Coping With the Loss of a Pet

By Kathy Reiter, Pet Loss Specialist

For many who are pet owners, grieving the loss of a companion animal can be more of a challenge than any human loss people have faced. One of the main reasons for this is that your animal was such a major part of your life, daily routine and existence. Questions that surface are: What do I do now? How am I going to survive this pain? Do I get a new pet or wait? My prescription: Seek bereavement support through a local animal shelter group to discover that you are not alone and to find the answers to your questions.

Why is pet loss so hard on humans? Unlike many of our human relationships, our pets love us unconditionally and do not judge us. Once one has experienced the joy of that human-animal companion bond, the loss of those reciprocated feelings and friendship over the years can be devastating. Unfortunately, some people who don’t have pets perceive our behavior as abnormal, not recognizing that for years our “best friend” has been a major part of our life.

On another level, many religions do not acknowledge that animals have souls. The decision to euthanize a pet takes great courage, yet is the greatest gift and testimony of our love. We are ending our pet’s pain and suffering.

The most important thing grieving pet owners can do is to acknowledge that they are in pain. If one dodges one’s feelings and does not overtly express them, both physical and emotional illness can occur. Grieving compromises the immune system — it is very important to get adequate rest, nutrition and exercise during these times.

Everyone grieves uniquely in their own way and at their own pace. What may console one person may not work for another. If your pet died suddenly, and you did not have a chance to say good-bye, consider writing the animal a letter to express your feelings. As with human loss, having a memorial service is also beneficial, as it marks the formal beginning of the grieving process. Your service can be as simple as saying a few words, collecting photos, lighting a candle or putting your pet’s collar on your rear view mirror.

Over time memories fade. Write down as many of those memories as you can of your pet’s life. This bereavement exercise will help your emotions surface. Yes, you may cry — that’s the goal of this task. When you feel you are ready, begin replacing those memories of pain with the hundreds of memories that brought you joy. If you find you do not have anyone who understands your situation, consider attending a pet loss bereavement and support group at a local animal shelter or individual coaching to better help you cope with your loss.

Note: Kathy Reiter leads support groups at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria on the first Wednesdays of each month (the next session is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on February 4th) and the third Wednesday of the month at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. For details, go to www.alexandriaanimals.org or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter.
From the Executive Director

Vola Lawson’s Animal Legacy

It has been a little over a year since we lost our dear friend and fellow animal lover, Vola Lawson. Vola Lawson was Alexandria’s city manager for 15 years beginning in 1985. She made huge changes in the city including opening a new, modern animal shelter that was later named in her honor and that is now run by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA).

As the Executive Director of AWLA, I think of Vola every single day and remember her regularly telling me “Megan, I want AWLA to help even more animals.” I know she would be proud of the progress we have made in the last year. We have dramatically increased our adoptions, including more than doubling the number of dogs that we have adopted, from 303 in 2013 to more than 700 in 2014. The huge support from the community in adopting animals from AWLA enabled us to double the number of animals we transferred in from other shelters and rescue groups this year. Vola would be so happy.

Vola also wanted to see that we were a safe place for animals with special needs and loved to hear their adoption stories. Vola also loved to see us transform animal’s lives and make their futures better. A dog called Ben is just one of those animals that has had a true life makeover.

We will continue to work towards Vola Lawson’s vision of helping as many animals as possible and to serve as the community’s resource for animals in need.

Megan Webb
Executive Director
Senior’ Pets Can Make Perfect Companions
By Barbara Moffet, AWLA Volunteer

Gabe Chu, a 35-year-old patent examiner in Alexandria, knew just what he wanted when he arrived at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter a few months ago: an older dog, not too high-energy, one who would like hanging out with him at home.

Adoptions Manager Katie Faxon immediately thought of a 9-year-old black-and-white pit bull they were calling Rachael Ray. It was as if Chu already knew her.

The two met, they clicked, and Chu and the dog — whom he has renamed Marcelline — are now daily companions. Faxon says it was a great match.

Why did you choose to adopt a senior pet?

Kiki was recently adopted from AWLA at the age of 16. Her adopter said, “I looked at it as if it was my grandma. She is 90 years old and still kicking. I wouldn’t want someone to drop her off at a homeless shelter. The dog is great, we love her to pieces! She even became friends with the neighbor’s dog.”

