

TAILS FROM WAGS & WHISKERS

SUMMER 2020

THE DO'S AND
DON'TS OF
KITTEN
SEASON
PAGE 5





ONE AGENCY THREE LOCATIONS

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Orlando, FL 32839
(407) 351-7722

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(407) 351-7722

ALAFAYA CLINIC:

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PetAllianceOrlando.org

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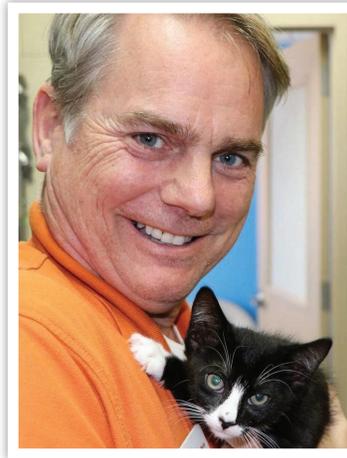
Erin Stepp

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A Letter from Steve



If you are anything like me, you have grown weary of Zoom meetings, social distancing, and the new vernacular regarding life as we know it. **This year is challenging us in ways we never imagined.**

Everyone knows the old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Dog owners say this with a wry little wink. It has never been about the dog's ability to learn. It has always been about the owner's ability to practice and be patient. Behavior change is merely the ability to practice until it becomes second nature. We are all having

to learn new things and be patient during the process.

Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando is leading the pack — learning lots of new tricks at age 83!

Through our incredible support network of volunteers and donors, we have continued helping animals in need. While our facilities have been closed to the public since April, we quickly adjusted to online adoptions, assisted more than 200 kittens, increased our foster homes, and provided more than 20,000 pounds of food to our community.

Although volunteers have not been in the shelter, they have been serving from their homes. The need for fostering was huge and the community responded as always. We have averaged 85 percent of our animals in foster care during this time. That gave us an opportunity to work on our facilities. We have deep cleaned the facilities, painted kennels, play yards, and cat rooms. Without volunteers coming in, our staff spent lots of extra time with the dogs and cats that remained in our shelters.

Our actions and those of the City of Orlando and Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties helped to "flatten the curve" in our community. Together, we truly made a difference to our neighbors and our pets in need.

As we invite the public back into our shelters, we will be using measured processes to maintain the safety and welfare of our employees, visitors, and animals. There will be appointment times, face mask requirements, reduced numbers of visitors, and other safety procedures taken as we reopen. We truly understand these are some significant changes. During the 83 years of serving this community, we have successfully managed many challenges and changes. We promise to be patient and practice the safest environment for everyone, and we ask the same of you.

Executive Director



Pet Alliance Offers the Cutest Curbside Pickup in Town Thanks to Virtual Adoptions



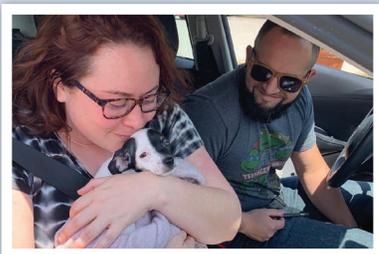
Pet Alliance was one of the first animal shelters in the the nation to provide Virtual Adoptions. This began shortly after Florida's Stay-at-Home order was issued in March 2020.

A call out to the community to help foster animals during the stay home period resulted in 80% of shelter animals finding temporary housing in foster homes. It was incredible to see that level of response; however, we (and our fosters) understood that the weeks-long lock down meant that the dogs and cats would have to wait that much longer to find their forever families.

Luckily, virtual support has bridged the gap helping animals find homes quickly and safely. Conducted through the Zoom app, Virtual Adoptions opened up the possibility of continued support for our shelter pets by helping them find their perfect human via virtual meet and greets.

Each Virtual Adoption appointment is designed to introduce potential adopters to a pet currently at our shelters or in foster care. **Adopters then drop by the shelter to pick up and meet their new pet for the first time curbside! A total of 526 dogs and cats found loving homes from March 16 – May 31, thanks to the virtual adoption process.**

Interested in adopting a dog or cat? Now could be the perfect time to bring a pet into your home! **See all the shelter pets looking for homes in real-time on our website www.PetAllianceOrlando.org.**



7 Steps to Getting Your Pet Hurricane Ready



We know everyone must be fatigued by emergency preparedness these days. However, this year's hurricane season is predicted to be more active than normal, so it's important that you and your pets are prepared. The Atlantic Hurricane Season is June 1st to November 30th, and the following tips can help you weather the storm:

- 1 Place two ID tags on your pet's collar.** Include a temporary tag with the phone number of a friend or relative who lives outside your immediate area.
- 2 Microchip your pet.** Make sure their chip registration is updated. Visit petchip.info to locate microchip registries.
- 3 Prepare a Travel Kit for your pet.** Make sure you pack enough food, bottled water, and needed prescriptions to last at least a week. Include carriers, bowls, towels, bathing supplies, flea/tick control, and leashes.
- 4 Update Vaccinations.** Create a record file for each pet. Include your pet's vaccination records as they are needed for most pet-friendly evacuation shelters.
- 5 A picture of you and your pet together.** A picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in case of a lost pet. Add species, breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.
- 6 Have Travel Carriers Handy for Evacuation.** Make your pet's carrier or crate a fun and safe space by placing treats, toys, and meals in it on a routine basis.
- 7 Most Public Evacuation Shelters do not accept pets.** Know ahead of time where your pet-friendly accommodations are, whether it's a shelter, hotel, etc. **Visit gopetfriendly.com to locate hotels or call 3-1-1 to inquire about pet-friendly shelters in Orange County.**

FURBALL 2020 Update

We know these past months have been a challenge for everyone in our community. We hope that you, your family, and your pets are seeing light at the end of the tunnel. Now more than ever, pets in Central Florida need the services of Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando, and we are hard at work, partnering with our volunteers and donors. We've made some changes to our fundraising efforts to better serve you during these uncertain times. We have postponed this year's Furball gala, but we look forward to hosting our supporters at the 30th annual gala on

November 6, 2021 at the Four Seasons Orlando. While we aren't hosting an in-person event, we are planning some exciting ways to partner with our community and keep you involved in supporting dogs and cats in need. **Please check our website for updates on our fall events, and thank you for everything you do for Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando!**

– Julie Axelrod, Event Chair

petallianceorlando.org/2020-furball

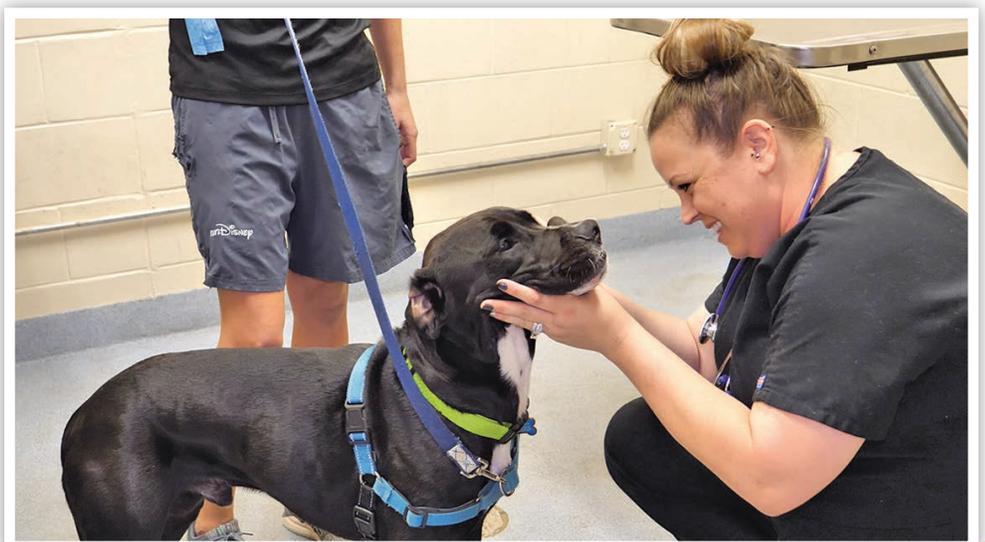
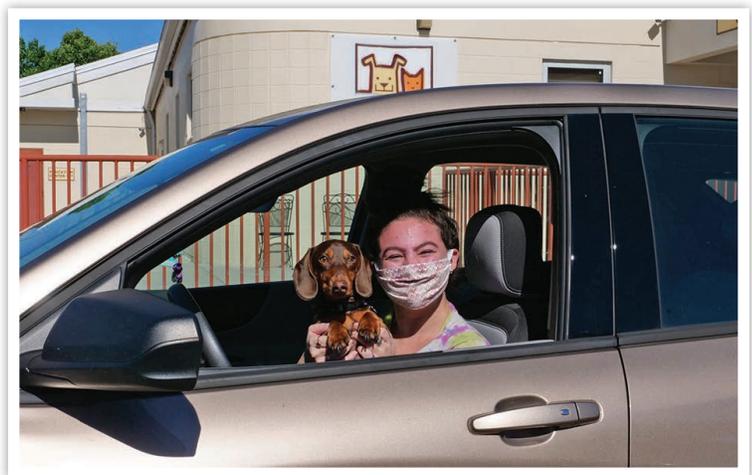
Curbside Service at Pet Alliance Veterinary Clinics

Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando Clinics in Sanford, Orlando, and Alafaya are open and offering social-distance friendly services by appointment only. For the safety of our clients, we will continue to implement a modified clinic process for public protection that began back in March 2020.

