

Spring 2020



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## *Our featured pets*

### *Meet Buddy!*



Buddy is a handsome young domestic shorthair orange tabby boy who loves attention, relishes food, and talks up a storm when he is looking for either! Buddy came to Almost Home from Alabama, and we were very surprised to learn upon his arrival that he is heartworm positive.

In some ways heartworm disease in cats is similar to heartworm disease in dogs: both are transmissible only by being bit by an infected mosquito, and the disease is not contagious to humans or other pets. Sadly however, while there is successful treatment for heartworm in dogs, there is not yet a cure for heartworm in cats.

Heartworms typically have a shorter lifespan in cats than in dogs (the heartworms live an estimated 2-3+ years since cats are not an ideal host), and some cats outlive the heartworms without incident. Others develop complications that require medical attention, and unfortunately some die from heartworm disease.

Almost Home adopts out cats to be indoor-only, and heartworm disease is one of the main reasons why. Indoor cats are less likely to be exposed to mosquitos that can infect them with

heartworm. Plus indoor cats are less likely to be exposed to other cats that may have feline immunodeficiency virus (AKA FIV, also known as "kitty AIDS") which is shared via deep bite wounds from infected cats, and also feline leukemia virus (AKA FeLV) which is spread via casual contact with infected cats. Indoor-only cats are the safest from disease, which is very important since none of these three feline diseases can be cured at this time.

The good news is that Buddy does not know he is sick. He currently has no physical signs or symptoms of heartworm disease, and thankfully he tested negative for both FIV and FeLV. As recommended by his vet, Buddy has started taking a monthly heartworm preventive. It will not get rid of the heartworms he already has, but it will protect him against getting more. In addition, Buddy will be re-tested for heartworms periodically in the hope that he is one of the lucky kitties that can outlive the heartworms.

If you are looking for a new family member that is sweet, social, and incredibly easy-going, ask to meet Buddy! He is kid-friendly, cat-friendly, dog-friendly and even vet-friendly. Buddy has lots of love to share with everyone he meets!



## Our featured pets

### Meet Caboose!



Close to perfect is the only way to describe Caboose. He is a seven-year-old Boxer mix. He is housebroken, current on vaccinations, neutered, microchipped and heartworm negative. Don't let his age fool you. He is energetic, playful and strong. He often chooses to carry a favorite toy with him on walks. Caboose is not a chewer and does not need to be crated. Caboose adores all people, young, old and everything in between. He is a snuggler and will be right there beside you every chance he gets. Caboose wants nothing more than to be your best friend and companion.

Caboose is not comfortable around other dogs and will need to be in an only dog household. In years past he had lived with another dog and even cats. It has been a long time though, and we are unsure what has happened during that time, but Caboose is now insecure in the presence of other dogs. We are working with him with positive reinforcement, and he does not seem to be insecure around puppies, but for the best for all involved, he will need to be an only dog in the household.

Caboose's past: Caboose came to AHF from a local shelter when he was around 6 months of age. He had been hit by a car, only sustaining superficial wounds, and was never claimed by his owner. He went into a foster home and was subsequently adopted. He was a "family dog" for the next 6½ years. He learned commands and how to behave in a home and what it was like to have a family. Then one day his family decided to drop him off at a kill shelter because he was no longer wanted. The shelter contacted AHF through his microchip and he was safe once again. However, for almost 4 months now Caboose has been living in the kennel, longing for the love and security he knew as part of a family.

Caboose needs your help! If you have the proper living situation for him and are willing and able to welcome him into your home, either for foster or adoption, please email Jackie at [jaccapps@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jaccapps@sbcglobal.net) and/or go to [www.almosthomefoundation.org](http://www.almosthomefoundation.org) and submit an application.

## Marijuana a no-no for animals

With the legalization of marijuana in effect since this past January, it might not occur to anyone to ponder what it may do to animals if they are exposed to it. The answer is: it's not good for them.

The Chicago Tribune, (January 19, 2020, Life & Travel, Section 6) recently dedicated a good part of a page, quoting veterinarians and the Schaumburg-based American Veterinary Medical Association, to point out that marijuana is harmful to pets.