Tiger is 14 years old but you would never know it from looking at him. He says age is only a number! Tiger has had a full lab workup and all of his values are great. Tiger did have some teeth issues that are common with senior animals that had been treated through the donations to Rosemary’s Fund.

Senior pit bull, Marcelline, in her glamorous new life. Photo by Gabe Chu

“A lot of people don’t know that they want a ‘senior’ animal — they may not realize what it’s like to cope with a puppy or kitten that needs tremendous amounts of attention and exercise,” she said. “Senior pets are especially great for young adults — people really can’t be at work all day and then go out for drinks with friends if they have a pet waiting for them at home in need of two hours of play.” She says older pets also can be right for senior citizens — and are free at the shelter to those 65 years and older.

The Vola Lawson shelter, which is operated by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, often houses “senior” pets — defined as age 7 or 8 and up for cats and dogs and younger for rabbits, guinea pigs and ferrets, which all have shorter life spans. And though it’s the kittens and puppies who tend to be in greatest demand from the adopting public, older animals, even those in their very last years, can make ideal pets. Faxon points to a friendly, energetic toy poodle called Midnight who found herself at the shelter after her owner died. Fourteen years old, she had a few minor health problems but enthusiastically greeted everyone she met. Senior pets like Midnight often get extra TLC at the shelter — Midnight spent her time in one of the shelter’s offices instead of a cage to ease the transition from her previous comfortable residence. She found a new home.

Older animals who arrive at the shelter can receive support from the AWLA’s Rosemary’s Seniors Fund, which pays for services like diagnostic tests and dental care that are sometimes needed before an animal can be put up for adoption. Faxon says the shelter does not euthanize pets because of old age, unless requested to do so by the owner. If an animal is found to be terminally ill, the shelter will seek help from outside foster groups for special “fospice” care for the pets’ last days.

“I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of people willing to take on an aging cat — or fall head over heels about a dog who needs brain surgery,” Faxon said. “We have lots of happy endings here; the last picture we saw of Marcelline (Chu’s pit bull), she was wearing goggles and riding in Gabe’s convertible.”

Note: Animals are available for adoption at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Visit www.alexandriananimals.org or call 703-746-4774. Some of our senior animals have been identified as “Shelter Snowflakes” during our “Whisker Wonderland” adoption promotion Dec. 1-31. Adoption fees for these “Snowflakes” are waived during this time.

Donate to AWLA’s Rosemary’s Fund to provide special care for senior shelter animals.
Pets Line Up for Their Moment With Santa

In early December, a few well-chosen volunteers at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) put on a fake beard and a bright red suit at the Olde Towne School for Dogs in Old Town Alexandria for a shift as Santa for some of the area’s most treasured pets. They raised over $16,000 for the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria in three days.

For 22 years, the dog school and pet-supply store has hosted professional photography sessions with Santa to benefit the AWLA, which operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. Pet owners line up with their companion dogs, cats, rabbits, birds and even snakes to have photographer Alison DeSilva capture a shot of their loved ones perched on Santa’s knee — as many as 300 animals each year.

“We move a pet through the process every five minutes for two and a half days,” said Carlos Mejias, owner of the Olde Towne School for Dogs. “Timed with Alexandria’s annual Scottish Walk parade, people come from all over the region, pets in tow. The animals, especially the dogs, don Christmas bows, hats, jackets, antlers or blue Hanukkah scarves as their owners entertain visions of them on their holiday cards or computer screen savers. “Most of the animals are cooperative,” said Mejias, who is in charge of posing them after they land on Santa’s lap. “It gets a little crazy when we try to get two or three dogs to look cute at the same instant. And it’s pretty impossible to get an expression out of a rabbit.”

Patience is the most important quality in a volunteer Santa, Mejias said. “The costume is really warm,” he explained, “and you can have animals biting you or urinating on you and trying to jump out of your arms.”

One Santa who had patience in abundance was Joel Robert Cannon. Cannon, who died in 2012, served as a volunteer Santa for many years and never seemed to tire of it, even as emphysema robbed him of his breath.

“Joel was always very jolly. We sometimes had difficulty pulling animals away from him,” Mejias recalled. “He’d be cuddling a dog and just didn’t want to let go.”

