



**fotas**   
*Making a Difference*  
Friends of the Animal Shelter - Aiken, S.C.

WINTER 2018

# FOTAS News

FOTAS is a recipient of the 2017 State of S.C. Angel Award - One of 10 organizations recognized as representing the most efficient, effective charities in S.C.



## YOUR DONATIONS ARE SAVING PRECIOUS LIVES

Your time, support and donations allow FOTAS and the County Shelter to launch and manage programs that help ensure “no adoptable animal is unnecessarily euthanized.” In fact, we expect the save rate this year to be higher than 90 percent. A save rate at this level is considered to be “no kill” status.

Last year, because of your generosity and commitment, we received the State of South Carolina Angel Award, an honor given for representing the most efficient, effective charities in South Carolina.

You are making a difference! Your time and money are critical to helping the animals at the Aiken County Animal Shelter. Nearly every achievement made through the FOTAS-County Shelter partnership takes the work of many people, like you, coming together toward one goal: saving these homeless animals and giving them a second chance at a good life.

Thank you! If you didn't donate to FOTAS, we wouldn't be celebrating such an amazing achievement.

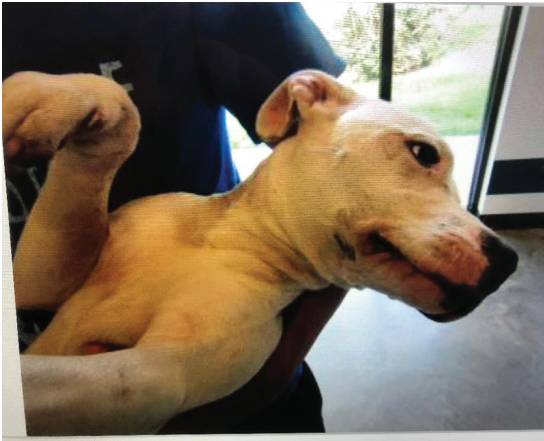
Here are just some of the specific benefits that resulted from your 2018 FOTAS donations:

- From January to November, FOTAS organized 95 transfers and paid the incurred foster & transport expenses to established rescue shelter partners for 1,237 dogs and cats in need who were not locally adopted.
- Provided funding for treating and curing more than 450 heartworm positive dogs.
- This past year, Aiken County and FOTAS combined to pay for the spay/neuter of 1,308 pets owned by citizens in financial need and 1,120 community/feral cats.
- Purchased eight needed cat condo suites for the Shelter.
- Purchased dog treadmill for shelter – part of a successful new program to help better socialize dogs who are shy or high-energy.
- Funded flea and tick treatments of adoptable animals received at the Shelter.
- Supplemented adoption fees for Military active personnel & veterans.



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## Hope finds a way – volunteers help paralyzed pup cheat death

She was found crawling on her belly in the middle of the street. Just 10 months old, the white Pit Bull mix had been hit by a car. Thankfully, she was found by a Good Samaritan who picked her up off the road and drove her to the Shelter.

When County Shelter Veterinarian Dr. Levy examined her, she couldn't find any broken bones, but the dog couldn't move her legs due to suspected spinal trauma. The poor Pibble's future looked dim but FOTAS foster extraordinaire Peggy Babineau and her husband, Dave, thought she might have a chance if they took her home and worked with her. If the dog (who Peggy named Hope) didn't recover, at least her last days would be in a good home with all the luxuries she deserved.

"Dr. Levy said if Hope could move her legs in water, there might be a chance her spine injury would heal and she could walk again," Peggy explained.

It wasn't easy, but Peggy got the scared pup into her swimming pool and miraculously Hope began moving her legs! The pool workouts became a regular routine and Hope loved wearing her doggie life preserver and fetching floating dog toys. This exercise, combined with FOTAS-funded visits to local canine rehab expert, Dr. Sybil Davis of Aiken Pet Fitness and Rehabilitation, started paying off as Hope gained strength and her coordination improved enough for her to walk gingerly around the house and yard. Her sweet personality and refusal to give up touched Peggy's heart and she made it her mission to help Hope find a loving home.

Hope continued to improve and began to go on longer walks. She even got strong enough to run. On November 10, Hope turned one year old and just a week later was adopted into a loving forever home.

*Hope's chances for survival were slim after suffering a spinal injury, but thanks to extra care from a FOTAS foster and her will to live, she recovered and was placed in a good home!*



## County Passes Shorter Holding Period for Stray Animals

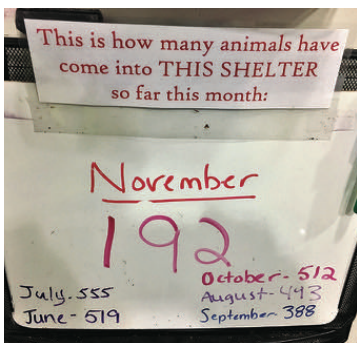
For years, the County Shelter has had to hold strays for five business days before they became eligible to be prepared for adoption or transferred to another facility or a rescue group. That all changed when the Aiken County Council voted to make the period five calendar days.

