

fall

15

animal welfare matters

A publication of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Dogs From Meat Farms Finding Joy in Their New Lives

AWLA Coordinates Regional Placement of 23 Dogs from South Korea

It's been almost nine months since AWLA received 23 dogs rescued by the Humane Society International (HSI) from a dog meat farm in South Korea. We agreed to coordinate the placement of these dogs for multiple reasons. First, we knew that this operation would, of course, completely change



the lives of the 23 dogs. Secondly, we believed it would bring attention to the issue of dogs killed for food and place pressure to change this practice. And, finally, we knew that we could utilize this opportunity to bring media attention to the important work of our organization and our sister shelters in the region.

AWLA quarantined all 23 dogs at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. The dogs had lived in harsh conditions at

the farms, as they waited to be sold and slaughtered for food. Many of them arrived here very frightened and in poor physical condition. Our veterinarian, Dr. Kaci Angelone, worked with HSI to gather all of their medical paperwork, then reviewed this information with the Health Department and examined and then treated each dog as appropriate. After five days of quarantine, we coordinated the transfer of some of the dogs to our sister shelters: Animal Welfare League of Arlington, The Washington Animal Rescue League, Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Loudoun County Animal Services and City of Manassas Animal Control and Adoption. Media coverage of the dogs' arrival and transfer resulted in boosts in general adoptions at all of the shelters, benefitting animals across the region.

So, how are the Korean dogs doing now?

We are thrilled to report that many of the adopted dogs have made a remarkable transition to living the American dream. One of them, newly

Photographs by Shelley Castle Photography



named Minnow, is still close to home for us — she was adopted by an AWLA staffer. Minnow came to us as a shaggy puppy with a serious leg injury, the last dog in the group to arrive at the shelter, and our Deputy Director, Abbie Hubbard, agreed to foster her throughout her surgery and recovery. Now a permanent part of Hubbard's family, Minnow has adapted beautifully to living with Hubbard's four parrots and can be seen at the shelter daily in Hubbard's office.



Continued on page 8

Vola Lawson Animal Shelter Adoption and Visitation Hours

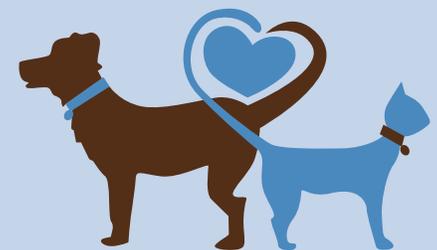
Monday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday CLOSED
Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Sat. & Sun. 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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.instagram.com/AlexAnimals
www.youtube.com/AnimalWelfLeagueAlex

Our hours have changed!



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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

Last week, as I was driving to work at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, I spotted a turtle crossing busy Eisenhower Avenue. Fortunately, I was able to stop my car, pick it up and release it into Cameron Run, out of harm's way. I am sure you too have had similar encounters with wild animals in our community. The work we do every day at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria reflects our mission to protect all animals in our city, including wildlife.

Fully half of the calls that AWLA's Department of Animal Services receives concern wildlife, often animals in distress who need our help urgently. Our Animal Control Officers receive extensive training in the best ways to safely and humanely handle the animals native to our region so they are prepared for any situation that may arise. They respond to everything from rescuing an injured beaver hobbling along the Potomac, to releasing two panicked adult deer who were trapped in a tennis court, to capturing a turkey vulture who had been hit a car, to saving five mallard ducklings on Oronoco Street stranded when their flock was attacked by crows.

Our officers know when to rescue an animal and when to leave it alone. They often end up explaining to concerned citizens that a baby animal left alone isn't necessarily in trouble — its mother is frequently nearby, foraging for food, and will be returning. However, in other situations, wildlife do need our assistance, usually because of human encroachment. For example, two baby raccoons whose nest fell to the ground after a tree had been trimmed had to be rescued by one of our Animal Control Officers and brought to a wildlife rehabilitator for care and nurturing.

Wildlife are part of the fabric of life in Alexandria. AWLA is the city's first responder for wildlife in need.