A Taste of the Outdoors for Alexandria’s Cats

By Barbara Moffet, AWLA Volunteer

The feline residents of the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter will soon be glimpsing blue sky and breathing some fresh air. A “catio” under construction on the shelter grounds will be the animals’ new playground — a fenced outdoor area with a specially curved top that will prevent escape.

The catio is an effort by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, which operates the shelter, to recognize that cats need to stretch their paws and get outside from time to time, but in a safe space. “Cats that roam outside face so many dangers — getting hit by cars, encounters with wildlife, poisons — that we really encourage people to keep their cats inside,” says Abbie Hubbard, the League’s director of animal care.

She recalls numerous times cats have been brought to the shelter suffering from injuries caused by run-ins with cars — and even a kitten whose ears were sheared off by a lawn mower. Fortunately, that one survived, with aid of veterinary care, and was eventually adopted.

Hubbard says that an expanding array of products, such as outdoor mesh enclosures, provides ways to create safe spaces for cats. Screened-in porches also can put cats in touch with the outdoors while keeping them at a safe distance from vulnerable wildlife. Apartment dwellers should be aware that cats who fall from open windows or balconies can sustain serious, even fatal, injuries.

Increasingly, cats are following in their canine pals’ footsteps by taking walks with owners, sporting harnesses and leashes made for cats. Cats should be introduced to that concept gradually, Hubbard says. She suggests that cats’ human companions start the process by putting a harness on the cat while indoors, for just a few minutes. “If your cat likes treats, make sure the treats come out when the harness does, so the cat will enjoy the experience,” Hubbard says. After several times, a leash can be attached to the harness but allowed to just hang on the floor until the cat becomes comfortable with it. Finally, the cat and human can venture outside on short trips. “It won’t be like walking a dog,” Hubbard says. “The cat will probably choose the direction it wants to go, or it may just perch somewhere to watch birds and inhale outdoor smells.”

Adrienne and Joel Robert Cannon pose with their shelter dog Lucy. Mr. Cannon served as a volunteer Santa at the photo sessions for many years.
In Honor of
Addie Louderback from Whitney Louderback
Alexander Aj Terio from Stephanie Chaik-Zaitsev from Vivian Lott from Sandy Yamaroto from Joseph and Bonnie Price
Anne and Kevin from Mr. and Mrs. Steve Hurst Beni Brooks from Becky Brooks Betty Hicks from Dan Hicks
Brian Hall and Cory Thornton from Michael Amin from Geneva Pope Buddy Woo from Joe Gilmer and Leah Mazar Gilmer
Charlotte from Brad Ulery and Kristin Neubauer David Brummersted from Laura Wilson
Dignity/Northern Virginia Blessing of Animals 10/4/2014 from David Lamdin and Dignity/ Northern Virginia
Dr. Shannon Talbott from Linda Coleman
Elaino Gordon from Nora Brennan Emily Wegenner from Lauren Kitts
Fancy from Barona Whiting-Green
Garth and Pin Davis from Diane Davis
Grayson O'Donnell from Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Freeman
Honey Abrams from Carol Abrams and Steven Orlovitz
Isaac Andoot from Ken and Samantha Andoot from Samuel Burkholer from Marya Peacock and Joseph E. Peacock
Jan Pepper from Rebecca Mandeville
Jane Murrell from Joshua and Luisa Murrell Jenna & Scott's Wedding from Jenna Solomon
Jennifer O'Boyle from Hugh and Marianne O'Boyle
Jennifer Birtwhistle from Stephanie Ballan from Julie Hall from Lisa McCaskill
Joan McCaileen from Barbara Avard from George and Jean Chamberlain from Ms. E. Lynn Hampton from KMA-RC
from Eric McKissack from David and Judith Moira from Robert and Karen O'Neill from Phil Roberts from R.L. Vivian
Kona Woowoow Mazar Gillmer from Joe Gillmer and Leah Mazar Gilmer
Layla Bouchard from Deborah Nelson from Lindsey Chapman from Adam Walker
Lisa and Doug Austin from Debbie Kobrin Lucky from Jane Strand and Stephen Wilkes
MacKenzie Nelson from Tabitha Temple
Margret King from Donald and June King Melissa Speake from Rebecca Stack Michael and Ruthie Smith from Marc I Greenberger
Nori Hill from Roger and Betty Capeland
Oliver (formerly Tyson) from Benjamin Stearn
Peking from Alison Lockhart DeSilva, DeSilva Studios from Richard Florence from Jean Kearn from Suzanne Masback from Nora McAdie from Eve Sebasta from Elizabeth Shanks from Deborah Suski from Jennifer Tye and DC Taste from Cathryn Attfield
Sable from Mrs. Claudine Mahin Sarah Taylor from Elizabeth Arnold Shaggy from Hillary Barger from Karen Bazzle from Erika Carroll from Beverly Tatum
Shane, Willy, & Emma Garner from Mr. and Mrs. James and Christine Garner
Siggie from Sheila Petaccia from Snug Chapple from Rebecca Huppert
Spencer from Dr. Lisa Harvey
Susan Richardson from Priscilla Glazow and Jerry Glazow
Tara Gross from Peter and Barbara Jacobs
Tisha Fitzgerald from Maria Fitzgerald
Tracy Kurnot from Tracy Kurnot and Diamondrock Hospitality Company
Trixie from Lynn Chinnaraj
Zake Williams from Sheryl and Zeke Williams from Cara Fratta