The five business day rule was originally intended to allow owners more time to claim their lost dogs. However, it just doesn't happen that way. In fact, only 8% of stray dogs are claimed by their owners, and that 8% are almost always claimed within three days of pickup. Only one percent of stray cats are ever claimed by their owners.



*The new County stray-hold ordinance will reduce kennel stress and get animals adopted faster.*





## A DAY AT THE SHELTER : A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY

The flurry of activity at the Aiken County Animal Shelter on any given day can be overwhelming to newcomers. But to the staff and FOTAS volunteers who put in their time nearly every day, the fast-paced, hectic and sometimes intense environment is just a typical day at 333 Wire Road in Aiken. Add the FOTAS events and happenings at other locations and adoption duties with FOTAS partners Aiken PetSmart and Bone-I-Fide Bakery (two satellite sites where we adopt out shelter felines), and it becomes clear why great teamwork is so essential. These folks all care deeply about the homeless pets that need their help and work closely to give them a second chance at a good life.

Photos Clockwise from upper left: Harley the puppy goes home with his adopter; A Hound mix is checked in, examined and treated by Shelter Veterinarian, Dr. Levy and her staff; A stray Pibble is processed and given medicine before being assigned an intake kennel; Three-legged Dan enjoys resting after his walk with volunteer Nanci Santos; Shelter kitten Reese is adopted at Bone-I-Fide Baker; A dog foster picks up food and a new pup to care for until he's ready to be adopted; An Aiken man who found a stray dog comes back to adopt her. Staff member Rachel McGee explains the process to him while the stray dog, Miss Piggy, waits on his lap; Danni gets cozy in a car during a Doggie Day Out, eager for her ride to the park; Donated kitten and puppy food arrives from Chewy.com. Each box represents orders made and paid for by FOTAS donors; Shelter Manager Bobby Arthurs meets the newest kitten added to the lobby; Canine Coach Darling Rios walks a dog from intake; A kitten is prepared for surgery by Vet Assistant Lyn Irilli; Milton enjoys some couch time with volunteer John Berk; At the end of the day, on November 14, the intake animal tally is updated to 192 strays and surrendered pets.



## TNR program gains momentum – FIV positive program launched



A growing number of Aiken County community members took advantage of the County's spay/neuter voucher offering in 2018 while the TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) program gained momentum with even more citizens trapping feral and community cats to get them fixed.

The TNR surgery is free to Aiken County residents. All you have to do is borrow a trap to catch the community cats and bring them to the Shelter on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday morning for surgery. Then, in the afternoon pick the cats up and return them to their outdoor habitat. This way, you can still feed, water and enjoy the company of the feral or community cats – but they no longer are able to add to the feline overpopulation problem.

In other cat news, FOTAS and the Shelter launched an FIV positive adoption program for cats and kittens. FIV is an autoimmune illness that can be contagious to other cats through blood or saliva (usually via a bite). However, cats with FIV often live long lives with little to no medical issues. This program not only saves the felines with FIV but also the kittens who are born with FIV but later build up antibodies and become FIV negative at three to six months of age.

*Kittens ready to be fixed.*

## Junior FOTAS kids prove the future is in good hands

Last year, a new after school program called Junior FOTAS was started by students at Tall Pines STEM Academy. Two teachers assist the students and every other week, the group meets after school along with FOTAS Program Director Kathy Jacobs and Volunteer Marnie Munger. During each meeting, the students are introduced to a new shelter pet and taught about FOTAS programs that help save homeless animals.

This year, the Junior FOTAS program grew in popularity with more than 40 students joining the group! Members of the group took the initiative to sell raffle tickets for a FOTAS fundraiser at Aiken's Makin' and sold \$100 in tickets and took in over \$400 in monetary donations. During Aiken's Thanksgiving Turkey Trot, the kids raised more than \$200 for the animals by providing sports drinks for a small donation.

FOTAS is thrilled to see young people in our community take an interest in helping the shelter animals. We have all heard that "children are our future," and if these students are any indication, our future looks bright!

## Shelter staff awarded for strong partnership with FOTAS

The No Kill South Carolina organization presented a Pick Me! SC Spirit Award to the Aiken County Animal Shelter, honoring the successful public-private partnership between Aiken County and FOTAS.



*Junior FOTAS selling tickets at Aiken's Makin'.*

### Watch for 10th Anniversary events!

In 2019, we'll be announcing a variety of special occasions to celebrate FOTAS's first decade.

#### ... did you know?

**When FOTAS was formed almost 10 years ago, the Aiken County Animal Shelter had an over 90 percent euthanasia rate. To date this year, the Shelter has achieved an over 90 percent save rate, with every adoptable pet being saved because of your continued support for FOTAS' lifesaving programs.**