

winter

15

# animal welfare matters

A publication of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

## 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 get 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



Photo by Kathy Reiter

Cyndy Guarino reads to Jake, her beloved companion of 15 years, as they celebrate his life and prepare to say goodbye

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.alexandrianimals.org](http://www.alexandrianimals.org) or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter).*

### 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	9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.
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](http://www.AlexandriaAnimals.org)  
[www.facebook.com/AlexandriaAnimals](https://www.facebook.com/AlexandriaAnimals)  
[www.twitter.com/AlexAnimals](https://www.twitter.com/AlexAnimals)  
[www.flickr.com/AWLAevents](https://www.flickr.com/AWLAevents)  
[www.youtube.com/AnimalWelfLeagueAlex](https://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](http://www.AlexandriaAnimals.org).



## 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.

### Ben's Story


*Before*



*After*



Ben had lived his entire life on a chain. His world was a patch of dirt and a small wooden dog house. Thankfully, our friends at Potomac Highlands Animal Rescue were able to get Ben and bring him to us. Ben was very difficult to handle when he arrived at the shelter — he was powerful and overstimulated by his surroundings. With regular training from our staff, advanced volunteers and help from Olde Towne School for Dogs, Ben began to learn how to focus and calm down. Ben has now been adopted and his life is now very different. His new name is Rocky and he loves to lounge on his couch and go to the dog park every day.

  
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 Marceline — are now daily companions. Faxon says it was a great match.



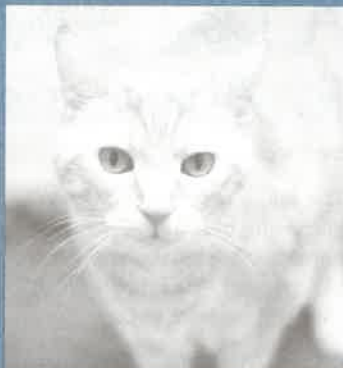
Photo by Gabe Chu

Senior pit bull, Marceline, in her glamorous new life.

## 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.*



*Roxanne is a very special spayed senior-aged St. Bernard who came to us as a transfer from Potomac Highlands Animal Rescue. She needed veterinary care, including a mass removal. She has just been adopted! Shown above with her new family, the Pospesels.*

"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 Marceline (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.alexandrianimals.org](http://www.alexandrianimals.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 screensavers. "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."



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.



## 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 drag 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."

## In Honor of

**Addie Louderback**  
from Whitney Louderback

**Alexander Aj Terio**  
from Stephanie Schalk-Zaitsev  
from Vivian Lott

**Alan and Sandy Yamamoto**  
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 Gillmer and Leah Mazar Gillmer

**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

**Elinore Gordon**  
from Nora Brennan

**Emily Wegemer**  
from Lauren Kitces

**Fancy**  
from Barona Whiteing-Green

**Gabe & Pinot 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 Burkholder  
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

**Jennifir Birtwhistle**  
from Stephanie Balian  
from Julie Hall  
from Lisa McCaskill

**Joan McCallen**  
from Barbara Avard  
from George and Jean Chamberlain  
from Ms. E. Lynn Hampton  
from ICMA-RC  
from Eric McKissack  
from David and Judith Mora  
from Robert and Karen O'Neill  
from Phil Roberts  
from R.L. Vivian

**Kona Woowoo Mazar Gillmer**  
from Joe Gillmer and Leah Mazar Gillmer

**Layla Bouchard**  
from Deborah Nelson

**Lindsey Chapman**  
from Adam Walker

**Lisa and Doug Austin**  
from Debbie Kobrin

**Lucky**  
from Jane Strnad 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 Marci Greenberger

**Noni Hill**  
from Roger and Betty Copeland

**Oliver (formerly Tyson)**  
from Benjamin Stearn

**Peking**  
from Alison Lockhart DeSilva, DeSilva Studios  
from Richard Florence  
from Jean Kernus  
from Suzanne Masback  
from Nora McArdle  
from Eve Sebesta  
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

