

fall

14

animal welfare matters

A publication of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

AWLA Rescues Kittens from Fire Truck

Early one recent Sunday morning, a team of Alexandria firefighters responded to a service call in a fire truck that they had picked up from the mechanic the day before. After the call, as is the procedure, one of the firefighters went to remove the wheel stop and discovered a tiny kitten lying on the ground. The firefighters assumed that someone had abandoned the kitten and brought the hungry baby to us at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA). A staff member took the singleton home for the evening until a foster home could be located for him. Well...that was not the end of the story...



continued on page 3

Flash, Ember, Siren, Boxie and Smoke

Zara Joins the Police Department

Zara and her handler on the day of her graduation.



Zara, who was surrendered to the AWLA in September 2013, has officially joined the Police Department, City of Alexandria, Virginia, K-9 Unit! When Zara came to us, we quickly realized that she was an extremely high energy dog who needed a job and wasn't going to do well in a home. We contacted the Police Department and they accepted her into their K-9 Police Academy. Zara graduated on August 13 from K-9 School and is now proudly serving with the Police Department's K-9 Unit!

For more information, visit: alexandrianimals.org/shelter-joins-police-department.html

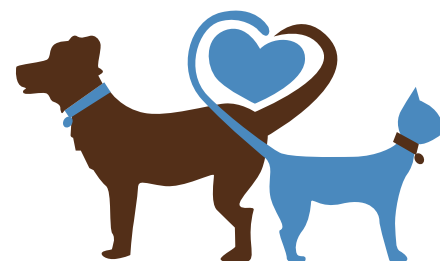
Vola Lawson Animal Shelter Adoption and Visitation Hours

Monday	9:00am – 7:00pm
Tuesday	9:00am – 7:00pm
Wednesday	9:00am – 7:00pm
Thursday	9:00am – 7:00pm
Friday	CLOSED
Sat & Sun	12:00 P.M. — 5:00 P.M.

Viewing of adoptable animals begins at noon on open days.

Connect with the League

www.AlexandriaAnimals.org
www.facebook.com/AlexandriaAnimals
www.twitter.com/AlexAnimals
www.flickr.com/AWLAevents
www.youtube.com/AnimalWelfLeagueAlex



Animal Welfare League
of Alexandria

Board of Directors

Charlotte Hall
Chair

Sharon McMichael
Vice Chair

Patrick Murray
Secretary

Lynnwood G. Campbell, Jr.
Treasurer

Robert P. Avary, Jr.

Jackie Cottrell

Kendra Davis

Dr. Jerry Hinn, DVM

Gordon Kromberg

Tykie Tobin

Diane F. Vidoni

If you're looking for a unique way to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or graduation, consider making a gift to the AWLA in honor of that special someone. If you know someone who cares deeply for animals, why not thank them for their compassion by making a gift in their honor?

Memorial gifts are thoughtful ways to remember loved ones. Gifts made in memory of people and pets go directly toward helping animals in need at the shelter. Another way to continue the legacy of helping the homeless animals is to include the League in your estate planning.

Sign up for our monthly newsletter "All About Alexandria's Animals" on our website, www.AlexandriaAnimals.org.



From the Executive Director

It has been a very exciting year at AWLA! We have been working hard to make changes to help even more animals in the community. Examples of these improvements include:

- **We nearly doubled our adoptions.** For the first seven months of 2014, adoptions rose from 532 to 855, compared with the same period in 2013. The most dramatic change was in dogs — from 189 to 453!
- **We worked to transform our adoption process to make it a more welcoming and enjoyable process for the public.** We discovered that some of the previous policies and procedures were likely screening out people who could have been great adopters.
- **We focused on finding innovative adoption options for "difficult to home" animals.** For example, we placed Zara, a high-energy, difficult-to-handle Belgian Malinois with the Alexandria Police Department, and she just graduated from K-9 School to become an official police dog with the Department.
- **We started the Adopt It Forward program,** which allows people to sponsor the adoption fees of specific animals and encourages the adopters to then sponsor another animal.
- **We now have a team of trained volunteers to take beautiful photos of our animals for adoption,** which helps publicize them to a wider audience.
- **We built strong relationships with outside shelters/rescue groups that desperately need our assistance.** We want to provide a source of rescue animals for our community residents to choose from rather than going to a breeder or pet store.
- **The volunteer program has undergone enhancements to make volunteers an even more critical part of the shelter team.** Volunteers now assist visitors with meeting animals for adoption. This has greatly improved the adoption process by decreasing wait times and giving staff more time to spend educating new adopters. With the help of the City of Alexandria, we even moved the volunteer area into the center of the shelter to help integrate them with the entire shelter.
- **We have significantly built our capacity to handle animal abuse and neglect cases.** Joe Seskey, a retired police sergeant/investigator for the Alexandria Police Department, was hired to oversee the Animal Control Department. He has worked to train the staff to handle these cases as serious crimes and coordinate with the police department and the Alexandria Commonwealth Attorney's office to charge and prosecute cases.
- **We significantly grew our team of foster parents** and our ability to place animals into temporary homes so they grow old enough and/or healthy enough to be adopted. The number of animals fostered almost doubled in the first half of the year over the same period last year.
- **We have built strong partnerships and collaborations with other organizations and businesses in the community.** We work with numerous businesses that provide in-kind services to us to help us care for shelter animals — veterinary clinics, boarding facilities that board foster animals, and groomers who take care of our animals.

We would not have been able to accomplish all of the above without the financial support of so many people. During the last fiscal year (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014), just over \$1 million was contributed by way of more than 7,800 gifts. Compassionate donors sent checks, gave online, and sponsored or participated in events. Of that amount, more than \$200,000 came through bequests. It is always humbling to receive a generous gift through the will of an animal lover who planned a donation to us to be made after they passed on. We are grateful to all of our supporters for their participation in our efforts to improve the lives of Alexandria's animals.

If you would like to receive our monthly e-newsletter "All About Alexandria's Animals," sign up at www.AlexandriaAnimals.org. Please also "like" our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/alexandriaanimals to get daily updates of our work to help animals.


Megan Webb
Executive Director



Foster Caregivers Provide Safe Harbor for Animals in Need

By Barbara S. Moffet, AWLA Volunteer

Danielle Cook can't remember the last time she slept uninterrupted through the night. She has lots of mouths to feed — newborn kittens and puppies, depending on her for survival.

Cook, 30, is one of a cadre of 50 foster caregivers that regularly assist the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria shelter with animals needing special care. "We have a foster-on-deck program, volunteers ready to pick them up and take them home within 24 hours," says Dalia Salah, the League's foster coordinator. Besides newborns, typical animals in need of foster care are those recovering from surgery, long-term shelter residents awaiting adoption, and pets who were victims of neglect and need safe housing as their legal cases run their course.



Danielle Cook with a few of her young fosters.

In the first six months of this year, the League fostered 267 animals, an 80 percent increase over the same period last year; the League provides all supplies and medical care for the animals in foster care. Three local businesses — WOOFs! Dog Training Center, Whole Dogz Inc. and Dogtopia of Alexandria — are assisting the League with foster services.

Summer can mean an explosion of animals coming into the shelter. On a recent day the League took in a fresh litter of

five Yorkshire terrier puppies whose mother had died while delivering them. Such animals need round-the-clock feeding and care, something the League is not equipped to do. "We put out an urgent request to our foster caregivers, and the puppies went into foster within 45 minutes," Salah says.

Responding to that call was Danielle Cook, who specializes in newborn animals, whose eyes and ears are still closed and cannot make it without a foster "mom." Cook placed the baby Yorkies — little, brown-furred balls that fit in the palm of her hand — in a special heated bin in her house, bottle-feeding them every few hours. "Each animal I get is different," Cook says. "Some like to be fed on their backs, others want to be held close. It's soothing for them to hear my heartbeat."

When it's time to go to work, Cook scoops up her tiny charges and takes them to her job as a veterinary technician, often carrying a puppy or kitten around in her pocket all day. She says she tries to emulate the animals' mother, until the day she must say good-bye. Around the age of eight weeks, the animals journey to the shelter to join others in search of permanent homes.

Fire Truck Kittens

continued from page 1

Later that evening, the same firefighters were back at their station and heard a strange noise coming from the garage. They investigated and realized it was coming from deep inside the fire truck-kittens crying!

They called the AWLA, and Animal Services Officer Doug Gudakunst responded. It wasn't going to be an easy task to get to the kittens — they were hidden deep in the internal space in the truck. They had to disassemble a portion of the truck, including a rear light and several other pieces, until they were able to see the dirty, hungry kittens cuddled far below.

