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Our featured pets

Meet Ned!



Ned is still patiently waiting for a foster or forever home. Despite being a good boy, Ned has been at the AHF kennel for three months now.

He is a handsome 1-year-old Great Dane mix weighing approximately 65 lbs. Ned loves all people, including kids, although he may be best in a home with older kids because he can sometimes forget his size.

As soon as you meet him, you'll see he's a sweet, affectionate boy who just wants your love. He's friendly toward everyone he meets and enjoys attention. Play, play, play is Ned's motto, especially with rope toys. He does need to work on containing his excitement a bit because a bigger boy can't be jumping up on people, but he's ready to learn.

Ned is housebroken and not destructive. He gets along with other dogs and loves to play with them. He enjoys walks, playtime, and attention from everyone. Ned is treat-motivated and knows his basic commands. Although he can be strong, Ned has good leash manners overall. No cats for Ned. For more information please email: dogs@almosthomefoundation.org

Meet Farrah!



Farrah is a beautiful calico that is 13 years old. Her owner adopted her a couple of years ago but sadly had to return her as she was too ill to take care of her. The two words that best describe Farrah are beautiful and friendly. Apart from being overweight (which she is working on), she seems to be in good shape. This poor girl is front-paw declawed and has no teeth, so she should be fed mainly wet food.

Farrah is rather lost right now as she misses her owner. As she is older, she sleeps most of the day but loves lots of attention when she is awake. She loves to be brushed, sit on your lap and sleep with you. As she is a calico, her hair needs to be brushed often so her fur stays soft and shiny.

Farrah would be suitable for any family who will love and care for her. If children are present, they should treat her gently. As she has not been around other animals, she should live in a home with no other pets except maybe a cat-friendly dog.

She would also be a great companion for seniors or someone who has recently lost a pet and is trying to fill the void in their life. For more information, please email: cats@almosthomefoundation.org



Is fresh the best

The media is flooded with ads for fresh cat food that can be customized for your feline and delivered straight to your door. The real question is: Is fresh cat food worth the cost?

Fresh cat food is trending right now and yet there are pros and cons to both fresh and traditional varieties. Let's compare them in the categories of taste, quality of ingredients, availability, shelf life, and cost per serving.

Fresh cat foods are made to feed our felines "as they would eat in nature". They are available in raw or cooked high protein combinations that advertise limited fillers. The lack of preservatives shortens shelf life so the food needs to be consumed when it is served to prevent spoilage. If your cat is a snacker, this may not work for you. These foods require advanced planning to have the needed supply delivered. Fresh Pet is available at retail pet stores but most are formulated for your cat's needs and delivered to your home. The cost per meal ranges from \$4.00-8.00/per day for the Fresh Pet brand to \$12.00/per day for others depending on brand and type of protein you choose, like duck or quail for Savage Cat. One hidden benefit is that wet food helps to keep your cat hydrated.

Canned food and kibble are readily available in pet stores and from delivery services such as Chewy and Amazon. Grain free diets have been linked with cardiomyopathy in cats. Traditional cat foods are also available in both wet and dry options to address health needs (weight control, urinary health). The dry varieties are less perishable so can be out for several hours in the cat dish without concern.

The cost for a good quality such as Royal Canin can be \$2 per meal for canned food and less for dry varieties.

In summary, if you feel that the fresh food is something that your cat will enjoy and it will give you pleasure to provide it, then by all means start investigating your options, however, If you cannot afford it or it is too inconvenient to manage ordering and thawing, don't feel guilty about that choice. Both fresh and traditional choices can keep your cat healthy when served in appropriate portions to maintain your pet's healthiest weight.

Can dogs tell time?



Ever wonder why your dog seems to know when it's time for a walk or time for dinner?

Dogs have what is called circadian rhythm, an internal sense that lets them know when to sleep and when to be active. But a large part of your dog's seeming ability to read the clock stems from his habits and repetition.

Dogs are little robots, and if you feed them promptly at six and head out for a walk promptly at seven every day, they begin to anticipate when it's close to that time. He sees what's happening in the home, by the light or shadows outside the house and with other cues, like their hunger or needs for exercise or a potty break.

Doggie brain games

Yes, your canine companion does have a mind of his own. A wonderful way to bond is to spend time with him, encourage him as often as possible to use that brain in positive ways. There are many “games” designed to further that goal. Some games you can buy in local pet stores or on-line but there’s plenty of games you can easily invent and construct yourself. But first train your dog to recognize some important words and the actions these words require of him such as: sit, stay, heel, wait, come, quiet.

