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Animal Tales

Fall/ Winter 2021

Covey's Corner

Welcome to the Fall/Winter edition of Animal Tales! The changing autumn leaves help me reflect on the many ways we change and adapt here at Animal Services in our efforts to serve both pets and people in Washington County.

I'm never at a loss for words when it comes to talking about the efforts of our team at the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter. They respond to a wide variety of questions and requests for assistance from our community and work to provide a safe shelter for the animals in our care. We have some of the highest return-to-owner rates in the country for both cats and dogs, and it's been said that if you are a lost pet you want to live in Washington County! For the pets under our care who have permanently lost their "people," we work with our partners in the Portland metropolitan area to find them new homes through our transfer program. We've worked hard to provide information on how to keep your pets safe or find them when they get lost, and you've responded in kind by microchipping your pets, licensing your dogs, and generally being responsible and caring pet owners. I appreciate the partnership we've developed with the community. It's a joy to see community members and Animal Services employees working together to help pets and people live together peacefully in Washington County.

As you read this issue of Animal Tales, you'll see examples of our efforts to help both animals and people in a wide variety of ways. I am proud of the work our team does, whether it's spending hours at the site of a drug bust herding goats and catching chickens for transport to a rescue farm, caring for a lost dog at the shelter until its happy reunion with its family in our lobby, or a long day and night spent rescuing animals



Shelter technician Joey with senior dog Genevieve as she departs the shelter. She'll find a home through one of our transfer partners.

from a home where they have been neglected and left to starve to death. I'm proud of our staff who are there to help people in situations they never thought they'd be in, such as the dog owner who reached out to us from the hospital after she was attacked by her own dog and was afraid to return home. I'm grateful for the trust our community has in us to respond in the most professional way possible to help find the best resolution for what are often dangerous or distressing situations.

As you support us through your generous donations, kind words, and responsible pet ownership efforts, we will continue to reciprocate by being here when you or your pets need us. I hope you enjoy the stories and information in this issue, and please remember we are here for you and your animal companions!

Warm regards,

Randy Covey, Animal Services Manager

Like Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter on Facebook or follow @BonnieLHays on Twitter to stay up-to-date on happy reunions, events, pet news and more.

Keeping Furry Companions Cool

When temperatures hit record highs this June, we were proud to partner with Washington County Emergency Management to open and support the County's first ever pet-friendly cooling center inside the new Wingspan Event & Conference Center at the Washington County Fairgrounds.

Animal Services provided supplies such as crates and litter boxes, created guidelines for pet owners and support volunteers to keep pets and people safe, and stationed two staff members at the site to provide animal-related expertise if needed.

This pet-friendly cooling center allowed folks who needed to leave their home when temperatures got too hot to do so knowing that they would not be leaving their animal companions behind. The cooling center hosted 22 dogs, 14 cats and one rabbit during the four days it was open. This cooperative effort led to four more pet-friendly cooling centers opening up during a second heat event later in the summer, and showed the importance of including pets in planning for emergency services for people.

Animal issues are people issues, as we've learned and continue to demonstrate when assisting with emergency situations in the Portland metro region!



Go Go Stardust was able to join his owner at their office to stay cool during the workday, but the cooling center offered welcome relief from the heat during off hours.



Don recognized that his cat Flower wasn't doing well with the heat, so he brought her to the pet-friendly cooling center.



Buddy's person knew it was getting too hot where they were staying, so she brought the adorable senior bunny with her to the center so they could both cool down.

The Perfect Plan for Your Pet

You provide so much love and care for your animal. Take steps now to ensure that if you were unable to care for them, either temporarily or permanently due to an emergency, hospitalization or other unexpected event, that there is a plan in place for your pet that matches the ideal situation you'd want for them.

Do these things now to plan ahead for your pet:

- Tell relatives, friends and neighbors you have a pet if they don't already know.
- Identify at least two people who can provide emergency care for your pet. They should have a key to your home, feeding and care instructions, and the name of your veterinarian.
- Get to know your neighbors. At least one neighbor should know how many pets you have and who they can contact regarding them if something happens to you. A neighbor may be the first person to know you were taken away in an ambulance! You can also make a plan with a neighbor to evacuate or care for each other's animals in a disaster if one of you can't get home immediately.
- Place emergency contact information, including your pet's emergency caretaker's name and phone number, in your wallet or purse. You should place this same information somewhere inside your home where first responders can find it. This is especially important if you live alone.

