

Summer 2020



## *In this issue*

- 1 Featured Pets
  - 2 Prep Your Pet
  - 3 Ask Homer & Hope
  - 4 Pals Forever
  - 5 Senior Pets Aging Signs
- Fun Facts

A

D

O

P

T

## *Our featured pets*

### *Meet Rachael!*



Rachael joined the Almost Home family in 2010 when she was 3 years old. Now a senior, she has been waiting an exceptionally

long time to find her happily-ever-after home, but the best things in life come to those who wait!

Rachael is white with lots of beautiful, colorful markings all over her fur. She is a relatively small cat with a huge heart, hope in her eyes, and a sweet spirit.

Rachael is a shy kitty that is easily scared and needs lots of reassurance. She will hide when she is afraid so her ideal forever family needs to have plenty of patience, a relatively quiet home, a huge heart, and previous cat experience. She is calm, quiet, well-behaved, and so sweet once she is comfortable.

Given time and TLC Rachael will come out of her shell and blossom. She likes to relax in a soft spot or soak up a sunbeam by the window, and if you can put the two together even better! She enjoys being pet once she gets to know you but moving slowly and being gentle are key to success.

Rachael is a good girl that needs a family willing to invest the time and effort to see her through her initial shyness. The rewards you reap will be more than worth the wait!

### *Meet Monique!*



Monique is a beautiful five-year-old grey tabby. She is very friendly and has been living with her mother, Cherie, as well as

other cats. Even though she is FIV+, she is extremely adoptable and can live a long and healthy life without any special care other than routine annual exams and vaccines.

FIV+ is formally known as “Feline Immunodeficiency Virus” but is more commonly referred to as “kitty AIDS”. Even though her immune system is compromised, this disease is **not** contagious to humans or other species, nor is it contagious to other cats through casual contact, only through rough deep bite wounds which are rare in well-socialized friendly domestic cats. As she acts and plays just like a normal cat, you would never know that she is special needs.

Please don't overlook this beautiful cat for adoption just because she has an unfortunate and often misunderstood disease. She deserves special love as she is a very special cat. If there is someone out there who has an oversized heart for nurturing, perhaps they would also consider adopting Monique's beautiful mother an orange and grey tabby who is also FIV+. Either way, Monique is anxiously waiting for someone to love her the way she has always wanted to be loved in her forever home.



For more information about Rachael or Monique, please email [cats@almosthomefoundation.org](mailto:cats@almosthomefoundation.org).

# SPRING

## *into* ACTION



Spring has sprung along  
with puppies and kittens!

Help us with the daily needs of these tiny ones in our care.  
Check our website for the link to our *Amazon wish list*.

Drop off items at  
1800 W Irving Park Road,  
Schaumburg

## *Prep your pet for your return to work*

With many of us staying at home lately, the trending joke about pets portrays dogs as delighted to have us there while the cat is demanding to know when they granted us their permission to stay home and lounge on their couch? Humor aside, something to consider is how your furry buddies will feel when you desert them and return to work. They may feel abandoned and suffer separation anxiety.

There are several things you can do to prepare your pet and better acclimate them to these drastic changes.

First, follow a daily routine. Try to make the timing of feeding, walking, playing with them as close as possible to what the schedule will be when you go back to work away from home.

Second, give them some “alone” time while you’re home. Create a separate room or area just for your pet. Somewhere with a barrier that will force them to be away from you for a

few hours each day. Introduce them to this “alone” time gradually. Be sure to make it comfortable and an enjoyable place for them to hang out by themselves.

If they are crate-trained, put a crate there. Add a comfortable bed, a cat tree/condo. Don’t forget a fresh bowl of water. Give them toys they can use to entertain themselves. Hide treats they can search out. A good distraction for both dogs and cats is if there’s a window nearby they can watch the world through. Fido can keep an eye on the street and squirrels and kitty can watch the rabbits and birds.

Be sure to set aside a special play time each day to interact with them. Train them to get used to you coming and going from the house without them. Leaving them should be treated as no big deal, though you could offer them a treat as you go. And finally, exercise, exercise, exercise. Exhaust them and they’ll be too tired to worry about you going out for a while...or a day.



## Ask Homer and Hope



### *Homer, how do I stop my dog from destructive chewing?*

Chewing is natural to dogs. Their canine ancestors gnawed bones and sticks seeking nutrition and relief from hunger. That being said, few owners are willing to allow this behavior to continue in their puppy or older rescue dog.

Dog owners must determine what is causing their pet to chew. If the dog is a puppy, he may be chewing because he is hungry or if he was removed from his mother/litter mates too soon or because he has not had chewing and biting experiences. If the puppy is teething, provide him with chew toys that will be safe but effective.

However, destructive chewing becomes more complicated as the dog matures. Has there been a change in the dog's home? Is he getting enough exercise or mental stimulation? Are there behavioral issues such as fear, stress, or separation anxiety? Are there medical, dental, or nervous conditions? Is the dog constantly hungry?

Narrowing the list of causes will help with a solution. First, remove temptations like shoes, socks, or TV remotes. Next, initiate positive training with toys providing stimulation. Lastly, exercise him by taking walks and playing interactive games. Redirect his attention from inappropriate objects to appropriate ones, or, if necessary, make them taste bad using safe deterrents. If separation anxiety is the issue, owners could handle dog toys to leave a scent, play soothing music while gone, or provide a safe place like a crate.

