



FOTAS News

Spring 2021

FOTAS is a recipient of the Secretary of State of S.C. Angel Award-One of 10, out of 14,000 organizations, recognized as representing the most efficient & effective charities in South Carolina.



Benefits of fostering: cuddles, laughter and helping pets get adopted

Over the last 10 years, the Wiseman family has fostered more than 600 puppies, but its most recent assignment was probably their most challenging and rewarding foster experience to-date.

Three puppies were found sick with Demodex, a condition in which the puppies' immune systems are compromised and they lose their fur, develop scabs from bites by a type of mite, and become swollen all over.

"We named the pups Joy, Noel and Holly," said Fr. Grant Wiseman. "It felt weird to hold them because their skin was so rough and was literally peeling off of them. Two of the puppies' eyes were swollen shut."

Over the next few weeks, the puppies' skin began to heal, their hair slowly grew back, and they started to play and cuddle. The trio continued to improve

and by the time they were ready for adoption, they were completely healthy puppies that no one would know had been so sick.

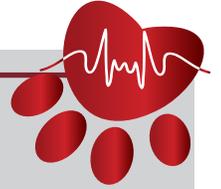
"I can tell you that most foster experiences are much easier than what we dealt with having these three puppies, but every one of them is personally rewarding," Fr. Wiseman said. "With each litter, we get to enjoy puppy breath, great cuddles and laughter. Each animal that we have in a household – rather than in the shelter – helps them get ready for their forever homes."

Fr. Grant Wiseman brings the pups to the shelter so the vet staff can check on their progress.



Joy, Noel and Holly before fostering and treatment (inset) and after.

Have a Heart, Save a Heart Program Saves 223 Dogs in 2020



When you donate to the FOTAS "Have a Heart, Save a Heart" program, you can be sure you are saving a dog's life. This program provides treatment for our adoptable dogs infected with heartworms. Last year, 223 heartworm positive dogs were treated and adopted. Since we launched our Have a Heart, Save a Heart program in 2017, we have saved nearly 1,000 dogs who tested positive for heartworms, but were otherwise healthy and adoptable.

In the past, shelter dogs with heartworms would be euthanized because the county shelter didn't have the funding to treat them. But thanks to your donations, we are saving these dogs and clearing them of the heartworms. By giving these dogs a combination of a strong antibiotic and monthly heartworm preventative, they are becoming heartworm-free. When folks adopt a heartworm positive dog from the shelter, FOTAS provides them with the medication for no charge. Thanks to you, formerly heartworm positive dogs are finding loving homes and living long lives!



Heartworm positive dog Gus with his adopter, Ella Gould.



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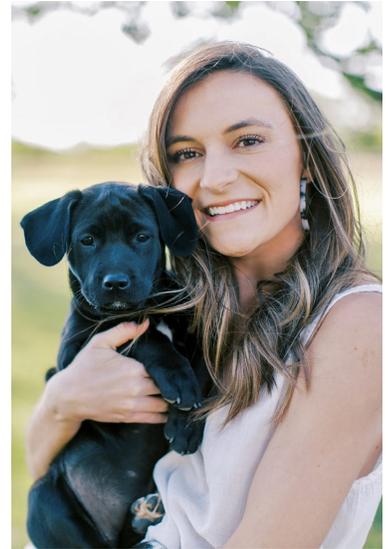
FOTAS is working: numbers tell the story

FOTAS was formed in 2009 when the intake and euthanasia rates at the shelter were, putting it mildly, horrible. In 2014, because of the tremendous private/public relationship in the county, the much-needed new shelter was built. Below, see comparisons between 2013 (the year before new shelter was built) and 2020:

2013		2020	CHANGE
5,107	ANIMALS RECEIVED	4,410	-13.65%
1,670	ANIMALS SAVED	4,151	148.56%
1,510	ADOPTED & TRANSFERRED	2,476	63.97%
160	RETURNED TO OWNER	265	65.63%
0	CAT TNR/RTF	1,410	100%
3,627	EUTHANIZED	144	-96.03%

These incredible statistics speak volumes about the dedicated support of the volunteers, fosters, donors, adopters, and shelter staff, as well as the County Council's commitment to the betterment of the County Shelter and the animals in need in our community. All the lifesaving programs, all the cooperation and all the love is working.

Clockwise: Berrie and her adopter, Katelyn Logan; Shelter dog Lindsay enjoys a spa day at Hair of the Dog pet salon; A kitten is dried after her bath; Caramel, a senior dog, recovers following eye surgery.



