



# FOTAS News

WINTER 2019

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

# 10 YEARS!

## A DECADE OF COLLABORATION, DEDICATION AND INNOVATION

FOTAS was formed 10 years ago in response to the heartbreaking plight of the homeless and abandoned animals in Aiken County. At the time, about 6,000 animals were received by the County Shelter each year but only 5% made it out alive. The challenge was formidable but from the start, the founders of FOTAS believed in their dream to ensure every adoptable animal found a loving home and no adoptable animal would be euthanized in Aiken County.

Thanks to close teamwork between the County and FOTAS, and your amazing support, we've found homes for 20,000 homeless pets in need and helped increase the save rate at the County Shelter from a dismal 5% to more than 90%!

There is much more work to be done, especially in our efforts to reduce pet overpopulation, stop animal neglect and abuse, expand pet care education and make the shelter a wide-ranging resource for people, rather than just a place to bring homeless pets. But through strong collaboration, innovative solutions, hard work – and your great support – we can continue to make a difference and save even more lives.

**Before FOTAS, Aiken County's live release rate was only 9%. The live release rate is now greater than 90%. This year, the shelter is on track to find a home for every adoptable animal.**



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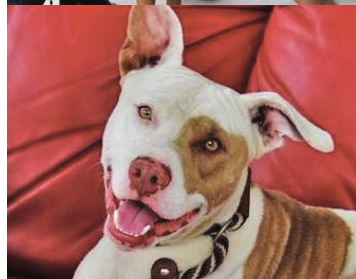
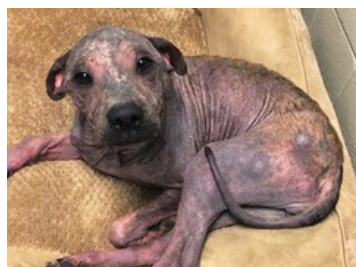
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# 10 YEARS!

## Celebrating a 10-Year Journey of Helping Homeless Pets in Need

*What a whirlwind decade we've experienced! We started with a dream to save every adoptable pet in the County, and now – because of your donations and passionate commitment to the animals – that dream has come true. It's been quite a journey so far and new challenges are always on the horizon, but here's a look back at some of the milestones and programs we achieved together.*

- The current Aiken County Animal Shelter facility was built in 2014 with both County funds and FOTAS donations. It was badly needed and allowed FOTAS and the County to reach new goals in caring for and saving strays and other homeless pets.
- The feline facility was originally built at the old shelter but was moved to the new facility at 333 Wire Road.
- FOTAS has organized and funded the transport of more than 8,000 shelter animals. These homeless pets go to no-kill rescues and are usually placed in homes before leaving the shelter.
- Last year, 300 FOTAS volunteers donated a total of 55,000 hours to help shelter animals.
- FOTAS has no brick and mortar, and is a volunteer-based organization.
- Started in 2013, FOTAS's Fix-a-Pet program and FIDO Fixers mobile spay/neuter service paid for fixing more than 2,500 cats and dogs for citizens needing financial assistance.
- FOTAS now meets with other shelter leaders and shares its expertise at international expos.
- The County spay/neuter voucher program combined with the feline TNR (trap, neuter/spay, release) offering has reduced the homeless feline overpopulation problem in Aiken County.

- The Doggie Days Out program allows citizens to take shelter dogs out for hours at a time, which helps reduce canine stress and make them more adoptable.

- FOTAS is a recipient of the South Carolina Secretary of State Angel Award – one of 10 organizations recognized each year as representing the most efficient and effective charities soliciting in SC.

- The Dogs Playing for Life program was started in 2016. Dogs are allowed to play in groups, which helps the shelter identify personality traits in dogs that ultimately result in better matchups with adopters.

- To thank them for their service, FOTAS sponsors adoptions for U.S. veterans and active U.S. military personnel.

- FOTAS provides citizens in financial need with dog houses and approved, humane runners.

- Publicity through community outreach, traditional media, events and social media, has become vital to finding homes for all the adoptable animals.

- FOTAS purchased a canine treadmill for the shelter that volunteers use to help high-energy dogs get more exercise.

