

Winter 2020



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## Our featured pets



### Meet Norm!



My name is Norm. I'm about one year old and I weigh almost 7lbs. No one is sure what happened to my

back. They say I'm going to go to physical therapy. I don't know what that is but I hope it means I get to play. I love to play. I will play with anyone. I'm not picky about their size either.

I do try to walk but I fall over a lot. I like the wheels my foster mom put me in. I can really go fast in them. Mostly I just drag my back legs. I can chase my foster brothers but they are too fast for me to catch. My favorite thing to do is play tug-of-war with toys. My next favorite thing is snuggling with my foster mom or with anyone who comes over. I'm so happy at my foster mom's. I have toys, dogs to play with and people to snuggle with. I also love the treats. I hope my forever home has those things.

Oh, I should mention that I'm almost housebroken and I only chew on things I'm supposed to. I may have a little accident if I get excited, what can I say. My mom just puts a belly band on me just in case I leak a little.

If my new home has stairs, I just need you to gate them. So, if you are looking for a cuddly, friendly and playful dog that may need a little extra help, well I'm your guy. Please fill out an application and my mom will contact you!

### Meet Polly!



Polly came to Almost Home Foundation in November 2010 when she was just shy of 6 months old. She has been waiting 10 long years to find her forever family and we do not understand why.

She is a beautiful long hair dilute tortoiseshell cat. She is shy but sweet once she gets to know you. She recently had some mats and had to be shaved down, but her fur is growing back beautifully, and she is keeping herself well groomed. She needs a good brushing several times a week to keep her long fur looking pretty, and she enjoys being brushed. Polly is cat-friendly but not sure about dogs. She is looking for a relatively calm and quiet home that matches her personality.

Polly is a gorgeous senior gal with a lot of love to share! She has claws on all four paws but is so gentle that she never uses them. She is a good eater and not at all picky! She likes every kind of wet food and dry food that she is offered. In fact, she likes food so much that she became a bit chunky and we had to ration her food! Food is one way to quickly make friends with Polly and win her heart!

We want Polly to find her happily ever after in a forever home. She has been waiting a long time! Could that kind person be you?

## Rescued dogs are not inferior dogs

Not my fault! Most dogs that end up in a rescue are not there because of a problem with them but because there is a problem with their owner. Many people do not realize how much time, effort, attention and expense is involved in owning a dog. So they either abandon or give up their dog to a shelter when they find they are not prepared to meet these needs.

For example, the dog's owner cannot afford health care for the dog; the owners get a divorce; the owners have a child and decide not to keep the dog; the owner moves to an apartment that doesn't allow pets; the owner is too ill to take care of the dog, enters a nursing home or passes away.

Purchasing a puppy from a pet store is no guarantee of a healthy dog. Because so many pet store pups come from puppy mills or irresponsible breeders, they are not the result of careful breeding and they are usually not well cared for before coming to the store. Some common illnesses and conditions are neurological problems, eye problems, hip dysplasia, blood disorders and Canine Parvovirus.

Rescued dogs are screened for health and behavior problems, so you have a better chance of knowing about any problems when you adopt than when you purchase a puppy from a pet store or an unprofessional breeder.

The number of euthanized animals could be reduced dramatically if more people adopted pets instead of buying them. When you adopt, you save a loving animal by making them part of your family and open up shelter space for another animal who might desperately need it.

So adopt, don't shop!

## The Beatles song 'A Day in the Life'

In an interview in 2013 Paul McCartney said they put a sound at the end of the song 'A Day in the Life' that only dogs could hear. The Beatles recorded a dog whistle and inserted it. The high frequency 15 kilohertz tone cannot be detected by the human ear but will have your pooch singing to its own Beatles sound. How's that for an amazing fact?