Isabelle and Mert's Unexpected Adventure

By Megan Luckenbach, Shelter Technician



Isabelle leaving Bonnie Hays to head to Florida with her new family.



Did you know that not all animals that come into the shelter are “lost and found” at Bonnie Hays? Sometimes we are asked to assist agencies such as police and other first responders with emergency situations where pets are involved. When this happens, we do our best to work with families to reunite them with their pets as soon as possible, all the while ensuring the animals are well cared for during their temporary stay with us.

Isabelle and Mert are an example of a sad situation where we were able to help facilitate a happy outcome for the animals involved. Isabelle, an adorable French Bulldog, and Mert, a fluffy, cute cat, came into our care when their owner died unexpectedly. The owner’s extended family lives outside of Oregon and were not able to immediately care for these two pets. Animal Services to the rescue! Isabelle and Mert were temporarily housed at the shelter where we provided care for them while the family made the necessary arrangements to get Isabelle and Mert back with people who loved and knew them.

During their stay at the shelter, both Isabelle and Mert got lots of love and attention from everyone who took care of them. Isabelle was walked several times a day and received lots of yummy (veterinarian approved) treats. We also provided her with various forms of enrichment to keep her mentally stimulated. She was given a different scent or spice like sage, cinnamon, vanilla or coconut to investigate every day and she even got to play a little game that involved seeking out treats hidden inside an empty tea box. Since Mert was a sweet and shy cat, his enrichment was different. He still got the fun scents and spices to investigate but was also provided with a special comfy bed to hide in that helped him feel safe, as well as a scratch post and toys.

Although we enjoy providing exceptional care to animals that stay at Bonnie Hays, we love it even more when they get to go home to people who know and love them. For these two wonderful pets, a family friend Isabelle and Mert were familiar with flew across the country from Florida and took them home with them. It was a joyous reunion, and everyone involved was so happy to see them go to such a loving home!

Perfectly Planned from page 4

- Use ICE-Pets as a contact in your phone (ICE = “In Case of Emergency”).
- Keep vaccines up to date. In an emergency, your pet may need to go to a home with other animals or temporarily stay at an animal shelter. Plan now to help protect your pet from disease.
- Include your pet in your estate planning and update your legal documents as animals come and go from your life. Contact Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter to discuss adding language to your will that will allow us to help your pets should they outlive you.

Other things to consider:

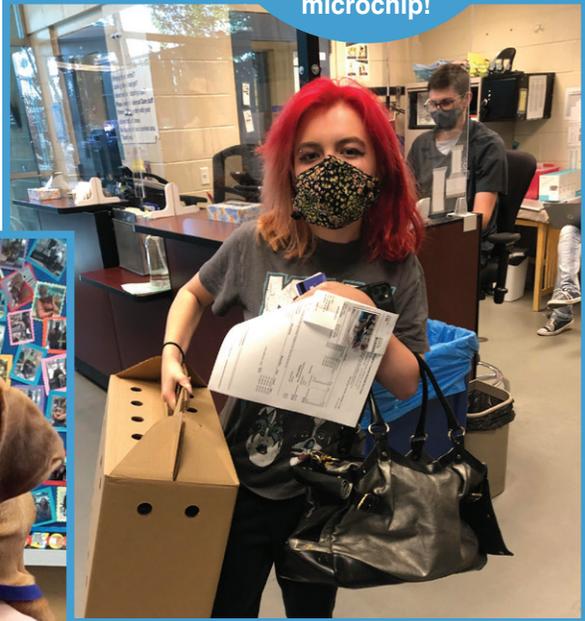
- While you’re making plans for your pet, encourage your friends to do the same for their animals. Planning together can make it easier to ask for support in caring for your pet if you ever need it!
- If you have a group of friends with pets, consider pooling information about your animals on a document you all have access to.
- Most veterinarians will add a note to your pet’s records indicating that specific people outside of your household can seek care for your animal. If your veterinarian provides magnets with contact information, keep one on your refrigerator so others will know who your vet is.
- If you are facing financial hardships, community resources are available to help people and pets stay together. Or, if you ultimately cannot keep your pet, there are rehoming resources. Contact us for more information.