Officer Gudakunst was then able to pull each one out to safety. They were screaming and shaking with hunger. He took them back to the AWLA where staff assisted with feeding and comforting them and found a temporary placement for them until they could be reunited with their sibling.

So what happened? The firefighters informed Gudakunst that the fire truck had been parked at the mechanic's lot for several weeks until they picked it up that day. The kittens were approximately 2.5 weeks old at the time. However, there was no way that the kittens could have survived for almost two days without their mother. Our best guess is that mom had the kittens in the truck at the repair lot and that she was in the truck with the kittens when they picked up the truck. When they responded to the call, mom must have attempted to carry the kittens out of the truck and dropped the first one, which they found on the ground. The remaining kittens were still inside the truck when they left the call to return to the station and had likely been there for about eight hours without their mom. Sadly, we were unable to locate mom. However, it is incredibly lucky for the babies that they were discovered in time, and they are all healthy and happy now and will be up for adoption soon.





Summer Camp Teaches Kids Compassion

For the past 15 years, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) has run a Summer Animal Camp for rising 3rd through 8th graders. The camp, which lasts for one week, is a great way to begin teaching children about the humane treatment of animals, how to properly care for all types of animals, and about local wildlife. Campers hear from animal experts such as veterinarians, animal care professionals, adoption counselors, and animal control officers. A Police K-9 demonstration and a special behind-the-scenes look at shelter operations are also featured. Campers even get to pretend to be veterinarians, and our volunteer veterinarians walk them through caring for an animal before, during and after surgery.

"[AWLA's camp] taught children what happens at a shelter and what is important to the community and to those who can't keep their animal."

— Trudie Thompson

Trudie Thompson. Thompson saw that there were several types of camps in the D.C. area, but was struck by the description of the AWLA camp. She said that AWLA's camp "taught children what happens at a shelter and what is important to the community and to those who can't keep their animal." She felt that it was important for children to learn these things, so she wanted to get involved and asked if she could fund a scholarship for needy children in Alexandria. Thompson made it possible to fund two scholarships, so we reached out to The Carpenter's Shelter and The Campagna Center, both in Alexandria, to find children who needed a summer camp and who were interested in animals. Two lucky girls were granted scholarships to attend camp.

In the spring, The Washington Post publicized its annual summer activities guide, which got the attention of

AWLA Summer Animal Camp runs from late June through August.

Deputy Director Joe Seskey and Animal Services Officers Alex Cooke and Megan Boyd at Alex and Megan's graduation from Rappahannock Criminal Justice Academy where they received their State Certifications as Animal Control Officers.



Save the Date



**Alexandria
Shelter Walk
for Homeless
Animals**

April 26, 2015

Honor/Memory Gifts

January - June 2014

In Honor of

Abygayl Moon
from Lynn Kawaratan
Ali Sims
from Sean Zadrovitz
Amina Khan
from Marybeth Peters
Amy Rose
from Doug and Sue Rose
Ana Lachelier
from Paul and Suzanne Lachelier
Ava Moulthrop
from Stacey Dash
Baxter
from Nancy Porter
from Douglas and Ann Rohrer
Donna Roman Wilson
from Kim Sheridan
Emlyn and Juliet Pascoe
from Erik and Emma Schipul
Fritz
from Ron and Jane Cruz
Gary Matz
from David and Kara Matz
Giada Hargis
from Earl and Kathryn Thompson
Hobbes
from Mary O'Connell
Jan Pepper
from Rebecca Mandeville
Jane Gehrig
from The Alexandria Committee
National Society of the Colonial Dames
of America
Janet Hawkins
from Thomas and Carol Skiba
Jenifer Farrell, DVM
from Bruce and Patricia Danver
Jillian Organek
from Corie Driscoll
Joe, Traci, Walter & Lucy Carena
from Chris Boron
Josef Chesney
from Jeffrey and Donna Gathers
Karyen Chu
from Hajime Hadeishi
Katrin Ventocilla
from David Pell
Kendra Davis
from Courtney Stamm
Kim Murray
from Blair Ege
Liam Van Goethem
from Constance Mackay
Lindy
from Paige Blache
Maddy McGillivray
from Gary & Michelle Lovatt
from Andrew and Chrisida McClymont
Maryann Friedman
from Amy Cotton
**Mr. and Mrs. Andrew
and Jennifer Schmidt**
from Agave Loco, LLC
Nicki
from Barbara Coffey
from Holly Feraci
from Ronnie Gold
from Margaret Smith
Pam Godwin
from Nancy Siegal
Regina Evans

from Christine Walker
Roger and Ivory
from Anonymous
Sue Jacoby
from Robert Burns
Susan J.
from Peter Ramsberger
Tim and Kari Longman
from Emily Wagner
Toni Andrews
from Julie Flynn
Verne Morland
from Todd and Melanie Condon

