



Forever Tails

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LOOKING TO ADOPT?

Are you looking for a new furry family member?

Visit www.aforeverhome.org or stop by an adoption event to find the perfect one. We have many wonderful dogs waiting for forever homes. Once you've fallen in love, the next step is to fill out an adoption application to get the ball rolling.

Go to www.aforeverhome.org for our adoption schedule and available pets.

2020 is off to a bang! As this newsletter is being written, we are making arrangements to rescue 35 puppies and 4 young adult dogs from one of our rescue partners in Mississippi. There is not an animal shelter within 150 miles of our rescue partner in Mississippi and they do an amazing job helping dogs in the area. The problem is too big for them to handle alone so we have committed to working with them.

These lucky dogs are coming from rural Mississippi – where the mentality toward spaying or neutering dogs, vaccinating them, and providing heartworm preventive is quite different from ours. Sometimes the reason is financial – people are struggling to feed and clothe their children; sometimes it is cultural – multiple generations have not provided appropriate vet care and think it's fine to tie a dog outside to a tree or a ramshackle doghouse or to let them run loose; sometimes it is simply a case of neglect and/or abuse.

For those of us who care for our dogs (and spoil them a bit), it is difficult to understand why people do what they do – or don't do – for their pets.

Regardless of the reason, AFH is here for those dogs.

As you likely know, AFH does not receive any federal, state, or county funding. We are only able to save so many abused, abandoned, neglected, and unwanted puppies and dogs with your financial support. You are the reason why we are able to provide both basic and lifesaving vet care at whatever level is needed.

With vet bills averaging \$300,000 per year, we need you now more than ever.

Please consider a donation at this time – or better yet – sign up for recurring donations. We can do some wonderful things with only a \$10 month (or more!) commitment! You can sign up for recurring donations at justgive.org or paypal.com.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support.

SPOTLIGHT ON STELLA



STELLA
Female (Spayed)
Breed: Border Collie Mix
Age: 14 months

Stella is a Border Collie Mix. She was dumped at a shelter by her family. Stella is fantastic in the house, cuddly, and loves her toys and bones. She is house trained and sleeps during the night in her crate. She has a lot of energy and needs plenty of exercise and she enjoys chasing tennis balls. After long walks, Stella loves relaxing on the couch. She knows commands like "sit," "stay," "come," and "paw." She gets along with most other dogs. She is interested in what you are doing and likes to follow people around the house.

Stella is working on her leash skills and is doing a great job.



TJ'S TO THE RESCUE

Brenda Murn from TJ's Hair Studio in Hayfield, Virginia reached out to us last Fall. She is an adopter of two AFH dogs. Brenda told us that everyone who works at TJ's is a dog lover and they wanted to do a Christmas fundraiser – specifically a doggy angel tree. Of course we quickly agreed! The ornaments went on the Christmas tree and clients quickly began purchasing them. Our friends at TJ's raised just over \$1,700 to help our pups and they came to visit us at an adoption event to give us their donation.

All of us at AFH want to thank everyone at TJ's and all of their clients for their generosity!



HOW ARE YOUR DONATIONS USED?

You likely know that AFH provides whatever level of care is needed for dogs in our adoption program. Once we commit to a dog, we are all in – regardless of cost. We can only fulfill our commitments because of your generosity. It is our responsibility to be good stewards of your donations by making responsible medical decisions and spending your money wisely – all while getting the biggest bang for our (your) buck! So exactly where do your donations go?



For starters, we have no paid staff and our overhead is extremely low. Our overhead costs include dog food (approximately \$1,500 per month); office supplies (toner, paper, file folders, etc.); postage; and general animal supplies such as leashes, collars, puppy pens, and bowls.

Our biggest expense is vet care. While many dogs only require basic vetting (vaccinations, deworming, heartworm testing, flea and tick treatment, and spaying or neutering), there are some that require extensive – and expensive medical care. Just a few of those dogs are highlighted in the following pages.

SAYING GOODBYE IS NEVER EASY



BEAU

Lori Anglin wrote to tell us about losing Beau

Beau Anglin was peacefully put to sleep on 1/18/20 after almost 17 years with our family. Who knew that rock and roll music would change my life forever? We had recently lost our dog at the age of four from cancer and decided to take a break from canines for a while. Less than two weeks later I was sitting in my car at my son's bus stop one morning in 2003 and heard about a dog on local radio station WBIG named Possum who might not be popular because he wasn't very pretty. When AFH found Beau in the woods of West Virginia he had puppy stranglers and required months of treatments before he was available for adoption. We all know where this story is going. Later that night I filled out an application and sent it into A Forever Home. I heard from them the next day. We went to visit Possum the following weekend and he became

a permanent part of our household the following week. Beau was such a gentle dog. I was able to continue my rescue work with cats (fostering dozens of them) because Possum got along with every animal who crossed his path. One of his favorite things was to play with his younger sister Brooke. They had a very special bond. Beau's life and moments will be fondly remembered by his parents David and Lori, Brother Dalton, and numerous friends who have crossed his path. He is also survived by his sisters Brooke (canine), and Dewey, Gibbous, and Crescent (feline). In lieu of flowers the family is requesting donations be made to A Forever Home so they can continue their mission of rescuing more dogs. Rest in peace my sweet boy and I'll see you on the other side.