Thank you for planning ahead for the pets who have provided you with so much joy and companionship!

Pets and Their People, Reunited!

Return-to-owner efforts, also known as “RTO,” are a big part of our work. When a stray animal arrives at the shelter, our goal is to reunite that pet with their family as fast as possible. Here’s a glimpse of just some of the happy reunions that took place at Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter in 2021!

Aries, a cat, had been missing for a year when he was reunited with his person in September 2021 thanks to his microchip!



Russell was reunited with his person in August 2021!



Pnut was reunited with his family the same day he went missing in August 2021!

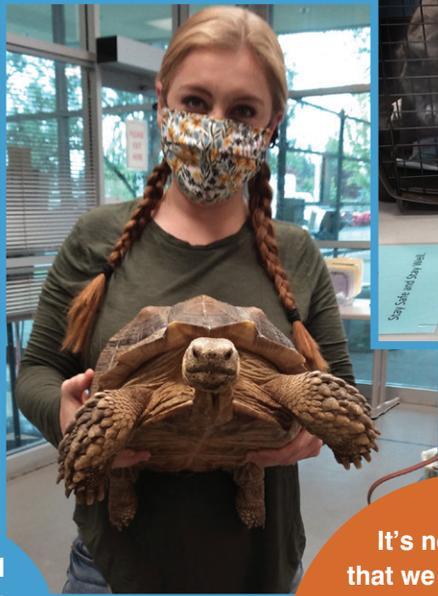


Even birds need our help sometimes! Nimbu, a parakeet, was reunited with its person in July 2021.



Rain, a cat, was reunited with her family in June 2021 after being missing for nearly nine months!

It’s not everyday that we see a tortoise at the shelter, but we were happy to help this one when he found his way to us! Clyde was reunited with his person in May 2021.



Bentley and Bugatti were reunited with their person in May 2021!

Check That Chip!

Many of the heartwarming reunions at our shelter happen because the pet is microchipped. When detected by our scanner at intake, a microchip provides a series of numbers our staff use to look up who the pet belongs to.

In order for a microchip to help your pet make it back home, it must be registered, and the contact information connected to it needs to be up to date.

It takes a few steps to register a microchip or verify the contact information associated with it, but the time spent will be well worth it if your pet ever gets lost.

Step 1: Get your pet's microchip number.

This number may be in your vet records or your adoption paperwork. If you can't find the number, your veterinarian's office can scan your furry friend for the chip and give you the number. You can also stop by Animal Services with your pet and we'll scan it for you!

Step 2: Go to [PetMicrochipLookup.org](https://www.petmicrochiplookup.org) and enter the number. This database from the American Animal Hospital Association will tell you which company manufactured the chip.

Step 3: Next, call that number or go to the company's website to verify or update your information. There may be a small fee to register the chip.

Step 4: Finally, you can create a secondary registration at [FoundAnimals.org](https://www.foundanimals.org) for FREE! We can also add your pet's microchip information to our records at Animal Services.

Shifts in Animal Sheltering

There have been a lot of changes to animal sheltering and animal services nationally over the past few years. While there is still a place for happy adoption stories, shelters across the country are increasingly considering how they can best serve their communities beyond just placing animals in new homes. There is a push in many cities for greater efforts to reunite people with their lost pets, limit the amount of time a cat or dog spends in what can be a stressful shelter environment, and focus on what each individual community needs from animal services in order to live safely with animals.

In recent years, operations at the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter have shifted away from doing adoptions. We are best able to serve the people and pets of our community by continuing to focus on efforts to return pets to their owners and by leaning into successful transfer partnerships when we are unable to reunite an animal with its owner. These partner organizations help us quickly place animals through their robust adoption programs, fast-tracking pets into loving homes. This allows us to know pets are finding happy outcomes while we continue to provide kennel space for the next dog or cat from the community that needs our help.