In Memory of
Alden and Simon from Scott Sanderford and Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home
Amy Barden from Julia Bancroft
Amy from Nancy Thompson
Angel from Gilbert and Maria Siegert
Anne and Kashana Tallman from Kashana Tallman Trust and Ellen Rayner
April (Maxine) Clark from Stephan Clark
Atticat Gaugh from Robert Williams and Sarah Zapolsky
Austen and Brioch from Les and Susan Ravitz
Babette from Andree Johnson
Bage and Lulu from Gordon Squires and Kenda Nitta
Bailey Roman from Joseph and Donna Wilson
Barbara Cohen from One Noble Bella Menzies from Mimi Menzies
Bobbie from Sam and Rosemarie Garrett
Bohd from Judith Branting
Boone Peregriny from Loren Lippman
Bowser McCue from Sean and Heather McCue
Brett O'Brien from Susan Mathy Patterson
Buddy Marmada from Brian and Karen Marmada
Buzz Lankford from Allison Fox
Carl Raskin from David Wormser and Janet Hawkins
Cassatt from Pet Care by Gaye Brown
Charlie Cadigan-Wilson from Sharron Fitzgerald
Chevy Boldman from Christine Becker
Chewy from Alan and Ellen Rosenblum
Chloe Burton from James and Jane Sleee
Chompie Meadows from Jennifer Moore
Christine Krason from Eddie Von Arsdale
Clint Coursey from Michael Pope and Hope Nelson
Coco from Nancy Porter
Cosmo from Thomas and Margaret Johnson
Daishy from Kimberly Harrington
Dakota from Nancy Porter
Dapple from Dean Hill and Nori Hill
Days Hammel from Patricia Haig
Dazzle from Sherry Pappas
Derrick (the Cat) Greenwood-Lehman
Dervish from Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Eastman
Dewey Bittel and Elin Chiang
Dizzy from Russell Hiezel
Donald Bonnell from Ann Carney
Dusty Majikout Ryan from Bobbi Russell
Eileen Thompson from Eileen Vilkas from Paula Tebben
Ellen Coffin Bancroft from David and Carolyn Abshire
from Sara Bartley from Laura Celso
from Suzanne Hemp from King's Jewelry and Norman Bradford from Audrey Mark from James and Erla Matheson from Edgar and Margaret Moxan
from Jonathan Sade from Dudley and Elizabeth Thomas from Judith Willard from Elizabeth Pentecost from Jennifer Tindell
Farley Collins from Wendy Beachter-Tuthill
Felix Bunn
from Mr. and Mrs. Douglas and Judith Feaver
Finn Downey from Jeff Lutton and Dogtopia of Alexandria
Fluffy from Maria Sorrell
Frances Formicola from Yvette Shelkin
Franklin Caruso from Lynnwood and Deborah Campbell
Friend's Mother from Catherine Dee
Gene Boms from Francine Tuck
from Emily Weems from Rick Olson from Jennifer Schaeffer Gordon Compton from Trudie Williams
Grace Riggen from Jennifer Pipa
Harrison Rabbit from Rachel Talbert
Huckleberry Armstrong from Sherrie Armstrong
Jack from Nancy Dapalo
Jack the Cat from Dennis and Claudia Argyros
Jackson Meyerson Schwartz from Jessica Meyerson
Jacqueline Chichester from Althea Burns
Jason Williams from Harry and Ann Williams
Java and Hannah McIntosh from Joanna McIntosh
Jennifer Fay from Richard Fay
Jennifer Knittel from Stuart Rudolph and Virtual Agility
Jock Davis from Jean McFarlane
Joel Robert Cannon from Adrienne Cannon
Johnson Y'Barbo from Lindsey Voala
Jules F. Billard from Patricia Mankin
Karen Vasquez from Richard Perryman
Kilpatrick Amoroso from Sherry and Wilbert M. Mahoney Kira from David Levy
Kuma Menza from Ann Arnold
Lexi Zaruski from Tara Zaruski Liam Weigl from Jack Shapiro
Lilly from Mindy Klein and Gloria Stewart
Lola from Trish Nicoloson
Loraine Kehl from Julie Blankenship
Louie Jones from Sharon Walker
Lukey Stokols from Robert Lorenzo
Luna Weidon from Jeff Feider
Marlon Schoeck from Marlene Moore
Marlene Curry from Dr. Denise E. Bruner; M.D. & Assoc. PC
Marley Waldack from David and Kari Waldack
Marney Miller from Thomas Oliver
Mary J. Hess from Ashley Eddy
Max Lewis Wilson from Ruben Sanchez and Marie Harte-Sanchez
Megan Scanlin from Megan Scanlin
Michael and his beloved animals from Richard Perryman
Midnight from Marrie Moore
Bunny Love Blossoms at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

