



TAILS FROM WAGS & WHISKERS

FALL 2020

LOCAL GIRL SCOUT
ADVOCATES
FOR SHELTER PETS
PAGE 7





ONE AGENCY THREE LOCATIONS

ORLANDO LOCATION:

2727 Conroy Road
Orlando, FL 32839
(407) 351-7722

SANFORD LOCATION:

2800 County Home Road
Sanford, FL 32773
(407) 351-7722

ALAFAYA CLINIC:

2050 E. Colonial Drive
Orlando, FL 32826

PetAllianceOrlando.org

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A Letter from Steve



This is the time of year I typically reflect on "How I Spent My Summer." Recalling the days when returning to school, an English teacher would inevitably ask the class to pen a paper on their summer activities and accomplishments.

As with many of you, I can easily think of all the things that did not occur — including a lifelong dream trip that was canceled. As my sister will tell you, I have always been an optimist — viewing life more than half full. This has been particularly challenging in 2020, yet all the more important.

Thinking about all the changes and "new normals", I realized that the Pet Alliance had a pretty awesome summer. We made significant adjustments in March that enabled us to continue our life saving and prevention efforts. Like everyone, we had to cancel activities and events such as summer camp and our fall gala, Furball. They were really tough decisions, but they forced us to, as Winnie the Pooh says, "Think, think, think!"

While being creative and flexible is not new to us, we have never had to do it on such a large, daily scale. You know what though? With the help of some engaged staff, volunteers, and donors, we turned out a great summer of accomplishments that were helpful to the animals we serve and to our community. Here are some of our significant achievements:

- **Launching our first ever giving day on September 29, with an amazing \$150,000 matching gift.**
- **Hosted two large pet food distribution days in May and July with a third one planned for September.**
- **Spayed/neutered 750 cats as part of our TNR program. (This is a very socially distanced activity!)**
- **Transferred 197 dogs and 150 cats from area shelters that may otherwise have been euthanized.**
- **With 74 percent of our intakes being cats, we assisted 832 kittens since May. Thank you, FOSTERS!!**
- **Adopted more than 1,500 dogs and cats since May.**
- **Learned there are many ways to connect with our community, our volunteers and our adopters.**

Aside from getting to wear a rather fetching Snoopy mask to work, I have been most assuredly reminded of the good: the good in people — whether friend or stranger. Daily, I have witnessed how caring and thoughtful people can be. All it took was a small piece of cloth covering my mouth and nose for me to truly see what a great summer 2020 turned out to be.

Executive Director

25,000 Pounds of Pet Food Distributed to Families in Need

No pet parent should have to feel the **panic and stress** of prioritizing pet food purchases against a laundry list of other financial responsibilities. Especially if it means the difference between keeping their beloved pets or surrendering them to the shelter.

But as the spread of COVID-19 increased this summer in Florida, so did the struggles for millions of families who are feeling the pressure of unemployment or reduced wages. The Pet Alliance Pet Food Pantry immediately went into action with our Feed the Need campaign, **which to date has given out over 25,000 pounds of pet food to families in need!**

Each week, our shelters have dedicated Pet Food Food Pantry pick-up days on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Pet owners can make an appointment to secure food for their furry family members. However, we have reached the most people in need through the two Free Pet Food Drive-Up Giveaway events we hosted in May and July.

Pet Alliance's second and most recent event occurred on July 26. Pet owners arrived more than an hour early to secure their spot in line, which stretched from Pet Alliance down Conroy Road to John Young Parkway. Thanks to the **generous support from our friends at Tito's Handmade Vodka**, we had an additional \$2,000 worth of pet food to hand out alongside the many donations from our community.

Staff and volunteers spent the morning placing nearly 10,000 pounds of pet food into the car trunks of over 200 grateful families — many even brought their dogs by to say “thank you” themselves.

We say it often because it's true, the best place for a pet to be is with their loving family. But, we know the road ahead isn't going to be easy for many, and it is clear to us **there is still more need.**

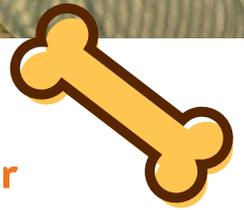
If you know someone who needs help from the Pet Food Pantry, appointments to pick-up food can be made by calling (407) 351-7722. If you would like to donate a bag of food, they can be ordered online and shipped to us or dropped off at either shelter location.

