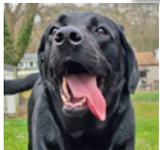


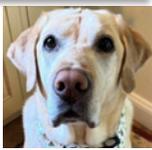
CHANTILLY'S FIRST PET MAYOR OFFICIALLY COLLARED AFH Pet Mayor and Cabinet Inaugurated



Mayor Charlie



Maya



Gus



Bella



Dyson



Tater



Melvin



Jax



Gizmo



Barcode

The votes have been counted, the tails have been wagged, and history has been made. **A Forever Home Rescue Foundation (AFH)** proudly hosted the first-ever Pet Mayor of Chantilly Collaring Ceremony on February 15, 2025, at Lazy Dog Restaurant in Chantilly, VA. The newly elected Mayor Charlie is a rescue dog with big dreams, a wagging tail, and an agenda focused on treat distribution, belly rub quotas, and ensuring all pets find their forever homes.

The tail-wagging collaring ceremony was officiated by Virginia State Senator Kannan Srinivasan and Emceed by nationally syndicated iHeartRadio host Ty Bailey during an afternoon of lunch, raffles and adoptions.

Mayor Charlie's cabinet includes:

Chief of Pawlice Maya, Fur Chief Gus and council members Bella, Dyson, Tater, Melvin, Jax, Gizmo and Glamorous Barcode.

We raised nearly \$15,000 from this campaign, including sponsorships, proceeds from the election and online voting, raffle ticket sales, direct donations, Lazy Dog's dine and donate, and Woofie's contribution from services that day. All proceeds will go directly toward helping rescue animals receive medical care, food, and shelter while they await adoption.

Thank You to the Following:

Julie Sun and Maribel Taylor-Mattox, Co-Chairs for the Pet Mayor of Chantilly Election and Event.

Manrico Zottig from Take One Production, Inc. for donating lights and sound for the event and to Hunter Mihalick, Lisa Alberti, Amanda Davis, Elena Taylor, and Patrick Mattox for onsite help.

A Special Thank You to our Generous Sponsors:

Public Interest Registry
Chantilly Animal Hospital
Centreville Dance Academy
Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar – Chantilly
Woofie's South Riding & Aldie

Read the full press release online and learn more about our sponsors at <https://petmayor.aforeverhome.org> ●





SANTA PAWS SUCCESS

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who participated in our Santa Paws photos! We had an amazing turnout with many cats, dogs and lovely people! Between both events, **A Forever Home** was able to raise over \$1,200 to continue our rescue mission!

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and look forward to our Santa Paws events in 2025. ●



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Editor: Susan Warner
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Looking to Foster or Adopt?

Are you looking for a new furry family member? 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.

Visit <https://www.aforeverhome.org> or email volunteer@aforeverhome.org to request information on fostering and to see our available dogs.

FAREWELL and THANK YOU : Patti Stinson

After 15 years of volunteering with **A Forever Home Rescue Foundation**, Patti Stinson has retired. We met Patti during our efforts to reform the Page County Shelter. It was incredibly difficult and we could not have succeeded without Patti's tenacity. Patti then joined us on several trips to Mississippi and Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. When **AFH** had a board member vacancy, she jumped right in and picked up the slack on our intake team—helping to get dogs into foster homes and coordinated transports. She also joined the rescue's board. Patti's many other contributions included the writing of our newsletter, helping put on our Casino Night fundraisers, and she also represented us on numerous television and radio shows. ●

She leaves some very big shoes to fill and we can't thank Patti enough for her efforts throughout the years.



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DOG ADOPTION



Available : Penny

By following these tips, you can create a positive environment that helps your new dog adjust and thrive, leading to a lifetime of love and companionship.



Available : Jessi



Available : Peppy

ADOPTING A DOG is a wonderful way to give an animal a second chance at a loving home. However, it takes time and patience for both you and your new pet to adjust. These tips will help make the transition smoother and set the foundation for a strong bond.

1. Help Your Dog Feel Comfortable Alone

Newly adopted dogs often form deep attachments quickly, making separation difficult. Help them get used to being alone by:

- Leaving the house for short, frequent periods before gradually increasing the duration.
- Keeping departures and arrivals low-key.
- Using chew toys stuffed with treats to keep them occupied.
- Playing calming classical music.
- If your dog shows severe anxiety (e.g., destructive behavior or excessive barking), consult a trainer or veterinarian.

2. Establish Rules and Routines

Consistency is key to helping your dog feel secure. All household members should follow the same rules, such as:

- Feeding on a regular schedule in a quiet space.
- Walking at least twice daily, including before leaving for work.
- Using rewards for good behavior and avoiding feeding from the table.
- Teaching polite behavior, like sitting before receiving treats or meals.

3. Reward Desired Behaviors

Positive reinforcement encourages your dog to repeat good behavior. Rewards can include treats, praise, playtime, or walks. Make sure to reward immediately after the desired action for the best results.