- FOTAS donations have saved nearly 1,000 heartworm positive dogs. Through the “Have a Heart, Save a Heart” program, the shelter now is able to treat and cure most heartworm infected canines. In the past, these dogs tragically would have been euthanized.

- One of FOTAS’s latest programs is Home to Home, a free, online service that allows people to adopt out their pets directly from their residence and avoid surrendering them to the shelter.

- Special adoption events off-site and at the shelter help more pets find homes. The biggest adoption event of the year is Clear the Shelter Day, a national event in which all the dogs and cats on the adoption floor are sponsored and adoptions are complimentary.

- Good adoptions bring smiles to people and their new pets.

- Big, annual FOTAS fund-raising events like Woofstock and the Playing Fore the Pets Golf Tournament get bigger and better every year.

- Collaboration between the 300 FOTAS volunteers and small shelter staff is essential to making adoption programs successful.

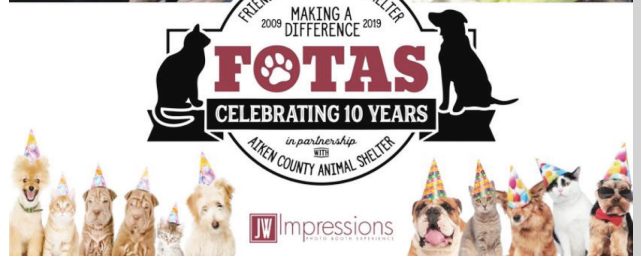
- Fostering saves lives – animals who need special care to become adoptable are given temporary homes with volunteers until they are ready for their forever homes.

- This year, the shelter extended its hours to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, making adopting more convenient for people working 9 to 5.

- On November 2, FOTAS hosted a 10th Anniversary Party for the community, thanking everyone for their support.

We've made great strides in 10 short years, but FOTAS's mission is far from over. The shelter still receives way too many strays and surrendered pets each year and we see an alarming frequency of animal neglect and abuse.

We will continue to develop programs that help us save more homeless animals through happy adoptions and increased spay/neutering of pets. We'll also increase our community outreach and expand our efforts to educate citizens about proper pet care. We want the shelter to be a great resource for people – not just a destination.



# Junior FOTAS: Passing the torch to coming generations

Two years ago, a new after school program called Junior FOTAS was launched at Tall Pines STEM Academy. Two teachers assist the students and every other week, the group meets after school along with FOTAS Program Coordinator Kathy Jacobs. During each meeting, the students are introduced to a new shelter pet and taught the importance of spaying and neutering, the Trap, Neuter Release (TNR) program, heartworm prevention and other key FOTAS and Aiken County Animal Shelter initiatives.

Since the STEM Academy students have enjoyed the Junior FOTAS curriculum so much and put their heart into helping the shelter animals through donation drives and special events, FOTAS is introducing programs to other

schools and organizations. It is a terrific way to educate kids about proper pet care and ownership, as well as pass along our knowledge to future generations.



## Your donations make a huge difference - see how you can help!

Your generosity and dedication to FOTAS does so much for the homeless pets at the Aiken County Animal Shelter. Contributions save lives and give these dogs and cats in need a second chance at a good life. THANK YOU!  
In 2019, FOTAS funded projects included:

- Medical equipment needed to treat dogs who need broken limbs set and healed
- Needed outside clinic medical surgeries for injured adoptable animals
- Foster kitten kits
- Renovations needed in feline facility
- Flea and tick meds, toys, leashes, collars, beds for shelter animals
- TNR traps
- Five Fido Fixer events providing free spay/neuter surgeries for pets

- Dog houses and humane runners to help folks in financial need to get their dogs off chains
- Medicine and treatments for shelter dogs that tested positive for heartworms
- Pet food pallet donations
- Home to Home service and website to help keep unwanted pets out of shelter and adopted directly from owners' homes
- Sunshades for all the play yards and four sun umbrellas
- Incurred transport and foster costs for organized transfers of shelter animals to rescue partners
- Security fencing for the shelter and 90 security locks for kennels
- Expansion and renovation of shelter front lobby desk and added needed shelving

**10 YEARS!**