Orlando Shelter
2727 Conroy Road
Orlando, FL 32839

Sanford Shelter
2800 County Home Road
Sanford, FL 32773



1,500 New Families Formed This Summer



How Pet Alliance finds homes for shelter cats and dogs has evolved frequently since COVID-19 began to impact Central Florida back in March 2020. Starting with launching Virtual Adoptions over Zoom during the statewide shutdown, and then adding Adoption-by-Appointment to limit the foot traffic in the shelter — we've been able to manage through the uncertainty. Together we celebrated many adoption wins while keeping our staff and clients safe.

We are happy to report that more than 1,500 new families have formed since May 1, 2020! Owner surrendered animals make up more than 1,000 of the animals who came to us looking for compassionate care. Many of the animals were nursing or unweaned kittens, since summer is the peak time of year that people will find young kittens and bring them to the shelter for care.

As businesses began to reopen, animals were able to move back into offsite locations for adoption. We now have adoptable cats at more than a dozen local pet stores like Petsmart and Pet Supermarket. The average length of stay for an offsite animal is typically only a few hours, with nearly all being adopted the same day they are dropped off. Talk about a huge WIN for the animals!

There is no shortage of light-hearted animal love during this time. The kitten parents who adopted a tiny two-month-old grey kitten named Fraiser said (in the “words” of their kitten), “My humans named me Fraiser because they felt they needed a live-in Psychiatrist during the pandemic!”. Pets have become an emotional support system for many pet owners these past months. More hours spent working from home or social distancing means prolonged isolation, which can affect your mental wellbeing. Pets are a great antidote to that because they help relieve feelings of stress and loneliness.

We think the woman who adopted two-month-old Daisee, the kitten, in June described it best, “All my cats are rescued, and with being a senior — especially during a pandemic — they bring so much joy and companionship to my life.”

Volunteer Spotlight



Cat Condo Care Volunteer Jami Hines

Jami has been a superstar volunteer these past few months! A dedicated volunteer for the past three-years, Jami spends most of her volunteer hours caring for cats at our offsite adoption locations. Recently she has been helping out at the Ocoee PetSmart. With our animal care staff busy at the shelter, and without an official Offsite Coordinator, Jami has stepped up and helped with transporting cats to and from PetSmart in Ocoee. She truly has a passion for kitties and finding them homes, and it shows each time she interacts with them. Jami stops by PetSmart two-four times a week to check in on the cats, clean their cages, spend time with them, and help facilitate adoptions. She even helped out with training new Kitty Cuddlers so they could assist at offsite locations, too. Jami always has the cats' happiness top-of-mind and regularly communicates with staff to ensure each animal has everything they need while they await their forever home. Plus, she's just a real ray of sunshine!

Volunteer Elsa Hill

Elsa started volunteering at the Sanford shelter back in 2017 after retiring from the United States Air Force in Medical Administration. Her passion for working with animals showed when she logged over 300 hours that year as a Kitty Cuddler, Bark Buddy, and Foster Volunteer. A medical situation prevented her from volunteering for about a year, but now she is back in full swing!

Elsa has been especially helpful during the pandemic. With the shelter being open for adoptions by appointment only, The Cattery at Lake Mary PetSmart has become a bustling location for cat adoptions. Elsa cleans the cat kennels and helps with adoptions at least three times a week. She also is "on-call" for transporting cats and kittens from the shelter to the store. It seems whenever we need someone on short notice, Elsa is ready and eager to help!

When Elsa is not volunteering at Pet Alliance, her attention is on her five rescued cats and her dog. "I'm back and loving the chance to once again work with the great animals and people of Pet Alliance! And looking forward to many more years, so thank you!" No, Elsa, thank YOU!



Volunteer Program Update

The new volunteer orientation process is still on hold and will likely not resume before 2021. Please keep your eye on our website and social media pages for updates!

Little Acts of Kindness

This Summer, our shelters saw an outpouring of tiny but mighty acts of kindness from our generous and thoughtful Central Florida community!

From answering the call to help hundreds of foster kittens, to comfy surprises for the cats at both shelters — we have a lot to be thankful for this summer.

A Comfy Surprise!

Carol Getsee recently made these adorable and comfy quilted mats for our Sanford shelter cats. She dedicated her time and materials to create quilts that fit perfectly into our kennels. Additionally, in celebration of Craft for Local Shelters Day, volunteer Christine crocheted lovely mats for the cats and kittens.

Even though our shelters are not open to volunteers just yet, our community is still showing through in fun and unexpected ways for the dogs and cats. We couldn't be more grateful.



A Cart Full of Donations for Foster Kittens

THANK YOU to everyone who answered our call for kitten food back in June!

