

Almost Home Foundation

PAW PRINTS



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Our featured pets

Meet Esmeralda!



Everyone who meets her agrees, there is just something very, very special about Esmeralda.

Esmeralda came to us from a kill shelter back in March of 2016. She was a little over a year old. She came with 7 kittens. Three were her own but this sweetheart chose to adopt 4 more little stray kittens all on her own. Esmeralda was a great mother to her kittens. She would spend hours playing with them.

Esmeralda was adopted in October of 2016 but was unfortunately returned to us. Her adopter decided to move to a retirement community and they only allowed one cat so the adopter took her senior cat with her. Poor Esmeralda was so sad when she was first returned. She thought she found her forever home and so did we. After a little bit she cheered up and became the Esmeralda that we all love.

She has always been a favorite kitty of many volunteers since the day she came to us. She has sparkling bright eyes and a cute little face that anyone can love. She loves people and likes to play. Esmeralda does like other cats but is a little picky about who. If she likes the cat, she will play otherwise she will just mind her own business. She does not like dogs at all so she would need to be adopted by someone with no dogs. If you have room in your heart and your home for Esmeralda, please contact us at cats@almosthomefoundation.org



Meet Prince Carl!



Prince is a 5 1/2 year old Chihuahua mix who was given up by his owner as she could no longer afford him. He is very attached to

his foster mom and loves her very much. When he is at the adoption shows, he doesn't do well if he can see his foster mom. All he wants is to be with her. The good news is that he developed this attachment to her which means his forever family will enjoy that same bond once he has time to adjust and attach to them.

Prince is small and would do best with teenagers or older children or just adults. He will make someone a wonderful companion. He does well with the other dogs at the show, in the home and with anyone that handles him.

Prince can be with dogs or an only dog. He loves to sleep and burrow in bed with his foster mom. Prince likes to go for walks and play with toys. He has been waiting for his forever home for a long time. We can't figure out why! He is a sweet, easy and overall great companion. He is house trained, up to date with shots and ready to find his forever home.

Could that be you? Will you give him the love, attention and time he needs to get to know you, learn to trust you and fall in love with you? If you are interested in Prince Carl, please contact us at dogs@almosthomefoundation.org or fill out an on-line application.

Little Paws Big Hearts Gala



Imagine stepping into a huge room filled with sparkling white lights, gold crystal chandeliers dropping down from the embellished ceiling,

tables decorated with holiday centerpieces and over 300 animal loving people who came to support the rescue of homeless and abandoned dogs and cats.

That is a description of the 2017 Little Paws Big Hearts Gala at Meridian Banquets in Rolling Meadows. If you did not attend, you missed this incredible evening of fun and giving.



As you looked around the room, you saw people checking their programs trying to decide what auction items they wanted to bid on. There were over 75 items including trips to Africa, Hawaii, the Caribbean and Colorado, Cubs Rizzo and Bryant signature frames, gourmet cooking class for ten, a money tree filled with Quick Pick lottery tickets and more. You could also try your luck by purchasing a raffle ticket to win a monetary prize.



The two tables set up for *Help a Pet...Get a Gift* were filled with 30 dog and 30 cat surprise gift bags and all were sold before a delicious four course dinner was served.

A separate room across the hall contained 300+ silent auction items: jewelry, a laptop, a guitar, candles, gift cards, wine bottles, handmade items, sports items, and gift baskets containing all sorts of goodies.



And thanks to the generous donations of many people through the live auction, enough money was also raised to remodel the runs at the kennel so our dogs will be able to go outside.

Here are some comments from attendees:



Patti A: "We come here every year to support AHF."

Rex O: "Energetic and very nicely organized."

Shiva M: "The silent auction is so much fun!"

Franco L: "This is by far the nicest one we've attended."

Are supermarket pet food brands the right choice for our pets

With today's growing variety of pet food choices in our local supermarkets and pet stores, it can be overwhelming when making a decision of what food to choose for our pets. The cheapest, most convenient choice is a supermarket brand, but the question is, are we feeding our beloved pets quality food when we make the choice to throw an inexpensive bag of food in our supermarket shopping cart?

Supermarket pet food may be convenient and less expensive, however; studies have shown that supermarket pet food brands are less healthy and nutritious choices for our pets. In fact, feeding our pets cheaper, less nutritious food can lead to serious illnesses and health problems that in the long run, will cost us more money in veterinary bills. If we make the choice to spend a little extra money on quality pet food, we can avoid serious illnesses as well as costly veterinary procedures. Pet owners who feed their pets a premium diet can expect their pets to live 30% longer and enjoy a better quality of life.

So what is it that we should look for when choosing a quality pet food?

Charitable tax break for IRAs

Here's a nifty way to support the Almost Home Foundation through your IRA Required Mandatory Distribution.

If you're 70 ½ or older and must take a minimum distribution from your IRA, you will get a tax break if you have your Required Mandatory Distribution funds made payable directly from your IRA account to the charity of your choice (Almost Home Foundation) and then designate it as a qualified charitable distribution on your tax return. The Almost Home Foundation, is a 501(c)3 charity, meets the IRS definition of a qualified charity.

Done this way, the donation counts as your required minimum distribution but doesn't increase your adjusted gross income. Note that the money needs to be transferred directly from the IRA to the Almost Home Foundation to avoid it being included in your adjusted gross income. If you withdraw it from the IRA first and then give it to Almost Home, you can deduct it as a charitable contribution if you itemize, but the withdrawal will be included in your adjusted gross income.