Megan Webb
Executive Director



Why We 'Adopt it Forward'

Don't know what to give Albert for his birthday or Dawn and Donnell for a wedding gift? "Adopt it Forward" and give the gift of love by paying animals' adoptions fees in your friends' honor. Read why Leah Mazar and Joe Gillmer of Franconia, Va., "Adopt it Forward":

"Adopt it Forward" is so much more than just paying for someone else's adoption fees. The program can bring to the forefront pets who may have been overlooked or at the shelter for an extended period of time. We have found that when we participate in Adopt it Forward, often the pet we sponsor is adopted within days — or even hours! We go out of our way to choose the longest-tenured residents, so that really does demonstrate the effectiveness of the program. It is a wonderful way to support the shelter and link pets to wonderful fur-ever homes."

For information on Adopt it Forward, go to:

<http://alexandriaanimals.org/adoption-information/adopt-forward.html>

Volunteers Reach the 1,000-Hour Mark

Shelter volunteers are critical members of the AWLA team. They exercise and socialize the shelter animals, assist the public when they come to the shelter in search of the perfect animal companion, and help with laundry and dishes.

AWLA staff recently celebrated one individual as he completed 1,000 hours of volunteering with us — Dan Bernstein. Bernstein has been volunteering with AWLA since December 2010, working as a dog companion, behavior and training assistant, volunteer mentor and at special events. Through countless hours of training and practice, he has become skilled in our behavior modification protocols for dogs and has provided ongoing support and dedication to our dogs with special needs.



Dan Bernstein (center) and AWLA staff

Bernstein is not the only volunteer who has hit the 1,000-hour mark! Tykie Tobin and Cindy Broome each have contributed 1,000 hours and recently drove all the way to Maine and back to deliver three of our semi-feral cats to a new life. Ellen Flynn and Nancy Posey surpassed 1,000 hours years ago. Flynn started volunteering for the AWLA in 1978 and is our longest-serving volunteer; Posey began volunteering in 1988 at the shelter's former location.

Other volunteers who count 1,000 hours are Mike Shera and Sandy Rittenhouse. Shera comes in three times a week to tackle the mountains of laundry generated at the shelter each day. Rittenhouse splits her volunteer time between socializing cats at the shelter and opening her home to cats and kittens as a foster caregiver. Read about our 1,000-hour foster volunteers in a future newsletter. To register for a volunteer information session or learn more about how you can volunteer for AWLA visit, our website at <http://alexandrianimals.org/volunteerfoster.html>.

We salute them all and thank them for their tireless work!

Get Your Cameras Ready!

Does your dog look at a camera and smile, or do your cats like to snuggle together? Or maybe your guinea pig shares dried papaya with your cockatoo? If your pet is especially adorable, capture the moment, and he or she could become the 2016 Alexandria Animal of the Year! The winner not only becomes a city celebrity but also the pet will get a glamour shoot by photographer Shelley Castle and the pet's owners a photo shoot of their own by Gena Roma Photography!

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria's annual Calendar Pet Photo contest begins Aug. 17 and ends on Sept. 17. Any pet is eligible to enter — any cat, dog, bird, fish, hamster, rabbit, turtle, guinea pig, lizard or snake can strike a pose. Just submit your pet's photo online beginning Aug. 17 at www.AlexandriaAnimals.org/calendar.



Each entry costs \$30, but there is no limit to how many animals one person or family may enter. Every pet that is registered for the calendar contest will have a place in the calendar, regardless of votes, and those with the highest numbers of votes will be featured as pets-of-the-month or as the cover model "Alexandria Animal of the Year." Once you register your pet, encourage your friends and family to vote for your pet's photo to ensure prime placement in the calendar. Votes are \$1 each, with a minimum donation of \$5.

Pet calendars will go on sale in November. All donations and monies raised from the contest go toward programs and operations of the shelter and AWLA, including animal adoption and foster programs, humane education programs, behavioral training and other services designed to reduce homeless animal populations in the City of Alexandria. Information about sponsorship opportunities is available at **(703) 746-5580**.