Our job at Washington County Animal Services reaches so much further than finding new homes for animals—although we do ensure that happens through our partnerships. We keep our community's stray dogs safe until they can be reunited with their owners. With over 79% of the dogs we see at our shelter being reunited with their owners, we get to be part of happy stories nearly every day! We serve the cat community of Washington County, too. In 2020, we reunited over 12% of cats that came into our shelter with owners or caregivers. This number looks low when compared to dogs, but it is significantly higher than the national average of 5.1%* in 2020.

Our team answered over 17,000 phone calls from community members last year. Many of those calls were filtered to our Animal Services officers who responded with education and instruction for both the caller and the pet owners involved. Our Animal Services officers handled 5,723 situations in 2020, including dog bites and aggressive dogs at large where public safety was a concern.

Through all of this, our shelter technicians stay busy caring for the animals that come in as strays and keeping kennel space clean and ready. We are here for animals in need, hopefully for just a short period of time, to get them back to their families. We say "short" because in addition to wanting to get animals back to owners, we also recognize that holding animals in any shelter long term is not the best thing for them. The ideal place for an animal is in a home, getting care from a dedicated owner or caregiver. We enjoy having animals in our shelter, but we get more joy from seeing the animals return home to the people who love them!

**According to Shelter Animals Count. Depending on data sets, the percentage of cats reunited with their owners can range from 2-6% nationwide.*

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April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021

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Gerald Warnock
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Loren and Theresa Wise
Gigi and Bob Wood
Johnnie and Kathy Wright

Thank you!

We would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who donated toys, treats and other goodies to our shelter animals through our Amazon Wish List in 2021! You made it possible for our staff to provide individualized care and enrichment for pets staying with us.



Donations Made in Honor or Memory of Special People and Pets:

Many of our generous donors ask that their donations be made in honor or memory of a special person or pet. We list them all here together in recognition of the human-animal bond and our regard for our loved ones who are with us as well as those who have passed. We so appreciate these gifts and the many ways that people and pets touch our lives.

Abby and Sibi

Madhu Jayaprakash

Alucard

Melissa and
Robert Proctor

Amada

Dianna Harrington

Angie

Kathleen Davis

Apollo

Terry and Karen Newsom

Austin and Tucker

Trisha Spiering

Bailey

Margaret and
Richard Ledbetter

Bailey

Kelly Strandberg

Bam Bam

Araceli Sandoval

Baxter

Jodi and Ray Bristow

Bengal Sisters

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Blazer

Susan Garland

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Bob

Julie Hatch and
David Standley

Bodie

John Roque

Bonnie Hays

Lucy Paterson

Bonnie the Beagle

Rachel Unruh

Boomer

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Richard Huntman

Brandon

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Brandy

Caroline and Chris Barns

Brodie

Joseph Kaufman

Bubba

Cyndi Ely

Buddy

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Buddy Pongo

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Rusty

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Help People and Pets in Need

By Karrie Johnson, Program Communication & Education Specialist

Please join us in helping people and pets in Washington County.

GIVE. Monetary donations make a huge difference in the lives of the animals. You can donate online, in person or using the envelope provided with this newsletter.

- Gifts are tax-deductible for those who itemize their taxes.
- Host a fundraiser. We've had Girl Scout troops, student groups and companies fundraise for the animals!
- Send items from our Amazon Wish List.
- Remember the animals in your estate planning. When you make the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter a beneficiary of your estate, your generosity lives on!

ADVOCATE as a Volunteer Ambassador. These volunteers address myths about our county's animal shelter and advocate for its important role in the community, help neighbors get lost pets back home, and support people and pets living together peacefully in Washington County.

Lilly Vogel,
a 5th grader from
Sexton Mountain
Elementary School,
delivered funds raised
by her class to help
the shelter!



LEARN about what we do:

- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for updates and sweet reunion photos!
- Sign up for our Animal Services Academy. This free training program aims to help community members understand the work we do and to empower people to share animal-related resources and information with their networks. Check our website for more information.

Animal Tales is a publication of Washington County Animal Services & the Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter

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