FIV positive cat Greg is worth the wait for his adopter

Greg, an extremely friendly and affectionate cat, was found near an abandoned, burned down house. His paws were injured, and they took a while to heal. But Josh Edgar, who saw Greg's photo on Facebook, couldn't wait to adopt him. After meeting the handsome gray, FIV positive cat, he filled out an application and was all set to bring him home. But then he got some bad news.

Three of Greg's paws were healing beautifully, but the wound on the bottom of his left front paw had reopened. Greg could not go home yet and had to be treated and monitored in medical.



It took six weeks for Greg's front left paw to finally heal completely. During that time, Josh called the shelter to check on Greg every few days and even visited him a few times.

"I knew when I met Greg that he was special," Josh said. "He isn't interested in playing much. But he's so laid-back and affectionate. He loves cuddling and being petted. Greg is one cool cat and I'm thrilled to have him."

To celebrate his adopted feline companion, Josh Edgar took selfies with Greg and posted them on Facebook.



Hilde and her big, goofy smile. Below: Hilde gets a hug in Spring 2018.



Hilde: a special pibble who's now an Instagram star

In the eight years since the new Aiken County Animal Shelter opened, many thousands of dogs have passed through its doors. But none more memorable than Hilde, a blonde, golden-eyed, pit bull mix, who first came to the shelter in 2016.

Hilde was a volunteer and staff favorite, a 55-pound, people-lover with a big, goofy smile. Despite her amazing personality and good looks, no one adopted her for months. Then, when she did get adopted, she was brought back through no fault of her own.



Hilde shares her new toys.

But Hilde's a survivor and when Kathy and Greg Bowman adopted her, it was a match meant to be. Now, she can be found at the Bowman's home -- romping through the yard, cuddling with her grandkids, napping on their bed or watching TV with them on their couch. Finally, Hilde has found her forever home. She even has her own Instagram page: Hilde the Rescue Dog. Check it out to see all of her adventures!



Laura Nearhoof with Corey during his Doggie Day Out.

A little love comforts a shelter dog waiting for adoption.

Ella hugs shelter dog Mulligan.



Take a sweet shelter dog for an afternoon or even a sleepover!

The FOTAS Doggie Days Out program allows citizens to take adoptable dogs out of the shelter for an hour or an afternoon – or even overnight. We can always use more doggie daters. If you are interested in participating in this program, which helps dogs socialize and reduce kennel stress, please stop by the Aiken County Animal Shelter and complete a short application so we can get you started.

ACAS dog Matilda saves her adopter's life

Sweet brindle and white Terrier mix Matilda was adopted by Carol Winn a year ago. Recently, this special dog woke up Carol by shaking her bed.

"She doesn't sleep with me, she has her own bed," Carol said. "At 5:45 in the morning, when she woke me by pushing on my bed, I was having a heart attack. I fell out of the bed, and she stayed by my side until the ambulance got to me."

The University Hospital doctor who treated Carol said that had she not been awakened by Matilda, she would have likely died in her sleep.

"I feel that God sent Matilda to me just for that reason," Carol said. "Fur angels are real, God works in mysterious ways. Thank you for allowing me to adopt my sweet Matilda. Thank you, God, for using my sweet Matilda to save my life."



Heroine shelter dog Matilda saved Carol Winn's life.



Meredith with Hamilton.

Local news anchor joins FOTAS, adopts and promotes shelter dogs

WRDW TV News Anchor and Investigative Reporter Meredith Anderson and her daughter, Ella, recently joined FOTAS, and we could not be more pleased to have them on our team. They visit and help socialize the homeless pets at the ACAS and both take photos of dogs that Meredith posts on her popular social media channels.

"With COVID restrictions, social media is their best chance," Anderson said. "It's good for my heart because it makes me feel like I am making a real difference."

The Andersons have three adopted dogs – two of which – Hank and Mulligan – came from the ACAS.

"What I say to people who are planning to volunteer or adopt is, 'Thank You, that's very kind of you to think about these poor animals,'" Ella said. "Never lose that sense of kindness."

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Neglected dog Cosmo has a new life and family



Cosmo enjoys cuddling during reading sessions.

"We LOVE Cosmo!" said his adopter, Liesl Day. "He's eating like a horse and has gained weight! He is still a little leery of strangers, but he is getting better. He likes to go on car rides, snooze in the sun, play chase with my husband, and read stories with my granddaughter and me. He's become a wonderful addition to our family!"



Woofstock Doggie Derby Day on track for 2021

With 2020 finally in our rearview mirror and the number of COVID-19 cases steadily dropping, we are excited to announce that our Woofstock Doggie Derby Day 2021 is scheduled to take place on Saturday, Oct 9. We can't wait! More details to come soon.



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