We were able to fill an entire cart with wet kitten food, dry food, and kitten milk replacement — all of which was graciously donated to help our foster volunteers who are currently caring for hundreds of kittens and preparing them for adoption.

Tiny kittens like Chloe, who is “PAWdeling” the impressive haul. Thank you to those who donated, shipped food, came in person to drop off items, or anyone who shared the message of need.

Orlando's Foster Care Coordinator, Susan, is in awe of the kindness! Susan says that “while the need is ongoing during kitten season, this gift is a visual representation of support for these babies. It means the world to the fosters, and helps make the hard days (and with underage kittens, there are many) better because we have such kind and caring people in our corner”. Thank you!

Visit our Wish List to make your own life saving “Kitten Kit”.



#HALFMYDAF CHALLENGE

Attention Donor Advised Fund Holders!

Are you a Donor Advised Fund holder? Great news! We have learned about an opportunity for your funding to have a bigger impact than ever through the #HalfMyDAF matching grant challenge. More than \$120 billion is sitting in Donor Advised Funds (DAF) and community foundations — money that could be used to support many struggling nonprofits during the COVID-19 pandemic. This challenge aims to put these charitable dollars to work now, when it is needed most.

Donors who choose Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando and commit to granting half of the money from their DAF before September 30 could also mean we are chosen as one of the 150 non-profits to receive a matching grant of up to \$25,000. The more donors who nominate Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando, the better our chances. Learn more by visiting halfmydaf.com.

If you have questions about making a donation from a DAF or how you can support Pet Alliance, please contact Cathy Rodgers at crodgers@petallianceorlando.org.

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Call (407) 351-7722 to make an appointment at the Sanford or Orlando clinic.

Local Girl Scout, Lexie Young, Advocates for Shelter Pets with Impressive Gold Award Project

Alexis (Lexie) Young met her first cat, Milkyway, when she visited an animal shelter with her Girl Scout troop early on in her 11-year journey from “Daisy” to “Senior” scout. In Girl Scouts, becoming a well-rounded scout means learning about the community — and it starts by experiencing it first hand.

Lexie’s troop learned about adoption and pet overpopulation that day while greeting and playing with the furry residents looking for forever homes. Often, a person’s first visit to an animal shelter can open their eyes to the pervasiveness of pet homelessness in their own community. This was certainly the case for Lexie.

The trip to the Pet Alliance shelter and meeting Milkyway ended up leaving a lasting impact on Lexie that stays with her to this day. Now that she is older, Lexie has a different understanding of the pet homelessness problem in her community and how she can help. Through her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Lexie is setting out to help her community learn more about the importance of pet adoption.

Her passion for animal advocacy sparked the creation of two well thought out adoption brochures that explain to potential adopters the importance of being an educated, prepared, and empowered pet owner.



“My project focuses on informing people interested in adopting a cat and/or a dog. The information included is general costs, basic supplies, and getting people to think if they are ready to adopt,” said Lexie. “The purpose of this pamphlet

is to give a realistic idea of expectations when adopting a pet, to highlight the wonderful benefits of adopting a pet and to avoid pets being returned to shelters/rescues.”

Lexie worked with a local veterinarian to create the fact-filled brochures (one for cats and one for dogs) to ensure all of the information was accurate, educational, and inspiring for pet parents.

Lexie’s pet advocacy project is being submitted as a Girl Scout’s Gold Award Project (the highest achievement within the



Girl Scouts of the USA). The award is earned by Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts who tackle issues that are important to them and drive lasting change in their communities and beyond.

“This project reflects each Girl Scouts’ journey to becoming a leader, and their ability to make a change in their communities,” said Lexie. “Each project is unique to each Girl Scout, and each makes lasting changes to the people involved.”

Lexie is currently a student at Winter Park High School in Winter Park, Florida where she resides with her family including a menagerie of cats, a dog, and chickens. She is looking forward to continuing to help spread the “adopt don’t shop” message throughout her community and hopes this project will make a serious difference.

This is the future of animal welfare hard at work. Thank you, Lexie, for your support of all the cats and dogs looking for second chances.



All donations on this special day will be **matched dollar for dollar up to \$150,000** by The Sherry Chappell Cooper Foundation!

You to the Rescue

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 | PetAllianceOrlando.org/GivingDay

It's your opportunity to be a local hero for homeless dogs and cats! When you give before midnight, September 29, your gift will go twice as far — providing shelter, care, and second chances to twice as many animals in need.



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Cams on 9/29!
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