Clients with an appointment will be met outside by a receptionist, signed in to our new online queue, and then asked to wait in their car until they receive a text message that an exam room is ready to receive their pet. At no point do any clients enter the building to help ensure the protection of our staff so we can continue to offer low-cost veterinary services to our community.

For existing clients, you can even order your pet's prescriptions online to be delivered right to your home!

For more information and to schedule an appointment, please call (407) 351-7722.



The Do's and Don'ts of Kitten Season



The 2020 Kitten Season is upon us here in Central Florida. That means thousands of kittens will end up in shelters across the state (as well as nationwide) as unaltered outdoor cats begin having litters of kittens.

Summer just so happens to be when we see kittens rushed to the shelter daily, which can put a strain on resources as kittens are some of the most vulnerable animals at the shelter. Just last year, over 1,300 kittens were brought to Pet Alliance alone.

So what do you do when you find a kitten or a litter of kittens?

Do Leave Them Be: We all want to help protect these babies, but the truth is that kittens stand a better chance of survival when they are with their mom. If the kittens are clean, look healthy, have plump bellies, and are quiet, then that's a good indicator that mom is taking care of them and is close by. If the

kittens are in a safe location (shaded and hidden) wait several hours for mom to come back and keep at least 40 feet away if you plan to watch them.

Don't Take the Kittens from Their Mom: Never take nursing newborns from their mom and bring them to the shelter. The most vulnerable time for a kitten is while they are still nursing at the ages of 1-6 weeks. They need mom to provide the around the clock care.

Do Try to Foster: As kittens start to wean, they become more adventurous and walk around a bit more. This is the time where you can see if they're willing to eat kitten pate wet food as it's a good indicator that they're ready to be fostered.

Fostering saves thousands of lives each year. It helps shelters place animals into homes that provide individualized care — something newborn kittens cannot live without. **To learn more about fostering and Kitten Season, please visit our website www.PetAllianceOrlando.org.**



2020 My Best Friend Wine Label Contest



It's that time of year again! Is your dog or cat ready to be a star? Enter them in the 2020 My Best Friend wine contest in partnership with Quantum Leap Winery. If your pet is the winner, they will be featured for a full year on the label of the Quantum Leap My Best Friend Red Wine! A portion of the sale of the wine throughout the year benefits Pet Alliance. **Since the contest started in 2014, it has raised \$145,948 to help homeless dogs and cats!**

Learn more at: www.gogophotocontest.com/mybestfriend

Foster Highlight

With so many people at home during April and May, many trading their office desk for makeshift home offices, the world's new normal wasn't the most natural of transitions. But still, many people wanted to find a way to fill their days at home helping the community. One way many people chose to do that was by fostering a dog or cat from Pet Alliance.

During those two months 334 animals spent time in a foster home. With the community's help, Pet Alliance was able to keep the number of animals in the shelter very low. This helped minimize the number of staff onsite and provide a comfortable place for these animals to ride out the pandemic. Below are spotlights on two of our foster volunteers.

Gabrielle and Cody



We became dog foster parents at the beginning of April. Since then, we have fostered three lovely ladies so far; Storm, Luna, and Daisy!

Cody and I grew up with family dogs and have a passion for animals, but with a very busy work schedule, we felt we didn't have

enough time to balance everything and a dog. During the lock-down we both started working from home, and we thought it would be the perfect time to open up our home to animals that were looking to get adopted!

The best part of being a foster is when the dog has been with us for a little while and feels comfortable enough to open up and really show their personalities. I am so glad that during the search for their permanent home, we can hang out with them in a relaxed home environment. And hopefully it resembles what will soon be their permanent home!

If you are thinking about becoming a foster, we say go for it! There are so many different dogs out there with so many different personalities, and you might be the exact person they need during a relatively stressful time. We have seen just how many dogs and families Pet Alliance helps, and we are happy to be able to be a small part in helping out this community!

Luca



I have never fostered any animals before this. However, during my childhood and as a teen in Northern Italy, I rescued and bottle-fed some kittens. We were a cat-friendly family, and over a couple of decades, we had dozens of cats. In the mid-nineties, we finally found a reliable veterinarian who offered spaying services, which helped put an end to the periodic merry explosion of kittens.