## A Merry Christmas Tail Real dog meets neighbor's Christmas decoration



Sometimes it's hard to tell what's real and what's not. Checking out a neighbor's fake Christmas dog is a "must." Aside from getting acquainted with the neighbors, here are some tips to remember to keep your holiday and winter season merry and bright:

- Season favorites Poinsettias and Chrysanthemums are toxic to pets. Check the internet for other plants to avoid.
- Christmas Goose and chocolate are delectable to cats or dogs. Cats are happy to scale the heights to reach food left on high. Dogs are happy to explore food left within reach including that left under the tree.
- Dogs will drink water from the tree stand of that beautiful live tree in your house.
- Dangling ornaments, garlands and light strings are irresistible toys. Keep an eye on your pet and keep them out of rooms where there is temptation such as these.
- An outdoor hazard to YOU is black ice, especially when hidden by a light snow fall. Put the phone down and watch out for it. If you fall, that's not good for your dog!
- Anti-freeze is poisonous to all, so keep it out of reach of your animals (and kids).
- Paws, legs, ears and tails are most susceptible to frostbite. Keep paws well-groomed and remember not to leave pets outdoors for long.
- For some exercise and fun when it snows, shovel a maze path in your yard to play "chase." Toss some snowballs for those crazy dogs who are obsessed with the game.



## Ask Homer and Hope



*Homer, what is canine travel anxiety and how can I help my dog to overcome this condition?*

Canine travel anxiety is a dog's reaction to the unknown sights, sounds, and smells of car travel or to the unpleasant experiences associated with the destinations. If your dog resists getting into the car, whines, barks, or exhibits nervous responses such as shaking, wide eyes, ears close to the head, or yawning he is exhibiting anxiety.

Prevention and desensitization are two approaches to travel anxiety. Obviously, prevention works more easily with a puppy; mature dogs may already exhibit the condition. In either case, the owner needs to start slowly and patiently. The puppy should be introduced to the car with the engine turned off. You should sit with the dog for a few minutes offering praise and treats. If the dog responds positively, move behind the wheel, offering praise and treats, eventually starting the engine. When the dog is comfortable with the sound of the engine, you may begin short trips, then lengthening the trips.

Desensitization often requires getting your dog to the car because he may back away. Build your dog's confidence with praise, petting, and treats until he enters the car then continue the prevention steps at his pace. Eventually, most dogs develop positive associations. Unfortunately, some dogs require more than this. You can use blankets with your scent on it, anxiety-reducing dog jackets, supplements, and pheromones may work. Restraints such as crates, carriers, and harnesses will secure him. Medications for travel purposes may reduce anxiety but leave him lethargic for several days. As always, the vet MUST be consulted for a professional opinion about the situation.

Anxious dogs even improve with a partially opened window, air conditioning, music, potty or travel breaks. If nothing works, you may have to choose between staying home or leaving him with a sitter.

*Hope, what are the drawbacks to declawing cats and what are the alternatives?*

Cats make great pets for so many reasons. They are cuddly, independent, quiet, lovable, clean, and just too adorable! But they are not as low maintenance as many people think they are. One of the biggest things that future cat owners should be prepared for is that cats scratch things like furniture to mark their territory and as well as to sharpen their claws. In order to prevent their furniture from getting ruined, there are people who choose to declaw their cats.

Declawing cats has been a very controversial topic for a while, but it's really not recommended because it can leave cats with chronic pain and disabilities. The process includes removing all the nails and also the third joint of the toe. Even without explanation, this just sounds too painful for our little furry felines to handle. After the surgery, cats can have long-term pain in their paw, infections, tissue necrosis, etc. Imagine wearing a very uncomfortable pair of shoes for the rest of your life.

Many cities in various states have been attempting to ban declawing. So far, New York is the only state to ban declawing. It's cats' nature to scratch things for various reasons, and this is something that people definitely should consider when planning on getting a cat.

There are many alternate ways to prevent cats from scratching furniture other than declawing. Some of those include safeguarding surfaces that cats may find tempting, nail caps to act as sheaths over their claws, routinely trim their nails, get scratch posts and more. Even with all these alternate options, it may be hard to get your cats used to these things. If you don't have the patience to wait and train your cats, it's highly recommended that you reconsider owning a cat until you are ready.