**Siggy**  
from Sheila Petaccio

**Snug Chapple**  
from Rebecca Huppert

**Spencer**  
from Dr. Lisa Harvey

**Susan Richardson**  
from Priscilla Glasow and Jerry Glasow

**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

**Zeke Williams**  
from Sheryl and Zeke Williams  
from Cara Fratta

## In Memory of

**Aiden and Simon**  
from Scott Sanderford and Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home

**Amy Barden**  
from Julia Bancroft

**Amy**  
from Nancy Thompson

**Angel**  
from Gilbert and Marcia Siegert

**Anne and Kashana Tallman**  
from Kashana Tallman Trust and Ellen Rayner

**April (Maxine) Clark**  
from Stephan Clark

**Attycat Gough**  
from Robert Williams and Sarah Zapolsky

**Austen and Brioche**  
from Les and Susan Ravitz

**Babette**  
from Andree Johnson

**Bagel and Lulu**  
from Gordon Squires and Kendra Nitta

**Bailey Roman**  
from Joseph and Donna Wilson

**Barbara Cohen**  
from Ona Noble

**Bella Menzies**  
from Mimi Menzies

**Bobbie**  
from Sam and Rosemarie Garrett

**Bohdi**

from Judith Branting

**Boone Peregory**  
from Loren Lippman

**Bowser McCue**  
from Sean and Heather McCue

**Bret O'Brien**  
from Susan Mathy Patterson

**Buddy Marmaud**  
from Brian and Karen Marmaud

**Buzz Lankford**  
from Allison Fox

**Carl Raskin**  
from David Wormser and Janet Hawkins Cassatt  
from Pet Care by Kaye Brown

**Charlie Cadagin-Wilson**  
from Sharron Fitzgerald

**Chewey Boldman**  
from Christine Becker

**Chewey**  
from Alan and Ellen Rosenblum

**Chloe Burton**  
from James and Jane Sleeva

**Chompie Meadows**  
from Jennifer Moore

**Christine Krason**  
from Eddie Van Arsdall

**Clint Coursey**  
from Michael Pope and Hope Nelson

**Cocoa**  
from Nancy Porter

**Cosmo**  
from Thomas and Margaret Johnson

**Daisy**  
from Kimberly Harrington

**Dakota**  
from Nancy Porter

**Dapple**  
from Dean Hill and Noni Hill

**Days Hammell**  
from Patricia Haigh

**Dazzle**  
from Sherri Pappas

**Derrick (the Cat) Greenwood-Lehman**  
from Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Eastman

**Dewey Bittelari**  
from Ralph Bittelari and Eilin Chiang

**Dizzy**  
from Russell Hirzel

**Donald Bonnell**  
from Ann Carney

**Dusty Majkut Ryan**  
from Bobbi Russell

**Eileen Thompson**

**Eileen Vilkas**  
from Paula Tebben

**Ellen Coffin Bancroft**  
from David and Carolyn Abshire  
from Sara Bartley  
from Laura Cisar  
from Suzanne Hemp  
from King's Jewelry and Norman Bradford  
from Audrey Marcoe  
from James and Erda Matheson  
from Edgar and Margaret Mixan  
from Jonathan Sade  
from Dudley and Elisabeth Thomas  
from Judith Willard  
from Elizabeth Pentecost  
from Jennifer Tindell

**Farley Collins**  
from Wendy Beacher-Tuthill

**Felix Bunn**  
from Mr. and Mrs. Douglas and Judith Feaver

**Finn Downey**  
from Jeff Lutton and Dogotpia of Alexandria

**Fluffy**  
from Maria Sorrell

**Frances Formicola**  
from Ynette Shelkin

**Franklin Caruso**

from Lynnwood and Deborah Campbell

**Friend's Mother**  
from Catherine Dee

**General Boms**  
from Francine Tuck  
from Emily Weems  
from Rick Olson  
from Jennifer Schaeffer

**Gordon Compton**  
from Trudie Williams

**Grace Rigger**  
from Jennifer Pipa

**Harrison Rabbit**  
from Rachel Talbert

**Huckleberry Armstrong**  
from Sherrie Armstrong

**Jack**  
from Nancy Dipaolo

**Jack the Cat**  
from Dennis and Claudia Argyres

**Jackson Meyerson Schwarz**  
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 Mecartney

**Joel Robert Cannon**  
from Adrienne Cannon

**Johnson Y'Barbo**  
from Lindsey Vaala

**Jules F. Billard**  
from Patricia Mankin

**Karen Vasquez**  
from Richard Perryman

**Kilpatrick Amoroso**  
from Sherry and Wilbert B. Mahoney

**Kira**  
from David Levy

**Kuma Menza**  
from Ann Arnold

**Lexi Zurawski**  
from Tara Zurawski

**Liam Weigl**  
from Jack Shapiro

**Lilly**  
from Mindy Klein and Gloria Stewart

**Lola**  
from Trish Nicholson

**Loraine Kehl**  
from Julia Blankenship

**Louie Jones**  
from Sharon Walker

**Lukey Stokols**  
from Robert Lorenzo

**Luna Weldon**  
from Jeff Felder

**Marion Schoeck**  
from Marnie Moore

**Marlene Curry**  
from Dr. Denise E. Bruner; M.D. & Assoc. P.C.

**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 Marnie Moore

**Mindy**  
from Kathleen Rankin  
**Mithril Leary**  
from Ray Bert and Selena Leary  
**Molly Barbour**  
from Bryan Boatman  
from Jessica Wallace  
**Molly Flattery**  
from Douglas and Kimberly Parsons  
**Monster Fernandez**  
from Pet Care by Kaye Brown  
**Moonbeam**  
from Naomi Medvin  
**Morgan**  
from Christina Benson  
**Mr. Bentley**  
from Robert Comerford and Mr. Russell Lawrence  
**Mr. Boo Blaska**  
from Lynn-Jane Foreman  
**Mr. Phil**  
from Robert Comerford and Mr. Russell Lawrence  
**Ms. Oppenheimer**  
from Dr. Nora Bensahel  
**Nessie Scott**  
from Maeve Scott  
**Noel**  
from Randall and Theresa Walker  
**Nonamie**  
from David Wormser and Janet Hawkins  
**Oliver**  
from Victoria Sievers  
**Paws**  
from Rebecca Hecht-Lewis and James Lewis  
**Pixie Faust**  
from Julie Greenwood  
**Riley Brownson**  
from Leah Yoo