In Memory of

Abby Ramsey
from Charles Ramsey
Abby
from Laurie Mobley
Anna
from Marie Harte-Sanchez
Arthur
from Jim and Patti Vause
Bagger
from David Wormser
Baker Smith
from Meghan Mascelli
Beethoven and Sparkles
from Karen Carroll
Bella
from David Wormser
Ben
from Kevin and Jennifer German
Blue
from Randall and Theresa Walker
Bobbie Jo
from Karen Wilder
Bodie
from Brian and Diana Waller
Bonnie
from Heidi Fleming
Boo Bear
from Alan and Joanna Capps
Butch
from Allison Ferko
Buzz Monnot
from Marilyn Hottle
from Rebecca Monnot
Caesar
from Gena Woodward
Carta
from Page Warren
Charlie
from Susan Aubuchon
Chase
from Bessie Fickel
Chico
from Mary Hess
China
from Ayne Furman
China
from Nancy Shepard
Claire Moran
from Roger Moran
Cleo Cahill
from Chris and Amy Eversole
CMDR Robert Hurt
from Rick and Deborah Gallagher
Cora
from Richard and Julie Paisley
Danny
from Barbara Hennessey

Delores Lloyd
from Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 7327
Donna Brown Gray
from John Shanks
Dot
from C. Greer
Echo
from Thomas and Ann Hafer
Edward Felegy
from Roger Hart
Ellie Paulston
from Leah Yoo
Ellwood McMullin
from Gloria Morgan
Emmy
from Jean Keeting
Erin R. Williams
from George Mason Elementary School
Erin R. Williams
from Gordon Johnston
Erin R. Williams
from Sandra Mortimer
Fenway Hoffman
from Brad Ulery
Francis
from Denny and Carol Leshock
Freckles
from Karen Wilder
Harry Manaher
from Patricia Sobol
Iney Webster
from Jonathan and Jannelle Welch
Jack
from Joe Quigley
Jake
from Kathleen Rankin
Jameson Brown Short
from Laura Sherman
Jeff Jarvisvuvu
from Katherine Pitsch
Jerry
from Ana Jones
Joan Smith
from Stephen Nailor
Joanna Befke DeRing
from Rick and Debbie Hohlt
John Hall
from Lynnwood and Deborah Campbell
John Hall
from Charles and Jackie Cottrell
Joshua and Evelyn
from JoAnn Williamson
Kali
from Kirit Doshi
Katie
from Steven and Carolyn Riegel
Kosmo
from Liam Barber
Lady
from Diana Ridenour
Lexi
from Angela Robinson
from Joseph and Donna Wilson
Lila
from Alan and Ellen Rosenblum
Lilly Webb
from Karen Elsbury
from Kristin Perry
Lily
from Charlotte Hall
Louie
from Ron and Linda Blank
Lynn Reardon

from Brian and Diana Waller
Maggie
from David Levy
Mary Beth Hull
from Brian and Diana Waller
Maverick
from Fur-Get Me Not Pet Care
Max Loomis
from Nancy Winchester
Mickey
from Frank and Suzanne Talbot
Mimi
from Catherine Maddux
Mocha and Blueberry
from Monica Rodgers
Molly
from Katherine Gekker
from Emily Radford
Jim and Patti Vause
Mya
from Hillary Michaels
Nara
from Suzanne Elbeze
Nipper Mathews
from Denise Matthews
Norman Gunnerson
from John and Lea Sloan
Onyx
from Nancy Porter
from Fur-Get Me Not Pet Care
Paddy
from Edward and Anna Lenz
Pixie Samchisen
from Brandi Samchisen
Pudgie Boccia
from Peter Boccia
Punkin
from Peggy Seskey
Rascal
from Catherine Cockrell
Reilly
from Margaret Hodges
Richard Swigart
from Alan Caldwell
Rick Swigart
from Jan Amundson
Riley
from James Carlson
Riley
from Juliet Hranicky
Robert Kennedy
from Eileen Marousek
Ruth Arnold
from Sarah Taylor
Sally Chalmers
from Catherine Martel
Sapphire
from Nancy Porter
Sara Mackey
from Julia Boeminghaus
Sassy
from Scott Raps
Scout
from Sharon Gardiner
Seamus
from Mary Ann Hoffman
Sheba Trepper
from Joseph Dennison
Sheba
from Alexandria Pet Care, Inc.
Sheba
from Mary Lawrence
Shelby Hunter

