charge fees for them, and require those seeking permits to come in with their dog for a personal interview. Some issue special keys or fobs to enter the park and thereby limit the number of people who can be in the park at the same time.

Some dog parks are completely fenced in, and have separate areas for large and small dogs. On the other hand, some parks are very rudimentary, with everything out in the open, and no fence or regulations.

The main problem with any dog park is the main selling point: the dogs are off-leash. Thus the safety of your dog depends totally on the responsibility of all the other dog owners in the park with you and how well-behaved their dogs are.

If a dog is bounding across the park, full speed ahead, and he's heading toward your dog, you can never be sure what their meeting is going to be like. Is the other dog friendly, or has your dog annoyed an aggressive dog who is on the attack? And if the dog's owner is busy on his cell phone or chatting with another dog-lover, and unaware of what his dog is doing, there's no stopping that dog. Your dog could be attacked and injured or even killed in the blink of an eye.

Health risks are another concern. The parks that require permits and personal interviews may require proof dogs have received all required vaccinations. However, many parks have no such requirements. It is up to you to make sure your dog has had all of theirs. This includes not only the standard rabies shots, but also shots or medications that prevent such things as kennel cough (Bordetella vaccine), Distemper, Flu, and other diseases, and flea and tick prevention. See your veterinarian before taking your dog to a dog park.



Also, you should bring your own water bowl and water with you. You do not want your dog drinking out of dirty bowls or puddles in dog parks as these can be fountains of disease. Bottom line, it's up to you to determine if your dog will be safe at a nearby dog park.

Or you can look at other means of giving him the exercise, training, socialization and fun you want him to have. Take him on long walks, which are good for him and you. Find open spaces nearby and practice training routines with him on-leash. Enroll him in doggy day-care if you can't be home with him all day. Enroll him in obedience class. There are classes you can join to teach him special sports, dog agility classes, etc.

Whatever you do, think very carefully before you take him to run free in a dog park. It may do more harm than good.

Dog/cat food recall website

We're sure you hear all about these dog and cat food recalls. But sometimes you just don't catch all the details. We've discovered a very good website that provides excellent and timely information on dog and cat food recalls. You can even sign up to receive emails from them whenever there is a company or FDA recall of dog/cat food.

If you do sign up to receive emails, these emails will give you a link to the FDA Bulletin regarding the recall. No spam and you can cancel anytime.

The only caveat Almost Home Foundation has is that their recall alerts and website also include links to what they consider best foods and we do not necessarily endorse the products they are listing.

We are not saying, however, they may or may not be good products. Their website is

<http://www.dogfoodadvisor.com>



Fun facts

Did you know that your four-legged friend has three eyelids? The third lid is called the 'haw' and it's responsible for keeping the eye protected and lubricated.

Cats' claws all curve downward, which means that they can't climb down trees head-first. Instead, they have to back down the trunk.

AHF needs you!

As we march into Spring and the days lighten up, the sun warms our hearts and ambitions heat up.

While thinking about things you've dreamt to do, please remember the dogs and all the cats, too.

So many animals are in our care, who are ALMOST home but not quite there.

They need fosters, or walks, and lots of attention, donations and supplies, so many to mention.

You can help them in so many ways, just a small donation can brighten their days.

Being a fully volunteer organization, we are always in need of fosters. Our main goal, of course, is to get each animal adopted into their perfect forever home. Until that time, we'd like to be able to place as many as possible into foster homes.

We also need volunteers to walk and play with the dogs in our kennel (must be 18 years old). We need help to clean the kennels, including use of our washer and dryer to wash bedding and blankets, and other kennel-related items.

We also need supplies. Keep that in mind as you do your Spring cleaning and decluttering. Have a tattered old blanket or towel? We can use them. Soap, and other cleaning supplies come in handy. We need general supplies such as paper towels, trash bags, and office supplies such as paper, pens, and stamps. Of course, we need animal-specific items such as dog and cat collars, leashes (retractable leashes not accepted), beds, litter boxes and scoops, litter, etc. We can use gift cards, also, to purchase supplies and food.

Other volunteer opportunities include fundraising, grant writing, and event planning.

We are a 501(3)c non-profit wholly volunteer organization and all donations go to support the animals in our care. For more information or to fill out a volunteer application, see our website.

Adopt, don't shop! Let's keep spreading the word!