By Barbara Moffet, AWLA Volunteer

She was a large, mostly white, Himalayan rabbit who'd been at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria for a few months since traveling there from a puppy mill in Arkansas. He was a smaller bunny with a brown coat who had arrived with a few other rabbits from the Prince William County shelter.

They had never met until the staff decided to move both of them to pens on the floor of the shelter’s cat room, where they would live surrounded by cats in cages. The message: Rabbits and cats can coexist.

It wasn’t long before the two rabbits — known by the staff as Alice and Bopplty — noticed each other. “I was walking past the cat room one day and saw Bopplty in Alice’s pen,” recalled Chelsea Lindsey of the League’s adoption staff. “Alice was grooming Bopplty. I ran in and put him back in his pen, and 20 minutes later he had managed to get back over to her pen. By observing them, I learned that he was jumping up on a box in his pen and onto the partition and then down to a box on Alice’s side.”

Lindsey and the staff realized that whether it was bunny love or something else, the rabbits had made their preference about their living arrangement clear. Down came the partition, and the two rabbits, who have been spayed and neutered, began cohabitation. Now, they rarely leave each other’s side. They do seem happier now, Lindsey says. Alice, who hadn’t been the most cuddly bunny at first, has warmed up and will now get on people’s laps. Patches on Bopplty’s speckled-brown coat have filled in, leaving him with a lush appearance.

Along with rabbit pellets, Alice loves to eat fruit and vegetables, sometimes stealing food from Bopplty. Much larger than he, Alice has no trouble throwing her weight around. “She definitely wears the pants in the relationship,” Lindsey says.

We publicized Alice and Bopplty’s romance and they soon had human admirers. The two were adopted together.
Alexandria: Caring for Animals

Story and Photos by Shirley Ruhe
Reprinted with permission from the Alexandria Gazette

A loud meow hangs in the air as the brown tabby struggles against the small needle inserted in his hind leg. Deidre Seifried, animal care technician, says, “This blood test is part of the intake procedure that also includes vaccines if necessary, inserting a microchip and a ‘snap detail’ physical exam. It starts with the mouth, nose and goes all the way to the end of the tail.

“Looks like the ear is a little sensitive; it seems irritated,” she observes as the cat twitches this ear back and forth to avoid the cotton swab. She says, “I don’t know if this one is a stray or surrender.”

Meg Price, the veterinary care coordinator at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Shelter who is helping with the cat, is also recording all of the results in a computer database. The animals receive vaccines if needed and a behavioral evaluation with behavioral modification if necessary. People want to know if a pet is good with children or if they get along with other cats or dogs. The animals receive two physical examinations, one when they come in and one before adoption so they can see if anything has changed.