Honor/Memory Gifts

January - June 2014

from Ellie Shea
Shirley Wilson
from Lake Beverly Forest
Civic Association
Shirley R. Wilson
from Jason Walsh
Smokey
from Cody and Karen Thongtavee
Sophie
from Marie Harte-Sanchez
Sparky Mathews
from Denise Matthews
Splash
from Donna Krochak
Stella
from Katherine Emrisek
Stewart Fabian

from Caleb Henderson
Suzie
from Megan Webb
Suzie and Rosie
from Charlotte Hall
Tia Patt-Romano
from Lisa Romano
Tigger Hyde
from Andrew and Meredith Barbour
Tilly
from Robert Burns
from Lorraine Douglas
Toby Lewis
from Marsha Murphy
Trivet Norton Waldrom
from Sheryl Rapee-Adams
Trixie

from Marie Harte-Sanchez
Virginia Howard
from Joanna Rider
Vola Lawson
from Commission On Local Government
from Karen Darner
from Jacqueline Davis
from C. Dees
from D. Jean Dickerson
from Sheila Drews
from Frank and Louise Fowler
from Christopher Henry
from Sarah Hollander
from Florence Hosp
from Randy Kell
from Robert and Betty May
from Gwen Stokols

from The Bockorny Group, Inc.
from Frances Vaughan
from Christa Watters
from Your Rail Agent LLC
Widget
from Victoria Lee
Winnie
from Dean Hill
Woody
from William and Barbara Lynch
Xena
from Pet Care by Kaye Brown

Thank You!

Cat Memorials

Kingstowne Cat Clinic

Mimi	Timmy
Onyx	Toby
Freddie	Rocky
Daddy Meow	Jeffrey
Meow	Gibson
K.D.	Myer
Maple	Polly
Truffle	Moo Moo
Spunky	Elsie
Mitzy	Squeek
Nikky	Sassy
Hannah	Susie Q
Oz	Ndereba
Amalie	Nevada
Little Man	Tabitha
Mocha	Mistletoe
Liberty	Sophie
Molly	Sunny
Takoda & Tattinger	Boo
Zeus	Kitty
Simba	Basboos
Divot	Noel
Willow	Taz
Asa	Daizie
Mike the Tiger	Jasper
Smoke	Lucy
Ditto	Kitt
Kitty Kitty	Gracie
Anna	MooMoo
Mystery	Binkie
Shelly	Hank
Mr. Big	Tattinger
Angel	Sweetie Bear
Mouse	Lena
Toulouse	Spencer
Buffy	Baby
Sable	Hunter
Othello	Tia
Jasmine	Calie
Genghis	Amber
Snickers	Patter
Xena	Cookie
Janie	Sophie
Mercury	Charlie
Emmi	Sissy
Nancy	Grady
Meisha	Juliet
Princess	Sunny
Simon	BK

In Memory of Judy Frost Chesley

In the fall of 2013, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria's (AWLA) Development Department was contacted by a devoted friend of Judy Frost Chesley, an Alexandria resident who had recently passed away. Judy's friends wanted to honor her wishes by memorializing her with a donation to the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, operated by the League, and asked what might be needed. After speaking with Animal Care staff, it was determined that examination lamps would be ideal.



In December 2013, a generous check arrived along with a gold nameplate. A collection taken by Judy's friends would purchase two examination lamps - one for cat exam and one for dog exam. There would even be money left over to contribute to Rosemary's Senior Fund, a special fund for senior animals with special medical needs.

Judy's friends described her as a huge spirit and loving life force. Her memory will live on here at the AWLA through her generosity and legacy.