**Robert Rinker**  
from Chad Rinker  
**Rock Dolliff**  
from Phil Dolliff  
**Rocky Beeks Moore**  
from Jonathan Welch and Welcome Waggin Pet Sitting  
**Sadie Polk**  
from Christopher Polk  
**Sadie**  
from Caitlin Quarles  
**Sam**  
from Dr. Gary and Arlene Avakian  
**Samantha Vilardo**  
from Daniel and Linda Vilardo  
**Sammy and Cymba Samans**  
from James Samans  
**Sandy Coleman**  
from Kenneth Naser  
**Saudade**  
from Helen Davis  
**Scarlet**  
from Sarah Newcomb  
**Semisweet and Sundance**  
from Electra Liatos  
**Shadow Verret**  
from Mr. and Mrs. Matthew and Jessie Cornelius  
**Sherrie Garrett**  
from Shannon Irvin  
**Smokey**  
from Larissa Jakubow  
**Snowball**  
from Grace Graham  
**Sophie**  
from Jack Blaylock  
**Sophie and Cordelia**  
from Michael and Rozanna Levine  
**Spurs**  
from Patricia Mellen

**Squirt**  
from David Peters and Jane King  
**Stella the Dog**  
from Hillary Michaels  
**Steven Gentry**  
from Eddie VanArsdall  
**Sugar Georgevich**  
from Mary McClain  
**Suka**  
from Thomas and Margaret Johnson  
**Suka Higgins**  
from David Wormser and Janet Hawkins  
**Sunny and Elvis**  
from Melodie Thomas  
**Suzanne Payne**  
from Margaret Dammeyer  
**Sweetie**  
from Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Shirley Harris  
**Taffy and Pom Pom**  
from Sharon Forrest  
**Thomas Mullaney**  
from Thora Colot  
from Stephen Davis  
from Constance Humphries  
from Shon and Jill Koly  
from Christine Kurker  
from Harold Madorsky  
from John Pickens  
from Cait Post  
from Doug and Sue Rose  
from Nancy Cowen  
from Nancy Thompson  
**Tinkerbelle**  
from Tonya McCreary  
**Tisha Fitzgerald**  
from Maria Fitzgerald  
**Tony Andes**  
from Susan Case  
**Tony Sterenberg**

from Margaret Sterenberg  
**Topper Blair**  
from Jeff Lutton and Dogotpia of Alexandria  
**Totsie Cicconi**  
from Helen Bolger  
**Trixie Lytle**  
from Gregory Kmiecik and Karen Keefer  
**Vola Lawson**  
from Karen Darnier  
from Bill Lyles  
**Whiskey**  
from Colleen Henry  
**Will Sullivan's Beta Fish**  
from Melissa Sullivan  
**Willie**  
from Chuck and Janet Ziegler  
**Willy and Shadow Ochoa**  
from Cristina Ochoa  
**Winston Morris**  
from Theresa Morris  
**Winston**  
from Chuck and Janet Ziegler  
**Zeke**  
from Cynthia Kougeas  
**Zelda Watson**  
from Julian and Elizabeth Watson  
**Ziggy**  
from Jill Kronstadt  
**Zippy**  
from Sylvia Cohen  
**Zora Owenby**  
from Rick Fenstermacher

Thank You!

Cat Memorials  
Kingstowne Cat Clinic

Arnie	Frosty	K.B.	Madeline	Mr.	Ripken	Sweet Pea
Buddy	Ginger	Kessler	Max	Topplemeyer	Sabrina	Tess
Buddy	Go Go Boy	Koko Belle	Max	Nellie	Sebastian	
Flower	Horus	Lilly Beth	Millie	Nicky	Sebastian	
Foster	Jewel	Lucy	Ming	Noko	Snowy	Thunder

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 Boppity — noticed each other. "I was walking past the cat room one day and saw Boppity in Alice's pen," recalled Chelsea Lindsey of the League's adoption staff. "Alice was grooming Boppity. 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



Alice and Boppity

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 Boppity'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 Boppity. 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 Boppity'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.



The kitchen is loaded with stacks of canned cat and dog food, litter and enormous jars of peanut butter used to put in toys for dogs to play.



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." 7



Chelsea Lindsey, AWLA's Youth Coordinator, introduces the kids at the Boys and Girls Club of Alexandria to Crauton the rabbit. Chelsea talks with children about the needs of animals, how to care for them and how to understand the ways they communicate. These girls were very excited to meet Crauton and had lots of questions for Chelsea about animals.

## More than Dogs and Cats



The red-shouldered hawk.

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

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.







Luna

## 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.

Need your daily dose of cute?

Follow us on social media!

-  "Like" us on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/alexandriaanimals](http://www.facebook.com/alexandriaanimals)
-  Twitter  
[@alexanimals](https://twitter.com/alexanimals)
-  Instagram  
[@alexanimals](https://www.instagram.com/alexanimals)
-  Vine  
[@AlexAnimals](https://vine.co/AlexAnimals)