Seifried moves to the “healthy hold” that is lined three-deep high with cages where cats are waiting to move up front to the adoption area. She thoroughly scrubs out the empty cage, puts in a new food and water bowl, removes the old blanket to send to the laundry.

Deidre Seifried takes a blood sample during the intake procedure at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Shelter on Eisenhower Avenue while Meg Price helps with the procedure.

“This is for the next cat.” Each cage has a chart which has times and dates of food, water, litter change and some of the spaces have yellow stickers with notes. “Grain free,” “Staff Only,” Seifried says, “This one hiding inside the box is skittish, possibly feral.” Upfront in the Ready for Adoption section, the visitors can walk inside the cages so they can meet the cats up close.

At any one time the shelter can have up to 100 cats and 60 dogs plus a number of small animals such as rabbits, turtles, parrots, chinchillas, and fish. Seifried has been at the Alexandria Animal Shelter since May 2013 and was trained on the job. “I was an engineer,” she said and then I worked in construction. But I adopted my dog, who had come from a puppy mill, and I decided to help animals.” She added that her dog has come a long way in two years from hiding in another room to sleeping on her bed.

As she moves by the kitchen stacked high with cans and bags of food and a super size jar of peanut butter, she picks up a large rubber Kong. “We can put peanut butter inside the rim of this toy, and it takes the dog a while to chase it around and eat it.” Out in the hall a pile of laundry is waiting to be washed and returned to cages. “That’s my job, too, but the volunteers help a lot.”

At the end of the hall she contemplates a stack of pillows, blankets, pet toys and cans of food. “That’s for me later this afternoon — to put the donations where they go.” She points to a large white board mounted on the wall with responsibilities by day and by hour. A medical transport person hurries down the hall to take a dog to a contract vet for a special procedure.

Barking in all sizes greets Seifried as she opens the door to the public dog area with rows of large cages lining both sides. “The dogs have a wonderful support from volunteers,” she says. “They take the dogs out for a walk, have enrichment activities where they try to teach the dogs things — even some play groups to help with some behavior.” And each dog has access to a dog run on the outside through a door in the back of his cage. As she walks down the aisle of dogs, she points to Ben, a tricolor mix beagle with a proud sign on his cage, “I have just been adopted.” Across the way is an empty cage. “Yup, that’s La Fonz. He just left last night.” Seifried says a lot of people come in and get depressed. “But the upside is that the animals are living somewhere where they are well taken care of.”
More than Dogs and Cats

We help all kinds of animals, including wildlife. For example, a citizen recently called us about an injured bird on Seay Street. Animal Services Officers Megan Boyd and Ken Howes responded and found a red-shouldered hawk in distress. They safely moved the hawk into a crate and transported the bird to Raptor Conservancy of Virginia (RCV) for care. RCV is treating the hawk for a fractured wing and hopes to release the bird when he has fully healed.

Care for Injured Animals

Many of the animals who we take in to the shelter have serious medical problems that require extensive veterinary treatment. We are able to care for these animals because of the donations to AWLA’s Sarah’s Fund to specifically support the care of severely sick and injured shelter animals. Moe and Luna are just two of the animals who have recently received care funded by these donations.

Moe, a young pit bull, was hit by a car and had severe injuries to both of his legs. He had to have painful bandage changes almost every day to treat his wounds with an antibiotic cream. Moe would just stand still, stoically, while our vet treated his horrible wounds. He didn’t even need to be restrained! After over a month of care, the wounds are almost healed and scar tissue has filled in. Moe will be available for adoption soon.

Luna is a kitty who fell from a balcony in Alexandria and broke her back leg. Her leg was so badly shattered that the best option was to have it amputated. Luna is recovering well and is feeling much better. Her story is an important reminder that cats don’t always land safely on their feet, so it is important to protect cats from dangerous heights.

Announcements

Lace up your walking shoes and join the AWLA on Sunday, May 3rd for the third annual Alexandria Shelter Walk For Homeless Animals. The 1.5-mile walk through the streets of historic Old Town will begin on Market Square at 9:00 a.m. Everyone in the community is invited to join us on the square after the walk for food, face painting, activities for kids and dogs, and to meet the adoptable animals we have at the shelter.

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