First, make sure that the primary ingredient in the pet food consists of meat and that the recipe contains little to no cheap fillers such as Ethoxyquin, Propylene Glycol, BHT/BHA, and corn syrup or corn. These added ingredients can cause serious liver and kidney diseases. Be sure to check the label on the bag of the pet food when looking for these ingredients.

Secondly, it is also a good idea to check that the pet food brand you have chosen is based on sound nutritional research and is made by a reputable company.

Although it is easiest to pick up your pet food while you are doing your weekly grocery shopping at your local supermarket, quality pet food is normally found at pet supply and pet specialty stores. Many pet specialty stores offer food samples to help determine what your pet prefers.

We all love our pets dearly and consider our pets a part of the family. We want our pets to live long, healthy lives. We can add to the quality of our pets' lives by making sure the food we choose provides all of the necessary vitamins and nutrients our pets need to enjoy a long, quality life.



Ask Homer and Hope



Homer, do you have some tips to keep a dog's paws lovely and smooth during the winter months?

Glad you asked! Those paw pads are very important to a dog's comfort and health. They absorb shock to spare the joints some jolting. Dogs sweat through them, too, as dogs have no sweat glands. They do seem very strong, but require some care to keep them healthy, especially with the advent of winter.

Dogs get cracked paws from snow collecting and freezing between their toes, or when salt or other ice-melting chemicals get into their paws. It's obvious when this happens as you have a dog holding up one paw hopping behind you....or maybe the dog is on strike and refuses to move at all. This can be solved by removing the offending item from the dog's paw. Also, if the dog's feet get too cold, you may pick him up, if you can, and carry him for a bit till they've thawed out.

Another thing that may cause problems are the soaps and chemicals that are used to clean floors. If the pads get irritated, the dog may lick them. Whatever was used on the floor is now in the dog's intestines and may cause problems there.

To keep those paws healthy, keep the nails trimmed and keep the fur between the toe pads trimmed so snow and ice don't build up there. Lubricate the pads before going outdoors. Use Vaseline, or better yet, dog paw balms available at pet stores. Don't use human lotions. Try dog booties, if your furry friend will allow it. Use only pet-safe brand de-icers, or try sand, gravel, or non-clumping cat litter. Ditch the salt! Wash the dog's paws with warm (not hot) water after walking and give them a bit of a foot massage.

Hope, why is declawing banned and even illegal in so many countries?

The answer is that declawing is cruel and considered animal abuse. It is illegal in most European countries and in Britain. Japan and Australia ban or restrict it. It is not illegal in most places in the U.S. Some cities have enacted, or are working on, bills to ban it, or require more detailed information about the procedure to be provided to those seeking it for their cats so they are aware of what it entails. Many U.S. veterinarians refuse to perform the procedure.

Why? Cat declawing is a procedure where a cat's toes are amputated at (and including) the final bone, which contains the nail. This includes tendons, ligaments and nerves. It is as if a human's fingers were amputated at the last knuckle. It is painful, and there is pain afterward. There can be long-term problems, too. After the procedure, some cats have to learn to walk again because of balance problems. They have lost their defense tool and may start to bite more. They may avoid the litterbox and urinate on smoother surfaces that don't hurt their paws as much. It is possible for claw regrowth under the skin, causing great pain.

That said, there are things to prevent unwanted scratching that damages you or your house. Have lots of scratching posts and train the cat to use them. Try a squirt gun to keep him from scratching the furniture. Cover furniture with sticky tape or repellent sprays. Trim his nails regularly.

Almost Home Foundation is a claw friendly rescue and they believe declawing is cruel and unnecessary.

Winter safety tips

Take Care of Your Dog's Paws

A dog's legs, tail, and ears are most susceptible to frostbite. While there's not much you can do for the tail and ears—besides keeping your walks short or walking during daylight hours—booties will provide some welcome warmth to your dog's paws. Booties can also protect your dog from harmful chemicals like deicers. While some ice melts are clearly marked as safe for pets, many others are not. If your dog licks his paws after walking on deicer, he may be at risk of getting sick. For dogs that refuse to wear booties, you can use a towel to wipe their paws after a walk. If you notice your dog stepped in salt, rinse the area as soon as possible.

Block Off Heat Sources

Dogs, and especially cats, may seek out sources of heat in your house as nice places to cuddle up or take a quick nap. But these spots present burn risks for pets, because they aren't aware of how hot they can get. "Cats may try to curl up next to a radiator or jump up on a wood-burning stove," she says. "Owners should make these places inaccessible to their pets during winter months."

No Off-Leash Time

While your dog might love running around outdoors off leash, it can be especially risky when the temperatures drop. Falls through ice may occur if a body of water isn't fully frozen. Additionally, dogs are at an increased risk of being hit by vehicles, including snow plows.

Increase Intervals Between Baths

Moisturizer is your best friend during the winter, but your pet doesn't have the same luxury. Baths tend to dry out their skin the same way it does yours and dry skin can cause an animal some discomfort. It's not necessary to cut out baths but you may want to cut back on the frequency of baths, and speak with your vet to find a shampoo that's more moisturizing than the average one.

Palatine Public Library Kind Service Project



Kids helping AHF

The Kind Service Project at the Palatine Library collected donations of dog/cat supplies such as canned food, dog/cat beds, blankets, kitty litter, and gently used t-shirts during the month of November. Tweens and teens in grades 5-12 had a great time repurposing items that had been donated by the community into cat treat toys, pet beds and dog toys. Thirty three people attended the final event which capped off the library's month-long donation drive for Almost Home Foundation. We thank everyone who participated.



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