Patience is the key word. Altering bad chewing habits requires time and consistency. But the results will strengthen the owner-pet relationship.

### *Hope, why do cats go into small spaces?*

All cat owners know that cats are determined to go into the smallest and tightest spaces and wonder if they have any bones at all! It's no surprise to find cats in shoe boxes, under beds, behind warm appliances such as refrigerators and washers, etc.

Cats can actually fit into anything as long as their head and shoulders can get through, using their whiskers, which are often as wide as their bodies, to check whether they'll fit. This is possible because they don't have rigid collarbones to block their way. After their head and shoulders get through, fitting the rest of their very sleek and flexible bodies is easy.

So why do cats like going into small spaces? There are many theories as to why cats exhibit this behavior. Because cats are very cautious and also have a natural need for warmth, they seem to crave tight spaces. Small and tight spaces help them keep out of sight and hidden, which makes them feel comfortable and protected.

Sometimes, cats crawl into spaces that are unsafe for them. There are many incidents where cats climb into car engines, behind drawers, under sinks, etc. Cat owners should check these and other unsafe areas before using them.

To make sure your cat is in a safe environment, have a couple of cozy places around the house for them to curl up in! An upside-down box with holes cut in the sides also will make a nice retreat. Or just open a drawer once in a while and see if your kitty takes up residence. Paper bags (but not plastic ones) also make great hideaways.

## *Pals forever*

A sign on a cage at the kennel reads “Bonded Pair.” What does it signify?

It means that these animals, be they dogs or cats or any other animals, must be adopted as a pair. They should not be separated as they have grown to depend on each other. They may have been littermates, grown up together, or lived all of their lives together. Or they may have lived together only for a period of time. Whatever has caused them to bond, they NEED each other to thrive. They would be devastated to be separated.

How can you tell they're bonded? The rescue organization would have determined that, depending on the circumstances of their arrival at the kennel and follow up study of their behavior during their stay at the kennel and/or observation in a foster home.

Bonded pairs of cats will do everything together including playing, sleeping, and grooming each other. You'll see them sleeping next to or even on

top of each other. When separated, they may cry non-stop, hide, stop playing, not even groom themselves (a sure sign of stress in cats), stop eating, exhibit aggressive behavior. Bonded dogs will display similar habits, playing together, sleeping together and cuddling. When separated they will grieve, become fearful, or show signs of depression similar to cats.

So, what's the advantage of investing in two animals together? Well cats, they like company but can be finicky about getting to know new cats. They'll be calmer and happier to have their bond-buddy with them. Dogs depend on each other emotionally and are comforted when the dog they have grown to trust is there while they get to know a new home. In both cases, it's easier on bonded cats and dogs to adjust to new surroundings when they can rely on each other. And the bonded pairs keep each other entertained, which makes life easier for their adoptive family.



**IT DOESN'T COST A THING!**

**EASY AS 1, 2, 3!**

**THEY PAY US!**

**HELP us help them**

**Just purchase  
on line at...**

[Smile.amazon.cm](https://www.smile.amazon.com)

Choose AHF as your  
charitable organization.

Place your order.

Amazon sends us a contribution.

[Petrescuerox.com](https://www.petrescuerox.com)

Choose AHF as your  
charitable organization.

Place your order.

Pet Rescue Rx sends us a contribution.

## Senior pets aging signs

According to the American Animal Hospital Association, smaller dog breeds tend to live longer than larger breeds and cats live longer than dogs. AHF considers the dogs and cats to reach the beginning of their senior years at 8 years of age. However, cats can live very long lives as indoor house pets. Many have been known to live into their twenties! So, why not give a senior cat a chance?

Each dog and cat, like each human, is different. Here are some general things to watch for as a pet ages. Senior pets tend to slow down a bit. You begin to see a distinguished looking graying around their faces and muzzles/mouths. Their hearing begins to diminish but that only makes it a little quieter of a world for them; that does not sound like such a bad thing. Their eye coloring might change from age and their muscle mass may decrease.

As we look at the "aging signs" of our pets, they look very similar to the aging signs of us humans. If we don't want to be discounted when we are human seniors, then why should we discount our

pets when they enter their senior years? Older pets, just like older humans, like a warm place to hang out and sleep. For some of our pets, that may be the window sill or near a heating vent. Put up a few nightlights to help them see when the rooms are dark as their eyes do not adjust to the dark like they used to. Remember those family conversations about how grandma doesn't eat much anymore?

Well, that is how it may be with your senior pet. They may eat less but more often. Whatever you do, remember that even our senior pets need exercise. Move it or lose it is a good thing to remember. Take a short slow walk or toss a treat across the room for your pet to go and get it.

Here's an idea...go on line and read about some of our senior dogs and cats that are available right now. There are some real gems in this group. They all long for a forever home of their own in which they can spend their later years. They could be your LUCKY CHARM

## Fun facts



Caboose

It takes eighteen muscles to move a dog's ear. This specificity of motion helps the dog pinpoint the origins of sounds much faster than a human can.



A. J

Cats don't meow at other cats. They reserve this sound for getting attention (not to mention food) from humans.

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