## Our new kennel parking lot



Thanks to a generous grant that we received from the William Dean Charitable Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee as well as the donations from you, our generous supporters, our kennel parking lot got a much needed facelift! We are very excited! THANK YOU for keeping our dogs, volunteers, and visitors safe!



## Fun facts

Dogs are about as smart as a two or three-year-old child. This means they can understand about 150-200 words, including signals and hand movements with the same meaning as words.

When cats walk, their left front leg moves in tandem with their left back leg, and their right legs do the same. The only other animals that walk this way are giraffes and camels.

## “The cat picked me” Bring a cat home

Cat lovers often say: “The cat picked me.” And lucky you – you’ve been “chosen.”

Now it’s time for kitty-cat to take possession of you. To bring him home, you’ll need:

- A crate or carrier
- A kitty litter box and litter
- Bowls for food and water (Stainless, ceramic or glass as plastic may leach chemicals)
- Food (Try to use same food cat has been eating, if possible)
- Scratching posts
- Cat toys
- Break-Away safety Collar and ID tag with your information

Prepare the house before you bring him/her home. Look everywhere. Cats get into places you’d not suspect. They love small spaces like closets, dryers, chimneys, cardboard boxes. Boxes are okay. Just make sure they are cleared of any staples, tape, plastic lining.

Any food left out anywhere in the kitchen or house is fair game and various foods are toxic to cats. Sewing equipment, needles, pins, etc., are also favorite targets. Desk tops are ripe with hazards such as rubber bands, rubber fingers, etc. Some cats even learn to open drawers!!!

Look at all shelving, table, counter and desk tops. Cats can climb and jump high. On your shelves, anything moveable, like vases, pictures, etc., can be knocked off during the cat’s explorations. Plants and flowers are often toxic to cats and they will eat the flowers and leaves.

Check the Pet Poison Hotline, or the Humane Society websites for information on what foods and plants are toxic. Do this before you bring your buddy home.

And finally, make sure your cat is microchipped in case he gets out of the house when you’re not looking. See article in this newsletter on AHF microchips.



## Microchipping: high tech to help find lost pets

Hard to write a warm and fuzzy article about a high-tech item like a microchip. They don't have big puppy eyes and adorable fuzzy fur that make you fall in love with them. Maybe a tech guy would be fascinated by an item that's about the size of a grain of rice.



But that little piece of technology is very important for the pet owner to understand and get for the pet. So, what is a microchip and how does your pet get one?

The small chip is implanted under the animal's skin, usually between the shoulder blades. Anesthesia is usually not required. These microchips are designed to have a life-span of 25 years.



Note that the microchip itself does NOT contain the owner's information. The information it transmits is the registry information. Thus it is important that after the chip is

implanted the owner contact the registry and give them his information. And if the owner moves, or changes his phone number, after it is registered, he must make sure the registry is updated ASAP. This is especially important to do immediately as most pets don't like moves. It's a critical time when your pet may be frantic to get out the door to go find his old home.

Should your pet cat or dog get away from you without his collar and ID tags, that microchip can be your best friend. Anyone who finds your pet can take it to a veterinarian, animal control, many animal shelters, or local police, who can scan the animal with a special scanner. If a microchip has been implanted, the scanner will show the chip registration number and a phone number for that chip's brand. Then the registry can be contacted to obtain the contact information for the pet's owner.



Almost Home Foundation considers the microchip a very important part of our program. As animals come into our possession, we microchip them, with Almost Home Foundation as the registered owner.

The information is entered into our pet database. Adopter info is automatically changed to the adopter's info when that is entered into our system. If a pet already had a chip on arrival at AHF, we try to transfer the ownership on the registry into our name. If it is not compatible to our registry, then the adopter will need to transfer ownership to their contact info and the adoption coordinator will include a letter in the adoption folder explaining how to do this.

All that said, it is also important that each cat or dog have a physical collar with ID tags. That is the first thing anyone finding the pet will see and will expedite finding the owner. Microchips are the backup.

*Thank you for your continued support and we wish you a healthy and prosperous 2021!*