Using his fondness for food treats, hide smelly treats around the house or yard. Release him to find them. Be creative in hiding treats by covering them with small rags or papers, making him work to locate them. Or in his full view, hide yourself instead of treats, calling him to come.

Take a section of rope and tie knots in it a few inches apart. Let him tug his end while you pull the other side.

To provide more strenuous mental workouts, take two cups and play the “shell” game. Put a smelly piece of food under one of the upside-down cups and then switch them around. He’ll be watching you like a hawk. Tell him to find the treat. As soon as his nose touches the cup with the food, lift it and give him the treat.

Physical games require mental activation, too. Have him chase bubbles. Create an agility course using things you have around the house. Set up poles, cords, boxes or other objects to jump over. He can jump through a hula hoop. Create mazes for him to walk through or tunnels made of boxes for him to navigate.

Fetch is a favorite game. Grab a tennis ball, toss it and tell him to go get the ball. Watch him jump as it sails through the air and pounce when it lands. As he gets older, suffering arthritis, roll the ball on the ground and tell him to fetch it. He’ll also enjoy chasing Frisbees. In winter, shovel a maze in the yard and toss snowballs for him to chase.

Teach him words. Dogs are capable of learning a hundred plus words. Just repeatedly say a word while demonstrating what it means to him. Repeat names of toys while tossing them for him to fetch. Once he knows the name of a particular toy, teach him to pick it up and put it away in his toy box.

So have fun with your dog. Remember, all the reward your dog needs is a very enthusiastic “GOOD DOG” in your happiest voice and he’ll joyfully wag his tail.

Fun facts all about eyes

Human eyes have three types of cones that can identify combinations of red, blue, and green. Dogs possess only two types of cones and can only discern blue and yellow - this limited color perception is called dichromatic vision.

Cats can see very well in low light because of their large corneas and pupils, which are about 50% larger than humans and allow more light into their eyes. This extra light helps them to see in the dark.



Ask Homer and Hope



Homer, how safe are dog parks?

Dog parks have become a hot topic among dog owners whose opinions vary from “No way!” to “My dog loves going.” Much depends upon park management, individual owners, and the dogs themselves. At best, dog parks offer positive experiences, but, at their worst, they may cause traumatic ones.

Dog parks are not all the same. Generally, they are fenced-in, outdoor areas designed for off-leash dog play. Others, however, are open, public places unsupervised by park professionals.

Both types differ in degrees of safety, cleanliness, requirements, and users. An owner should evaluate the location first. Are park rules posted? Is the fence high, secure, and double-gated? Is there a separate play area for small and large dogs? How many dogs are allowed at one time? Are the premises clean? Are there communal water bowls that spread parasites, bacteria, and viruses? Are dog owners attentive to their pets? Is rough play discouraged? If unfenced, what types of wildlife share the location? Are fertilizers and pesticides used?

Not all dogs are ready for the dog-park experience. Puppies younger than four months or dogs with lapsed vaccinations are in danger of contracting bordetella, leptospirosis, or canine influenza. Females in heat will create aggressive male behavior and perhaps unwanted puppies. Dogs not knowing basic commands may become distracted and unresponsive while dogs that have not been socialized or that act aggressively are dangerous.

Just remember, not every dog needs the dog park experience. Going for walks, play dates, or fun training classes are alternatives.

Hope, what exactly is catnip and its effects?

Catnip is a plant that has a strong smell and belongs to the mint family. It has a scientific name, *Nepeta cataria*, but people also call it “catmint” or



“catswort.” It’s from Africa, Europe, and Asia, but now it’s also in North America. There are more than 250 types of catnip in the world.

Catnip grows to be two to three feet tall and has strong stems and heart-shaped leaves. At the tips of the stems, it can grow flowers that are blue, white, pink, or purple. Most catnip toys contain dried and ground-up catnip, but it can also work if it’s fresh.

Catnip has an oil in it called “nepetalactone.” When cats smell it, special “happy” cells called receptors are activated which sense something called “pheromones.” When cats smell catnip, they might paw at, rub, roll over, chew, and even lick a catnip toy. Some may also get really excited and get frisky, meow, growl, purr, drool and act silly for several minutes! However, when a cat eats the catnip, it tends to have the opposite effect. The catnip acts as a sedative and the cat will often mellow out.

After a little while, the effect of the catnip goes away. It will take about two hours before they react to it again. Not all cats will react to catnip, but about 50 to 75% of cats will feel something. Young kittens and old cats are less likely to be affected.

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