4. Manage the Environment for Success

Prevent unwanted behaviors by controlling your dog's environment:

- Dog-proof your home by securing off-limits areas and removing tempting items.
- Supervise your dog, using crates or gates when you can't watch them closely.
- Provide safe chew toys to keep them entertained.
- Use proper walking tools like a front-clip harness to discourage pulling.

5. Turn Mistakes Into Learning Opportunities

Mistakes will happen, but they're teaching moments. Redirect unwanted behaviors by:

- Offering an alternative action (e.g., asking for a sit instead of jumping).
- Ignoring attention-seeking behaviors like whining or barking, as long as they aren't harmful.
- Avoid punishment, as it can damage your relationship and increase anxiety.

6. Take a Dog Training Class

Group classes or private sessions with a positive reinforcement trainer can help you understand your dog's learning style and strengthen your bond. Choose a trainer who uses humane techniques like clicker training or lure-rewarding. ●

Volunteer SPOTLIGHT

The **AFH** family is composed of a wonderful, varied group of volunteers dedicated to helping us save lives. Whether it's an hour a month or the majority of your day, we greatly appreciate the support of all our volunteers.



MINDY STEINMAN

MINDY, who served in the Marines, is a newer volunteer with **A Forever Home** and has enjoyed every minute of her 7 months working with the rescue. She jumped right into fostering, taking on a litter of puppies. “This was also the first time I didn’t have to work around barracks, military housing or landlords so I could FINALLY foster!”, she said.

When Mindy isn’t fostering, she helps out at the adoption events and will drive transports to pick up and deliver our rescue dogs.

Mindy has volunteered with other rescues and shelters in some capacity over the last 20 years but felt a deep connection to the mission of **A Forever Home**. “I cannot really pinpoint what I love the most, perhaps the community and family aspect. I absolutely love every single dog that comes through”, she said. “I love how my son gets involved with the puppies at home. It's my therapy and happy place. I tell my son 'We save their lives so they can live their lives!'” ●

Rescue Story : ROSIE

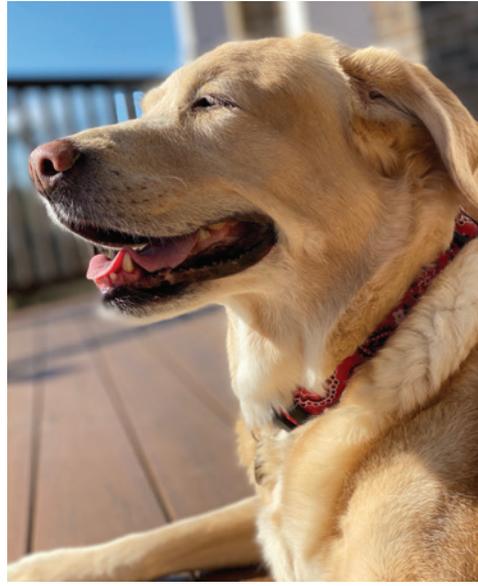
ROSIE was a stray in South Carolina who was picked up by a good samaritan along with two other dogs. She held on to them as long as she could but, already having two dogs of her own, she was unable to keep them. The shelter picked them all up and quickly realized that Rosie was pregnant. They were able to put Rosie in a foster home and she delivered her puppies within two weeks. Rosie had 10 puppies but unfortunately one of them didn't survive. Poor Rosie worked so hard to feed her babies as much as she could but it took a toll on her body. She was very thin and was eventually unable to feed them any more. Luckily, the pups began to eat mush and were able to survive. The foster had to return Rosie and her babies to the shelter because she was pregnant herself and couldn't care for a mom and all those babies. The shelter reached out to the rescue community for help and two wonderful **A Forever Home** fosters stepped in to help—Susan Green offered to foster the puppies and Sherry Long offered to foster Rosie. Then, Marybeth Henry drove 500 miles to pick up the family while keeping the babies fed.

The stars really aligned for this pregnant dog and her puppies. If the first good samaritan had not taken in Rosie, she would have given birth in an outdoor kennel with dirt floors. The shelter's kennel building had been closed and just reopened the week Rosie came in after it was rebuilt. Then **A Forever Home** was able to help.

Rosie and nearly all of her pups are now enjoying their forever homes thanks to their lucky stars. ●



IN MEMORY – OVER THE RAINBOW BRIDGE



BUSTER

Our beloved Buster, a member of the Golden Septuplets litter born 6/21/2009, passed away in November 2024. Buster was my very first dog, but my husband, who had owned many, confirmed that he was the most loving, gentle, and empathetic dog he'd ever known. My stepson correctly stated "Buster doesn't have a mean bone in his body." If he had a fault, it was that he licked.

In 2017, we made the decision to move to Florida and I found myself alone in a new area when my husband deployed. To say Buster saved my life is an understatement. He could never stand to see me sad and would nose open my door to lick tears from my face. Buster truly rescued ME.

My husband would often ask me, "Did you ever think you could love a dog this much?" The answer is a resounding "no," and I can't imagine I ever will again. Buster was that exceptional.

Thank you, **AFH**, for all that you do to change the lives of your animals and the families who are lucky enough to love them forever.