Peking is on the Mend

Puppy Peking recently had heart surgery to correct a congenital heart problem that would have been fatal. This surgery was made possible by generous donors to AWLA's "Sarah's Fund" - our donation fund for the care of shelter animals with serious medical issues. Peking is making an incredible recovery! Thank you to everyone who contributed to Sarah's Fund to help pay for her lifesaving surgery, to the team of Chesapeake Veterinary Cardiology Associates for performing the surgery, to WOOFs! Dog Training Center for caring for Peking when she was a tiny puppy, and to the wonderful fosters who have been providing her with lots of love and comfort pre and post-surgery. Please watch our website and Facebook to track Peking's amazing progress.



Peking relaxing at the river.

A shoulder to cry on for thousands who've lost pets

By Barbara S. Moffet, AWLA Volunteer

It all started about 35 years ago with a newspaper ad from a British doctor seeking a volunteer driver for a new concept in America — something called a “hospice.” Then-Arlington resident Kathy Reiter didn’t know the term but wound up taking the job — and eventually facilitating support groups for grieving widows and widowers.

But the project took an unexpected turn. “People started coming up to me after the group meetings and confessing that they actually were there because their companion animal had died and they didn’t know how to cope,” Reiter recalls. “I realized that someone needed to start a support group especially for loss of pets.”

At the time, Reiter had a much-loved 10-year-old cat named Prince who had just been given a few months to live by a veterinarian. “I made a bargain with the universe that if I could get a support group started, the tradeoff would be my cat not dying,” she says.

Reiter went on a mission, appealing for sponsorship from numerous organizations. Many people thought the idea sounded crazy. Finally, the Fairfax Animal Shelter agreed to set up a pilot program at a local library. In the first six months, more than 1,000 grieving pet owners had made their way to the meetings, traveling from as far away as West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Some 30 years later, Reiter is still leading monthly support groups as a volunteer, at both the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. Trained as a psychiatric social worker with a specialty in grief and bereavement, Reiter believes her true education has been simply listening to more than 75,000 people share their stories of loss of a pet, whether it’s a cat or dog, parrot or ferret, rabbit or snake. “Grief is as individual as a fingerprint,” she says.

About half of those who gather in Alexandria or Fairfax have



Kathy Reiter holding a puppy from the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria on Potomac Riverboat Company's "Canine Cruise."

recently lost a pet, Reiter says; the other half are preparing to say good-bye to one whose end is near. People take part on a confidential basis — no one need give a name. Reiter says participants have included a father who steals away from his family to shed tears over a beloved cat. Or a police officer who’s lost a longtime K-9 companion. Or a soldier whose faithful combat dog made the ultimate sacrifice. A few months ago, six

people in the Alexandria group all had experienced the sudden death of their pets; Reiter says they took great solace in talking to each other. “Most people find great help simply spending time with others who can validate that it is legitimate to grieve the loss of your companion animal,” she says.

Looking back, Reiter feels the “universe” took her up on the bargain: Reiter’s ailing cat Prince lived to be 23.

Note: Kathy Reiter’s support groups are held at 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and the third Wednesday of the month at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. For details, go to www.alexandrianimals.org or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter, or contact Reiter at 703.280.2244.

Alexandria organizations team up to aid seniors and their pets.

By Jim Palumbo, AWLA Volunteer



Dan Bernstein is a dog volunteer with the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and a driver for Meals on Wheels for Senior Services of Alexandria. He has now combined both of these interests by driving for the AniMeals program too.

Two of Alexandria’s service organizations, Senior Services of Alexandria and the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA), have developed a unique partnership to help the area’s senior citizens.

Alexandria’s senior population is expected to grow 33 percent by 2030 according to the 2010 census. With 45 percent of the area seniors living at moderate- to low-income levels, it is critical to identify solutions to the various needs of the area’s mature population. Senior Services of Alexandria works with city partners to provide programs and services including Meals on Wheels that allow seniors in the City of Alexandria to age with dignity. The Meals on Wheels program seeks to counter the social isolation many seniors experience and the corresponding problem of malnutrition.

Senior Services of Alexandria is now working with AWLA to expand the program to include food delivery for seniors’ pets — a program now known as “AniMeals.” This novel approach leans on research showing how pets play a key role in improving the health of elders. The UCLA Center for Health Policy, for example, found that companion animals can play an important role in keeping individuals healthy and happy. AWLA gathers and stores the donations of pet food and supplies while Senior Services of Alexandria provides the volunteers to transport the items to the seniors.