Donations Help Bring Emaciated Dogs Back from Brink

Photographs by Shelley Castle Photography

The story of a German shepherd mix dog called Everest couldn't be more dramatic: He and his parents and two siblings were victims of severe neglect and were extremely emaciated when they arrived at the shelter. Everest himself was near death, not likely to survive even another day. But we should never underestimate the power of our donors and supporters. After reading about Everest on Facebook and elsewhere, they came forward with generous funding that financed care for Everest at VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital, including three days of intensive-care treatment. He rallied and is looking more healthy and vibrant every day, recovering in a foster home.

His brother, called Olympus, has recovered and has been adopted, and so has Everest's mother, now known as Kayla. Everest's sister, Himalaya, and his father, now called Kingston, are receiving special behavioral training.

Everest and his family members are grateful to all who cared enough to give them their new lives!



Left to right: Himalaya, Everest, and Olympus

Bats Quietly Doing Good in Our Own Backyards

By Barbara S. Moffet

Reprinted with permission from the Alexandria Gazette

Spring and summer are the busiest of times at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, and that includes citizen calls about encounters with a particular mammal: bats. Starting each April, an average of one or two calls comes in each week to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA), which operates the shelter, describing a bat flying around a bedroom or another part of a citizen's house. If an AWLA Animal Control Officer dispatched to a home finds that the bat has not had direct contact with a person, the officer will merely net the animal and release it outside. But if there is a

possibility that a bat could have bitten a person, the officer will capture the bat and, working closely with the city health department, euthanize it to test for rabies.

Brian Rees, AWLA's Chief of Animal Services, says he has found that many people are extremely afraid of bats, in part, he believes, because of cultural misunderstanding. "Bats are portrayed as evil in vampire movies," Rees said, "and there also is a perception that all bats are rabid, which is far from the truth."

Continued on page 6

Happy Outcome for 8 Cats Locked in Truck

The word "rescue" comes up a lot about dogs and cats that find their way to the shelter, but "rescue" couldn't be more appropriate to describe this situation: Eight cats, left abandoned in a U-Haul truck for at least five days, without food or water. When our Animal Control Officers responded to the scene in Alexandria, the cats were found to be in terrible condition. They were all dehydrated and very thin. Brought to the shelter, our veterinarian and other staff took over, examining and treating each of them and monitoring them closely for many weeks.

The good news is that the Animal Control Officers were able to track down the owner of the cats and serve him with 16 criminal summons for cruelty and abandonment. And, in part because of extensive information provided to the court by our Officer, the owner pleaded guilty to a count of animal cruelty and received a 30-day suspended jail sentence. His sentence remains suspended for a year, conditioned on his good behavior and agreement not to own any companion animals. The Officer received a note of commendation for his work on the case from the Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney.

The other good news is that, at the time of this writing, more than half of the cats had been adopted, including an orange one called Dumbledore, who had captured the hearts of the staff with his hugs. Two of the other cats rescued, Lovegood and Weasley, were awaiting adoption, and a black-and-white spayed female called Malfoy was receiving nurturing in a foster home.