To summarize the article, an edible with pot in it is poisonous. A snoot full of second-hand marijuana smoke is bad, too. The Tribune article also warned to be on the lookout for any item your dog may find to eat during walks. It could contain marijuana.

Some symptoms of ingestion or exposure might be vomiting, loss of balance, seizures, dribbling urine, eye dilation. An immediate call to a vet should be made if any of these symptoms occur or if you know an animal has ingested any pot.

## The best type of crate for your dog



### **Plastic Portable Crate**

Plastic dog crates are usually used for small to medium-sized dogs. This type of crate is helpful for use when the owner is on the go and wants to bring his pet be it car or plane travel. It has a front-facing swinging door and a carrying handle on top. If you're flying with your dog and you know he'll need to go in the cargo hold, a strong-walled crate like this will offer the most protection.



### **Folding Wire Crate**

The advantages of these crates are that they come in all sizes, your dog has unrestricted view and they are easily cleaned. Putting a cushion or blanket down on the metal bottom tray makes it comfortable for your dog. A common issue with these crates is that they are sometimes too big for the dogs. Which means big enough for them to eliminate on one end and curl up for bed on the other, thus defeating housetraining.



### **Soft Sided Crate**

This type of dog kennel isn't for every dog. Because they are made of canvas or nylon, dogs who like to scratch or chew at their confines are not good candidates for a soft crate. It isn't recommend for initial crate training but for already crate-trained or calm dogs. The soft kennel is a comfortable, lightweight travel option for dogs of any size.



### **Heavy Duty Crate**

This type of crate is commonly marketed for giant breed dogs, dogs who destroy their crates, or for master kennel escape artists. If this is the only kind of crate you've found that is large enough for your enormous dog, that's fine. A heavy-duty crate is not the right solution for a dog with crate *anxiety*. The point of a crate is to be a *haven* for your dog. If you need maximum security just to keep your dog inside a crate, your dog is not getting the training benefits a crate is supposed to provide and this may result in some unwanted behavior.



### **Furniture Dog Crate**

This kind of crate is exactly what it sounds like: a dog kennel that doubles as home furniture. The most typical example of this crate is in the form of an end table. And yes, they look nice in the living room but they are not recommended as an effective training tool, are not easily cleanable and are quite expensive.



## Ask Homer and Hope



### *Homer, how can I tell if my dog is in pain?*

Dogs mask pain instinctively because they have retained many behaviors learned as a member of the pack. One of the most important of these is that pain is a sign of weakness. Any predator will target sick or injured prey. Therefore, dog owners must be watchful of subtle changes in their pet's physical appearance, behavior, body movement, routine, and preferences. Owners should promptly consult their vet.

Acute pain develops suddenly. Broken bones, dislocated joints, damaged soft tissues, sprains and strains will cause immediate distress. Dental problems, infections, and some cancers also produce a similar effect. Chronic pain, on the other hand, develops over time. Dogs tolerate chronic pain because they become use to it and adapt.

Here are some signs to watch for. Is the dog twitching, trembling, panting, squinting? Are his head and tail lowered? Is he whimpering, restless, or lethargic? Have there been unexpected accidents in the house? Has there been a change in eating, drinking, or sleeping habits? Is he hiding in an attempt to rest and heal? Is he refusing to walk or use the stairs or having trouble lying down or standing? Is he walking more slowly, licking his paws constantly or seeking more or less attention?

If any of these symptoms are affecting your dog make him comfortable at home until the vet advises a course of action. An understanding of canine body language will ease concerned owners who see that their best friend is not feeling one hundred percent.

### *Hope, are kittens born with blue eyes?*

Yes, most kittens are born with blue eyes. Some cats, like Siamese, naturally have blue eyes but most cats' eyes are usually green, yellow or even orange.

The reason kittens are born with blue eyes is because they aren't born with the color pigmentation that is needed for true eye color. As a kitten develops, her eye color may go through several changes including gray, brown, yellow, orange and green.

As the kitten grows, her body produces more melanin, triggering the eye color change. This happens around 4 weeks of age and progresses until about 10 weeks of age. If your kitten still has blue eyes at 8 weeks of age, the chances are good that her eyes will remain blue into adulthood.