DON JULIO

Don Julio came to us in September of 2018 from a southern shelter. This poor little girl had multiple medical issues.

First, she was heartworm positive and went through treatment for that. After that she was spayed, and during the spay, she had a major hernia repair.

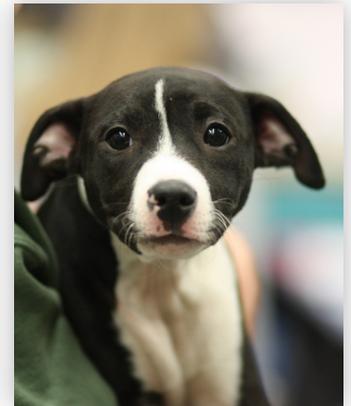
Next we did two surgeries to correct her luxating patellas (a luxating patella, or trick knee in layman's terms, is a condition in which the patella, or kneecap, dislocates or moves out of its normal location) and then did follow up surgeries to remove the pins. The surgery on one of her legs failed – there was a fracture after the first surgery so she had to undergo a more extensive surgery. There were several pin removal surgeries after that.

Don Julio was finally ready to be adopted. We updated her vaccinations and did another heartworm test (which is our policy) and she was heartworm positive again. The first treatment didn't work so she had to go through treatment again.

Finally, Don Julio's forever family was finally able to take her home in January 2020 after waiting all those months!



Total Cost: \$13,500



ITALIAN DELIGHTS

The six Italian Delight pups came to us in September 2019. Unfortunately, they soon broke with Parvovirus (canine parvovirus (CPV) infection is a highly contagious viral illness that affects dogs) and we started treating them immediately. Parvo is extremely contagious, which means that extra care must be taken by foster parents.

Unfortunately one of the pups didn't survive but all of the other pups have been adopted!

Total Cost: \$14,000



ANGEL'S PUP TINKERBELLE

Angel – a purebred Husky – came to us from a poor rural shelter and she was heartworm positive. She was found as a pregnant stray, dragging a heavy chain. The owner did not reclaim her so she came to AFH. She delivered her 11 puppies and immediately became very sick and almost died.

Her puppies had to be hand fed at just a few weeks old. Three volunteers worked around the clock to care for them and Angel. Unfortunately, at around four weeks of age, puppies started dying. We took three of the deceased puppies to The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) for necropsies and learned that they were having heart attacks.

We took the remaining puppies to a cardiologist for a barrage of tests, including EKGs and Holter Monitor tests. They all ended up on medication because they were diagnosed with cardiomyopathy.

Unfortunately, none of the other puppies survived but Tinkerbelle was a fighter. She has to go every 12 months for an ECG and a Holter Monitor test and every six months she goes in for a blood pressure check and complete labs.

Tinkerbelle is not expected to live a long life. She is now three years old, which was her projected life expectancy, and we are keeping her happy and healthy with a permanent AFH foster.

Total Cost: \$14,000 with ongoing costs of \$4,500 per year for specialized care

MISSISSIPPI FAITH

Mississippi Faith came to us from a southern shelter. She has had skin, eye, and ear issues since she arrived. She has been seeing specialists but we have not yet been able to completely solve her issues. We are keeping her comfortable and still treating her issues, but she will require ongoing medication.

**Total Cost to Date (costs are ongoing):
\$3,900**



SAYING GOODBYE IS NEVER EASY (continued)



OLIVIA

Sarah Flemming wrote to tell us about losing Olivia

We adopted Olivia on February 27, 2011. Olivia was the best pup we could ever have asked for! Since welcoming her into our family, she became a big sister to a little human sister (2014) and little human brother (2015). Olivia adored her little humans. She slept next to both cribs during their infancies and alternated sleeping in their beds when they got older.

She loved playing in the backyard, snuggling on the couch, and eating! She was there to console us through some very difficult times. The only complaint to ever come out of her mouth was when we weren't moving fast enough to get her breakfast or dinner into her bowl. Olivia had numerous humans who loved her and she loved them.



Sadly, on Monday, December 2, 2019, Olivia passed away unexpectedly. The four of us were with her hugging her, petting her, and telling her how much we loved her. It was been extremely difficult for my husband and I, as she was our first baby, but our children are taking it the hardest. They both adored her. Since they could walk, they both would help feed her and give her treats. Our daughter had started holding her leash on walks and was more than eager to help with her. They ask about her daily looking for reassurance that Olivia is watching over us from Heaven. Olivia was a huge part of our lives and now that piece is missing, leaving behind a huge void.