Weasley relaxing at the shelter

In Honor of

Basil
Carolyn Perry
Baxter's Birthday
Nancy Porter
Steven & Daisy
Berbeco/Wheeler
Thomas Annen
Bernadette's Friends and Staff
Dennis White
Bisco
Roberta Klein
Brandy, New Volunteer
Suzanne Barkyoumb
Ava Calese 's Birthday
Moiria Irvin
Edna Capps
Joanna Capps
May Carpenter
Shejal Desai
Catherine Cavey
Michael and Stephanie Kurka
Bahar Pinto
Jackie Cottrell
The Staff of Senator Pat Roberts
Caroline Deering
LILI Romero-Desimone
Jessica Durand
Brian Drozd
Everest
Laurie Alstrom
Stephen Benante
Arthur and Mary Blitz
Stanley and Sandra Bysse
Lindsay Chervinsky
Peggy Conner
Sharon Cooper
Anonymous
Katherine Dols
Theresa Dombrowski
Stacey Henderson
Cindy Hoag
Jenny Hyde
Sara Johnston
Julie Kapral
Jeffrey McQuilkin
Lucinda Meehan
Linda Morefield
Hope Nelson
Sarah Pinner
Deidre Schexnayder
Elizabeth Shanks
Ynette Shelkin
Nancy Ramsey
Mary Sommerville
Alan and Sandra Yamamoto
Barbara York-Taylor & William Taylor
Evin 's Birthday!
Kate Kramer
Hannah Goldberg
Julia Heit
Eileen Hanarhan
Karen Papouleas
Tara & Roger Hardiman
Keith Bratt
Autumn Hayes
Maria Getoff
Ices Econ Experiment
Ices Econ Experiment Id272
Walter Jacobs
Mary Quattrini
Sooyun (aka Cub) Johnson
Kristine Lindely
Cathie Kaplan
Barry Davis & Laura Santini
Kodi
Christa Lotesoriere & Ronald Richards
Sarah Kotulan
Robin Clark
Paul Krizek
Tracey Navratil
Eric Larson
Maria Jimena Pinzon

Lucky
Jane Strnad & Stephen Wilkes
Verne Morland
Melanie Condron
Alexandra Ladd Musser
Mr. & Mrs. William Musser
Olive the Cat
Tim Gainor
Paco
Rachel Malatesta
Lindsay and Brandon Parsont's Lemonade stand
Heidi Parsont
Evin Phoenix
Jasper Pitkin
Benjamin Pitkin
Jaime Todaro
Premier, P2, Skye, and Jessie
Mary Panus
Rae
Phyllis Diamond
Ray and Liane
Ray and Liane Goodwin
Jamie Richardson
Jamie Richardson
Riverside Rockets Pennies For Paws
Trina Robinson
Kelly Escarrega
Laura Russell
Heather Lyons
Andrew Schmidt
Agave Loco, LLC
Rowan Robert Smith's Birthday
Imelda Tiongson
Smokey
Robert & Claudia Madigan
Karin Stack
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Millett
Sadie and Winnie Strauss
Hillary Michaels
Remington Sullivan
Michele Carneiro
Chloe Sundstrom
Amanda Sundstrom
Tako
Brian Fazzone & Sachie Fazzone
Jennifer Wolf
Karen Hackman
Tank & Diva Wylupski
Warren Wylupski

In Memory of

Louie Adcox
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Sally Alanko
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Heidi Allen
Will Walsh
Roberta Ballenger
Timothy & Virginia S. Lutz
Nelson Bender
John and Janet Loomis
Bullwinkle Berti
Charlene Berti
Blue
Theresa Walker
Bo, the Great Dane
Ynette Shelkin
Moriarty Boltz
Kristin Alberse
Joan T. Brown
Angela Cannon
Cooper Bryant
Susan Bryant
Buci
Darlene Branges
Crystal Byorick
Mary Bahr
Mr. and Mrs G. Esteve
Richard Gilfillan
Robert Greenawalt
Sue Klemm
Kevin MarvelAnna Mays

Crystal Byorick continued
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Patricia Salamone
Richard H. Schumacher
Rufus Carlson
Sandy Yamamoto
Chandler a loving cat
Hal E. and Margaret Hallgren
Clancy
Mary Murphy
Connor
Scott Raps & Jenna Solomon
Marianne Conrad
Karen Thongtavee
Cow The Cat
Harvey and Linda Wenick
Angel Cox
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Max Deathe
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Delilah
Anne Cockrell
Bear Depeyrot
Del Ray Animal Hospital
Dillon
Norma Muller
Echo
Thomas and Ann Hafer
Ella and Louie
Reiner Specht
George Engle
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Connor Faircloth
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Solomon
Heffalump Felder
Merle & Jeff Felder
Tysen Fenley
Mr. & Mrs. William Creswick
Larry Frommer
Sara Bartley
Judy Bernal
William and Diana Crompton
Lee Ghiglio
Gordon and Jeanie Ginsburg
Granville Knox
Harold and Mildred Lamm
Francis and Susan Mardula
Bruce and June Nagler
Daniel and Sandra O'Keefe
Janice Stucki
Frances Vaughan
WLT and JTT
Eleonora Worth
Alan and Sandra Yamamoto
Maddy Gibson
Karin Viera
Gilbert
Sheryl Campbell
Maggie Griffin
Karen Griffin
Joyce Gustafson
Sheila Hayes
Michael Harrell
Janice Bigelow
Mike Harrell
Gary Jones
Pritchard Industries, Inc.
Jack Hildebrand
Susan Mathy Patterson
Ruth Hogue
Marnie Moore
Camry Holland
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Jake
Denise Livingstone
Jasper
Lilia Murphy
Jessie & Jacob Adopted From AWLA
Janice Geiger
Julius
Telly Meier
Katie
Jennifer Quarmby