A single cat can even have different color eyes, called *heterochromia*, and these traits are determined by the cat's genetics. In fact, eye color is so genetically defined that some breeds of cat have specific colors allowed by the breed registry.

Typically, by the time your kitten is 3 months old, her bluish-gray color she was born with will have changed from blue to the color they will be throughout her life. Once your kitten's eyes have changed color from the bluish-gray that she was born with, her eyes should not change color after that.

# Get on Board! Become a Member!



Because their lives matter

## Individual

**Annual fee \$25.00**

Benefits include:

Membership card, refrigerator magnet, quarterly newsletter.

## Family

**Annual fee \$40.00**

Benefits include:

Membership card, 2 refrigerator magnets, quarterly newsletter.

## Senior 65+

**Annual fee \$10.00**

Benefits include:

Membership card, refrigerator magnet, quarterly newsletter.

To become a member go to **DONATE** at: [www.almosthomefoundation.org](http://www.almosthomefoundation.org)

## Volunteer Luv-a-Pet Adoption Center

Luv-a-Pet Adoption Center is located in Bloomingdale PetSmart. This adoption center gives exposure and visibility to cats and kittens up for adoption outside of the adoption shows. Kittens and cats stay in the center 24/7 for a three-week period. If they are not adopted by then, they go back to their fosters and continue attending adoption shows.

While at the center, volunteers look after the wellbeing of the cats and kittens which includes, feeding them, cleaning the condos, cleaning out the litter boxes, and washing their bowls. Also, if a kitten or cat requires medicine then the volunteer administers the medication if the volunteer is comfortable with doing so.

Throughout the shift, volunteers keep track of feeding times, eating patterns and any special notes to add to their bios. Potential adopters can be let inside the room by the volunteers to interact with the kitten or cat so they can learn more about him/her. Most importantly the volunteers are there to keep the cats and kittens company. Morning or evening two hour shifts are available but volunteers are welcome to stay longer if they choose.

If you are interested in helping at the Luv-a-Pet Adoption Center contact us at [skveton1715@gmail.com](mailto:skveton1715@gmail.com)

## *Preparation for a new pet*

### *Things to consider*

We at AHF want you to have the most wonderful experience possible when you adopt a dog or cat. So, to help you get ready, here's some things to consider when preparing to bring home that adorable, wriggling fluff ball of unconditional love and endless amusement.

Consider if anyone in your family is allergic to animals. There are dog breeds with which your allergy-sufferer can live. You'll want to do a bit of research to find the right one. Remember the financial obligations of pet ownership: Veterinary bills, vaccinations, food, boarding if you travel or finding hotels that allow animals. You might consider hiring a pet walking service for your dog if you are gone all day.

Do you have a fenced-in yard for your dog, or will you take him for walks? If you decide on a large dog, is the fence high enough to keep him from jumping over it? If a small dog, does the fence go low enough so the dog cannot get out under it?

Look around your house. Is it animal-proofed? Don't forget the little beggar may need some training, depending on its age and background. It might be a good idea to move things up off the floor until you get a picture of how likely your new buddy is to chew. There are plants and foods that are toxic to dogs and cats. You'll need to know what they are and get them out of reach. With dogs, up high is fine. With cats, you'll have to keep any toxic items in a locked room or out of the house.

Also, most vets will no longer declaw cats as it is cruel and painful to the animal and we at Almost Home Foundation agree. So keep in mind you'll want scratching posts and cat condos for them to get their exercise and keep their claws occupied.

Once you've prepared the house and family, you are ready to take in what will become a beloved family member who will make you laugh and keep you entertained for years.

Check out the Almost Home Foundation website, or attend our adoption shows, and find the perfect puppy or kitten, or older dog or cat, which may be a little easier on the furniture and house.

## *Let us know*

Does your employer make provisions to match any contribution that an employee makes to a 501C3 Not-For-Profit Corporation? If so, we will be happy to give your Human Resources Department our tax exemption number for their forms. Email us at [info@almosthomefoundation.org](mailto:info@almosthomefoundation.org)

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