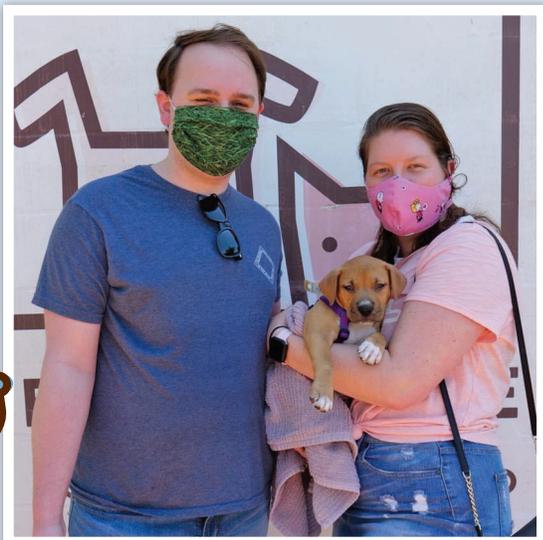
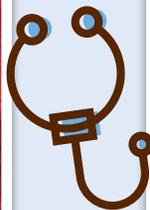
I always wanted to have animals around. However, as a full-time researcher and university professor, I spend most of my time at the office and need to travel nationally and internationally multiple times a year. Because of this, I did not have the time to foster an animal, let alone own one. In Spring 2020, two major events have changed these circumstances. First, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that I had to cancel all my travels for the year and work from home for several months in a row. Second, I received tenure, and hence I did not feel the same pressing urgency I otherwise would to sacrifice all the time freed up by the cancelled international and commute trips to do even more work. I decided instead to make some room to help animals, even if for a brief time.

I really enjoy seeing kittens grow, heal, play, and be happy. The support framework offered by Pet Alliance is a major game changer. Pet Alliance offers superb logistics, veterinary care, education, and materials to help make the experience of raising baby animals, which may have special needs, quite manageable.

I would tell someone interested in fostering that if you have a natural inclination to help animals, have experience with them, can provide (and maintain) a sanitary confined and enriched space within your house, and can afford making the occasional trip to Pet Alliance, you should definitely go for it. Fostering animals is a fulfilling and entertaining experience. It is also conveniently confined to a limited time frame of only a few weeks, as opposed to adoption, which entails a much long-term commitment of years or decades.

BORN IN A PANDEMIC

Flan the Puppy Finds Forever Home with Healthcare Hero



As the world changed overnight due to COVID-19, pregnant shelter dog Dulce needed a “helping paw” more than ever.

In early March 2020, Pet Alliance answered the call of a rescue coalition partner to help Dulce, who was found as a stray with seven puppies expected to arrive within days — if not sooner. She needed to be placed into foster care, but adding to the urgency was the nationwide race for shelters to place all of their pets into temporary homes as talks of county and state shelter-in-place orders began.

Considered most at-risk in her condition, Dulce was placed with seasoned fosters Lisa and Jeff of Orlando.Kittens on March 6, 2020, but “Baby Watch” only lasted a single day. Her puppies were born March 7, 2020, and named appropriately after their sweet mom as Fudge, Cocoa, Marzipan, Honey, Butterscotch, Toffee, and Flan.

For puppies born in a pandemic, the weekly growth milestones were now coupled with weekly historical events. The same week the babies reached one week old, Walt Disney World announced it’s official park closures, one of the few times in history this has happened.

At two weeks old, the puppies suffered from an upper respiratory infection that severely affected their breathing. That same week, cases of COVID-19 began to climb to over 200 in the State of Florida. Their foster parents began searching for anyone with an available nebulizer, something that could be incredibly hard to come by with the pandemic, as hospitals began needing more respiratory aids.

Alongside their amazing foster parents, the Pet Alliance shelter medical and animal care staff helped these puppies through it all. Providing a nebulizer that helped the puppies fight their cold, as well as vaccines, medications, and eventually their spay and neuter surgeries, so they don’t have to suffer the way Dulce did as a pregnant stray living on the streets.

Dulce and her seven puppies each found their forever homes in May, and sweet Flan had an incredible adopter looking to add her to the family. Chloe, an RN with Orlando Health, had been on the search for a puppy for over a year when she stumbled on Dulce’s puppies.

Following a virtual meet and greet on Zoom, Flan’s fosters knew there couldn’t have been anyone more deserving and ready for this lovable puppy than Chloe. As we thank all our healthcare heroes for the additional stress and hardship COVID-19 presents their day-to-day, we like to think that a sweet cuddly puppy is one way Pet Alliance can give a big “thank you” to one RN in our community.

Thank you to Lisa and Jeff and all the incredible fosters out there who have helped Pet Alliance during these challenging times. If this story is any indication, your support truly helps save lives.