Lexy Kennington
Michael Williams
Keynes
Anonymous
Kingston
Jennifer Rand
Oksana Korzeniowski
Alexis Moch
Umbro Kuhmerker
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Nascar Leith
Aaron and Nancy Leith
Bella Lewis
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Lucky
Betsy Biff!
Lucy
Gena Woodward
Maddie
Les and Susan Ravitz
JP Madrid-Obenski
Noah Waisberg
Magic
Keith Levingston
Baird Manarin
Walter H. Mullikin
Millie Pearl Mancini
Arthur Bajet
Dodie Meyer
Elizabeth Woodard
Leo Mickelson
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Midnight
Arthur and Linda Schwartz
Jane Milan
Alan and Deborah Brudvig
Demi Miller
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Miss Mattie
Georgia Dillaplain
Mom & Dad
Leslie Thornton
Roxie Moorhouse
Richard Moorhouse
Vera D. Morrison & her beloved dog
Bandit
Judy Sigrist
Sergei Murray
Blair Ege
My Ben
Zuzana Pacious
Nicholas
Anna and Deb Fuller
Nick
Barbara Calveric
Nikita
Linda Mellgren
Noel
Ann Cardoni
Noel
Lorraine Douglas
Maddie Notari
Erin Kasch
Nutmeg
Peg Caianiello
Daniel F. O Flaherty
Cody and Karen Thongtavee
Brady Oreskovich
Julie Greenwood
Patsy
Anita Edwards
Petey
Jane Schleicher
Maddie Petro
Noah Petro
Duke Phillips
Abigail Hughes
Pippa the lovely Elkhound
Carl Posey & C.E. Wadia
Zachary Primeau
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Christie Raukar
Donald Baur & Phebe Jensch
Mr. & Mrs. Don Bennett

Continued from page 5

Christie Raukar *continued*

Jennifer Colvin
Dario Gomez
Sam Gunderson
Kenneth Harris
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Johnson
Marcey Max
Ladonna Neterer
Occoquan Yacht Club
David Olive
Perkins Coie Foundation
Joy Robinson
Anne Marie Turner
Potomac River Yacht Clubs Association
Virginia Barnes
Camille Geiger

Reina

Marie Harte-Sanchez
Ashley Rogalski
Alice Rogalski
Rosita
Paola Cox
Shelley Rudawsky
Patti Rudawsky
Sarah
Sharon McMichael
Mac Schultz
Hillary Michaels
The Sheiner's Dog
Pierce Klemmt
Chili Sheiner/White
Joanne Broderick

Maurice Silverman

Erma Gibber
James Johnson
Bernice Lee
Arra Mazor
Anne Muckerman
Emily Soapes
Maya Slye
Marissa Mitzner
Mary Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Hartshorn
Jennifer Tanner
Jennifer Tanner
Ripken, Dempsey & Diva The Cats Of Petsage
Carol Ramsdell

Tigger & Pooh

Michael Toguchi
Brutus Torres
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Andrew Triplett
Donna Karlin
Trixie
Lynn Chinnaraj
Moses Turchetta
Diane Turchetta
Leah Turowski
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Micah Tye
Drs. & Staff of Del Ray Animal Hospital
Trivet Norton Waldron
Diana Waldron
Buford Wietecha
Julie Iversen