SUNDAE VIVIAN

Kathy Hawes wrote to tell us about losing "Sundae" Vivian Hawes

We adopted "Sundae" Vivian Hawes in 2004. Sadly she passed in December 2018. She was probably the last remaining dog in her litter and enjoyed a long happy life. This included trips to our beach house which she loved, and lots of walks.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

My first encounter with A Forever Home was when I adopted my dog Patterson (formally Pepper) from AFH in November 2004. Judy K. was fostering her along with her littermates. I will never forget walking into Judy's kitchen to see a pile of about 20 of the most adorable puppies I had ever seen. A week later, we went back to pick up our eight week old, dalmatian mix puppy. I still have the 2004 AFH newsletter featuring Patterson and her littermates. Patterson crossed the rainbow bridge about 14 years later in the summer of 2018. After losing her, I found myself browsing the website and attending adoption events, hoping to figure out what to do next. I decided to give fostering a try. I am only sort of a foster fail after my parents adopted my first foster. Since then I have fostered several other dogs. While I love dogs, the most rewarding part of fostering has been getting to pass on to new families a piece of the joy that Judy gave to me through Patterson.



IRENE WALSH



SUSAN FLASHMAN AND DICK BISSELL

Before I came to AFH I volunteered with several dog and cat rescues in Maryland. I stopped counting at 150 dogs and probably 50+ cats and kittens before coming to AFH. I started volunteering with AFH with a Katrina dog, and of course we all need the support of our spouses. Although Dick was not enthusiastic to start, he always enjoyed the different dogs who came through the door.

We continued fostering throughout different medical challenges and as we age, the size of our fosters has become smaller. When Dick and I were married I had two Chow Chows and Dick had two cats left to him by a nephew. We are now both retired Local 26 IBEW Electricians and still fostering for AFH.

Whenever I questioned fostering, I reminded Dick and myself that although it is one dog at a time, it matters to THAT dog!

SAYING GOODBYE IS NEVER EASY (continued)

SADIE LADY

Cheryl Piper wrote to tell us about losing Sadie Lady



Note from AFH: Sadie's story is a story of love, dedication, and lots of hard work. Her adopters went over and above to rehabilitate Sadie and make her feel safe and loved.

Our beloved Sadie Lady, a 75 pound Australian Shepherd/Rottweiler mix, passed away on Monday, December 9 at the age of 12 ³/₄ years. She had been abused by her original owner and spent most of her life in a shelter or kennel. Because of these early experiences, she exhibited fear aggression and came with a lifelong Barkbuster's scholarship paid for by AFH.

Sadie had the most enthusiastic, giving, and sweet personality imaginable, which she showed only to those she fully trusted. She was very devoted to her "leaders". We totally fell in love with her by the morning after her adoption and were committed to rehabbing her. This was a particularly daunting challenge as I, as primary caregiver, am vision impaired and have multiple physical disabilities. As I was incapable of physically controlling her, she needed to be totally voice trained and unquestioningly obedient.

The first couple of months were challenging. We had to use a muzzle when walking around the

neighborhood and having visitors. I worked with her daily to teach her that 99.9% of what happened out in the world had nothing to do with her. We would sit in the front yard (with me totally blindfolded because of light sensitivity). We hired a 14-year-old boy to work with me to teach her proper walking etiquette and train her to respond to verbal commands when outside of the house. The first month, I woke up almost every night at 3 AM with panic attacks and laid in bed after the morning alarm planning out what I would work on with Sadie that day. We also worked at getting her to ignore mechanical devices around the home.

It took about a month to break through the first layers of her fear aggression. We saw a calm dog emerge and got to finally experience those soft, intelligent brown eyes without fear. We began taking her on trips to Walmart, standing outside and letting the sea of people walk around her. We took her on a doggy cruise and were the proud parents of a very well-behaved dog. After 2 ¹/₂ months she was able to walk alone with me with her leash draped loosely over my arm, responding only to voice commands.

We quickly saw that Sadie was the most mentally alert dog we have ever had, extremely intelligent, and that she wanted to work. Eight months after adopting Sadie, I had hip reconstruction surgery and I could not walk or bend for months. Sadie learned within 48 hours to pick up items off the floor and give them to me and to open lower drawers so I could get in them. She also ran things back and forth between my husband and me. She loved to work and was extremely happy when she was

helping us. In fact, once when we were hosting our wine group, one of the guest's forks slipped out of her hand and onto the floor. Sadie immediately got up, retrieved the fork, and gave it back to our astonished guest!

Her intelligence was evident in how she communicated with her leaders. She had this incredible ability to communicate her needs and concerns in the most effective and simple ways. This became particularly valuable in her last couple of years when medical problems began to affect her quality of life.

Even though Sadie had come very far, we always had to be on guard and totally control any new or potential problem situation in order for Sadie to feel safe. Sometimes this could be emotionally exhausting; however, Sadie was worth it in spades! She gave back to us in love, snuggles, enthusiasm and zest for life tenfold of what we gave her. We mourn her greatly but feel privileged to have helped her overcome her fears and anxiety to be able to safely live and enjoy her life.



Sadie truly was our diamond in the rough, and many of our close friends and family will attest to this. By the way, did I say diamond? Sadie won for us the diamond door prize given away at one of the benefits sponsored by AFH, which allowed her dad to give her "mum-mum" the diamond ring he always wanted her to have. How many dogs can say that!