The two organizations will also co-host a speaker series event on the “Bond of Seniors and Their Pets” on Sept. 10 from 9:30 a.m. until noon at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, 4101 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA. Topics will include Senior Pet Program, Health Benefits of Pets, and Keeping Your Pets Happy. To RSVP for the event or to support “AniMeals,” go to www.seniorservicesalex.org or call (703) 836-4414, extension 10, and to learn about AWLA go to www.alexandrianimals.org.



Announcements

Make your pet a superstar by entering the **2015 Alexandria Animals Pet Photo Calendar Contest**. The contest runs until **September 15**, so enter now and get family and friends to vote for your pet at www.AlexandriaAnimals.org/calendar. For more information or if you would like to become a sponsor, please call **703-746-4774**.



The Del Ray Artisans and the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria present "All Creatures Great and Small", a showcase of animal art on display from **August 3 – October 26, 2014** at the **Vola Lawson Animal Shelter**. Viewing times are **Monday- Thursday, 12-7 PM** and **Saturday-Sunday, 12-5 PM**.

AWLA will host "Seniors and Their Pets," a collaborative effort with Senior Services of Alexandria, **Wednesday, September 10 from 9:30 AM – noon** at AWLA. To RSVP, please go to www.seniorservicesalex.org or call **703-836-4414 ext 10**.



Need your daily dose of cute?



Follow us on social media!



"Like" us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/alexandriaanimals



Twitter
[@alexanimals](https://twitter.com/alexanimals)



Instagram
[@alexanimals](https://www.instagram.com/alexanimals)



Vine
[@AlexAnimals](https://vine.co/AlexAnimals)



Animal Welfare
League of Alexandria

4101 EISENHOWER AVE, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304 | (703) 838-4774

A new approach to adoptions at AWLA

By Amanda Heincer, AWLA Volunteer

People seeking to adopt animals from the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) may notice some changes in the shelter's approach to adoptions. By partnering with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to evaluate its adoption process, AWLA discovered that some of its previous policies and procedures were likely screening out people who could have been great adopters.

The new adoption process is designed to make it more welcoming and more educational for potential adopters. AWLA staff members are now trained to ask potential adopters open-ended questions that catalyze conversations rather than depending on questions that have a defined "right" or "wrong" answer. Katie Faxon, adoptions and community outreach manager, said, "Our focus is on good conversations and customer service. It's about having mutual respect for each other."

The open-adoptions approach also emphasizes working with people to solve problems and match them with the right animals for their individual situation. "I have been excited to see the many more adoption matches we can make when we eliminated the automatic list of reasons to deny an adoption," said Faxon. For example, a man who did not have a permanent residence came to the shelter seeking to adopt a cat. In the past, the shelter would have automatically denied his adoption because he was technically homeless. However, the staff talked to him at length and discovered that he drove a large truck across country and wanted a cat as a companion. Based on the information the man provided, the staff introduced him to a cat who absolutely loves human attention and the two immediately bonded. He now has a riding companion -- and the cat has human attention all day and night.

Studies have shown that people who are denied an adoption at a shelter generally become frustrated with the entire adoption process and turn to a breeder or a pet store instead. AWLA's goal is to build a mutually respectful relationship with people and help them to think through what it means to be responsible for a pet rather than simply denying their adoption. Since making the changes in approach to adoptions in early May 2014, the adoptions numbers are trending up. The AWLA adopted out 224 dogs and cats to loving homes from May 1, 2014, to June 30, 2014, nearly twice as many as in the same period last year.

Javar - Owner Pled "No Contest"

Javar, a friendly, 100-pound mastiff, was dumped by his owner in a parking lot in Alexandria. Thankfully, an observant citizen copied the vehicle's license plate. Javar had a severely injured back leg that was more than three times its normal size. Our Animal Services Officers rescued Javar and took him to VCA Old Town Animal Hospital for emergency veterinary care. Sadly, Javar's leg was too badly injured to be saved and had to be amputated. However, he has recovered and is happy in his new adoptive home with a 150-pound mastiff brother and has been renamed George! Our Animal Services Officers investigated the case, tracked down Javar's previous owner in Washington D.C., and gathered enough evidence to charge him with criminal abandonment, neglect and crossing state lines without a health certificate. This individual has been prosecuted and has pleaded "no contest."