Cat Memorials

Kingstowne Cat Clinic

Abigail

Ally
Belle
Dascha
Demetri
Dweezle

George

Harvey
Iris
Joy
Lama
Madison

Maggie

Mao Tse Tung
Miss Kitty
Nadia
Nighty
Pappy

Roxanne

Sierra
Sky
Suuki
Teddy
Tigger
Xavier

Bats Quietly Doing Good in Our Own Backyards

Continued from page 4

Reprinted with permission from the Alexandria Gazette

In an effort to ensure staff is handling bats safely and humanely, AWLA recently invited, Leslie Sturges, president of the Save Lucy Campaign bat conservation organization, based in Annandale, to give a presentation to staff. AWLA welcomed staff from shelters, rescue groups and health departments from surrounding counties to take part. Participants even had a chance to “meet” two live bats.

Sturges told the group that bats struggle on a daily basis against the perception that they are dangerous pests that need to be eliminated. Myths swirl around the animals, among them:

- “Bats often carry rabies.” In fact, Sturges says, most bats are not rabid.
- “Bats are rodents.” Although many species have tiny, mouse-like bodies, bats are members of a separate mammal family known as Chiroptera.
- “Bats swoop down to attack people.” Bats flying toward people mostly do that out of curiosity, Sturges says.
- “Bat excrement is toxic.” Not true.

The world’s only flying mammal, bats have been found to have high levels of social intelligence. They are the most important predators of flying insects, gobbling up mosquitoes and other bugs as they fly, saving the U.S. agriculture industry at least \$3.7 billion a year in pest control. Some species around the world also serve as important pollinators.

Nationwide, bats are threatened by loss of habitat, pesticide poisoning, fatal collisions with wind turbines and lethal encounters with humans and cats, Sturges says. But an even darker shadow now looms over the nation’s bats: A fungus known as white-nose syndrome has spread through bat caves in 26 states and eastern Canada, wiping out colony after colony. The syndrome has virtually eliminated Virginia’s population of little brown bats, which once roosted by the thousands in caves across the state.

“We are losing bats at a very rapid rate,” Sturges said. “Bats are in very serious trouble.”



One of Your Neighbors Might be a Raccoon

By Barbara S. Moffet

Reprinted with permission from the Alexandria Gazette

This is the time of year when Alexandrians might step out into a yard or alley and encounter a masked creature, wearing stripes. Raccoons, born in the trees in spring, are descending to street level to search for food.

Though they're nocturnal, it's not unusual for an urban raccoon to walk around during the day, says Animal Control Officer Tammy Doran of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA). Raccoons are well adapted to city life, she points out, and when they can't pursue a typical diet of berries, they find sustenance in what people leave behind in their trash cans.

The AWLA, which operates the city's Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, responds to calls from citizens concerned about raccoons they've spotted, especially in the summer. Doran says that if the animal appears healthy, citizens should leave it alone. But AWLA officers regularly come to the rescue. Earlier this summer a limb of a tree in Alexandria bearing a raccoon nest broke, sending the babies to the ground. Still solid brown, without the adult mask and striped tail, the week-old kits were screeching for food but allowed a gloved Animal Control Officer to pick them up and bring them back to the shelter. The shelter sent them on to a wildlife rehabilitator for a second chance at life.

Raccoons can wind up with a rehabilitator for many reasons: being accidentally left behind in the nest, getting struck by a car, or being attacked by a dog or other animal. Virginia has some 300 permanent wildlife rehabilitators, some specializing in nursing injured raccoons

back to health, even those with serious injuries such as a broken leg or jaw.

"They try to raise them in groups like they are in the wild," says Dr. Dave McRuer of the Wildlife Center of Virginia. "Raccoons are very social, dynamic animals." McRuer says that citizens who come across a baby raccoon should not assume that it has been orphaned. A mother raccoon often moves her brood from den to den, and she does it by carrying each kit in her mouth, one at a time.

Raccoons are the most common vector of rabies in the United States (the others being skunks, foxes and bats), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control data put the East Coast at the center of the nation's reports of rabid raccoons. A raccoon might be rabid if it appears disoriented or aggressive, Officer Doran says. The Virginia Department of Health has recorded only one case of wildlife rabies for Alexandria this year, and it was a raccoon, says environmental health biologist Daniel Sherwood of the Alexandria Health Department, which works closely with the AWLA on suspected rabies cases. The larger nearby jurisdiction of Fairfax County, however, has logged 10 rabid raccoons this year.

Sherwood points out that mandatory rabies vaccines for pets have helped greatly reduce rabies among dogs in the United States; less than 10 percent of all rabies exposures involve domestic animals such as dogs and cats. But each year some 40,000 people in the United States receive rabies shots because of a possible exposure to a rabid animal.

And some 55,000 people die every year from rabies around the world, many of them due to contact with rabid dogs. Sherwood recommends three actions citizens can take to avoid rabies:

Avoid direct contact with wildlife. Teach children never to handle wild animals or unfamiliar domestic animals.

Make sure all pets are vaccinated. Unvaccinated pets that come in contact with rabid wildlife are likely to die or have to be euthanized.

Avoid placing large quantities of food out for feral cats. Without close monitoring, such feeding locations tend to draw both wild and domestic animals and can lead to confrontations and the spread of disease, including rabies.

Authorizes point out that most raccoons do not carry rabies.



Young raccoon in glove of animal control officer

"Bats are portrayed as evil in vampire movies, and there is also a perception that all bats are rabid, which is far from the truth."

– Brian Rees, AWLA Chief of Animal Services

South Korean Dogs Finding Joy in Their New Lives

Continued from page 1



Abi, a Corgi-cattle dog mix, got twitchy whenever anyone would enter her kennel at the Animal Welfare League of Arlington shelter. But everything changed when Jackie and DJ Woodell came along: They combined extensive research on dog socialization with their own uncanny instincts about how to make Abi feel safe. She now sits on people's laps, plays with toys, and walks on a leash in the woods and near busy roads, all without displaying fear.

When David Wyttentbach met Luna at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, she was skittish and afraid of people, but patience — and exposure to Wyttentbach's other dog — has transformed her. She now loves romping in the yard with her "sibling" and, especially, cuddling with Wyttentbach.



Judy Bjornaas chose Charlie, a Jindo-breed brown-and-white dog with tiger stripes on his face, at the Washington Animal Rescue League (WARL). Charlie quickly settled in to home life, despite his past in the meat farm, and loves running around outside with the family and their other pets, especially at the family's West Virginia retreat.

Cocoa was a frightened dog, until she met Sam Matlick at the WARL. Matlick, a volunteer there, was asked to socialize Cocoa and some of the other puppies from South Korea. After fostering Cocoa, Matlick and her partner decided to make it official: Cocoa was adopted.



Nani landed at the apartment home of Jon Commike and his fiancée, who had found the blondish-white puppy at the WARL. They report that Nani has adjusted well to her new environment and loves parading around Shirlington on her leash. Commike says it's touching to see Nani so happy every day.

Melissa and John Riston chose a whitish five-month-old called Bear at the WARL, and they've kept a journal of his new life with them. After overcoming initial shyness, Bear now spends much of his time playing with the couple's other dog and snuggling on the couch with the Ristons.

Photographs by Shelley Castle Photography



The Ackman family of Purcellville, Va., was looking for a new companion for their two young daughters and their Lab mix dog. Deciding to check out the new arrivals from Korea at the Loudoun County animal shelter, they immediately fell for Bo, now renamed Beni. They report that Beni is friendly, gentle, happy and healthy — and settles down every night to sleep with the Ackmans.

The journey has been a bit longer for two Jindo mix dogs called Jazz and Lilly. Terrified of people when they first arrived, they have received extensive behavioral training from DC Shiba Inu Rescue. They are now available for adoption as a pair, though their new owners will be required to take an online class on taking care of fearful dogs. Go to <http://dcsir.org/adoptionfoster-forms/> and Facebook for more information.



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