SANDY

We adopted Sandy from **AFH** in October 2009 and she blessed our home and our lives for 15+ golden years. Sandy was goofy, weird, wise and loved sweet peppers and beans as treats. She was doted upon every single day. She thought she was more human than canine and only really enjoyed the company of humans. She loved her long daily walks right up to her last week with us. She showered endless love and even at her last minute, she lifted her head and gave my wife and daughter one last lick before she had no more to give.

The miracle of life is how a stray from WV found her forever home with immigrants from India. Sandy was an angel who came from above to take care of us as much as we think we did of her.

We wanted to thank you for the gift of bringing Sandy into our lives and will forever love and remember her.

Thank you,
Suresh Visvanathan, Subha, Tanvi and Tanya

ELLA

Ella entered our lives when we needed her most. Having just lost a dog, we adopted her, with her sister Ariel, in 2008. She was the best. Every day for 15-1/2 years, she gave us sunshine. Her spunk and joy for life will be missed. She lived a good and hearty full life. Thank you **A Forever Home** for rescuing her, having been dumped at the side of a country road in West Virginia with her sister and brother. Your rescue not only allowed her to live but helped to heal our hearts when we were allowed to adopt her. She wore her **A Forever Home** tag on her collar as a badge of honor.

"There is no faith which has never yet been broken, except that of a truly faithful dog."

Konrad Lorenz

HAVE YOU JOINED OUR FACEBOOK GROUP?

Do you know **AFH** has a Facebook group for our volunteers, adopters, and friends?

There's no spam, no politics, no debates—just pictures and stories about our dogs! We love seeing our dogs in your homes, with you on vacation, and living their best lives.

www.facebook.com/groups/aforeverhome

A Dog's Story : CYRENA—LOST and FOUND



I don't remember much of my past, but I know it wasn't easy. I lived outside—hungry, cold, and alone. I had puppies, though I don't recall what happened to them.

One day, I was left on the side of the road. I watched the car drive away, but they never came back.

I wandered for months, starving and weak, covered in ticks and suffering from hookworms and heartworm. Then, a car stopped. Too weak to move, I was carried inside and taken to a vet. At first, I didn't understand, but soon, I realized—I was being cared for.

A kind lady, my foster mom, took me home. It was warm in winter, cool in summer, and I always had food, water, and a soft place to sleep. A small dog showed me it was safe to trust. Life was good.

Then, one day, my foster mom, teary-eyed, took me on a long ride. I didn't understand why she was sad. She told me I was going to my forever home. At the new house, I met another kind woman and her dog, Sophie. We ran together, and I knew—I had found a friend. My new mom hugged me, promised to protect me, and even let me sleep in her bed.

Now, I finally know what love feels like. My mom gives me food, treats, and endless kisses. If she had changed my name, I'd have wanted to be called Lucky—because after everything, I truly am. ●

Available DOG SPOTLIGHT

NOA came to **A Forever Home** from a terrible hoarding situation in Florida involving over 200 Chihuahuas. The dogs were living in an abandoned home without running water or electricity and surrounded by trash and feces. When she first arrived, Noa had a lot to learn about navigating this larger, scarier world. She had to learn to trust humans and relax. She understood that she was safe and would have plenty to eat. Thankfully, dogs have an amazing ability to bounce back from trauma, abuse, or neglect, and heal emotionally and build new relationships.

With the help of her foster mom, Arria Ibach Durham and family, and advice from Bea Baires, our **AFH** trainer, Noa started to heal. She began by carefully exploring and discovered that she loves being outside in the sunshine. Since being rescued, Noa has shown us her resilience and has truly blossomed. She is a sweet girl who loves and wants to be loved. She's smart and is a fast learner—quickly adapting to crate training and going potty outside. She gets along great with her foster fur siblings and finds every opportunity to play.

Noa's story was a sad one but has gotten much better since coming to **AFH** and her foster home. She's just waiting for her next chapter and happy ending in her forever home. ●



Happy Tale : DOZER



I adopted **Cooper**, now **Dozer**, back in June. He immediately made himself at home and had a busy life to jump into. Those first weeks saw him going on lots of walks, befriending many doggy pals, bonding with his sister Nova, swimming, training, and going on his first camping trip!

As busy as he's been, he didn't seem to forget his time with **AFH**. When I adopted him, he came home with a Lamb Chop toy—possibly from his foster home. A few weeks ago, he found Lamb Chop in a closet and I could see how much the toy still meant to him. *Respectfully*, Emilee Hardesty ●

In a world full of chances to make a difference, few things compare to rescuing a helpless animal. At A Forever Home, this isn't just about being kind; it's about giving dogs the care, love, and second chances they desperately need.

A Forever Home (AFH) is a 501(c)(3) animal rescue organization located in Northern Virginia. Our goal is to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome abused, abandoned, neglected, and unwanted puppies and dogs.

There are many ways that you can help a homeless puppy or dog:

MONETARY

- **Donate once or set up recurring donations through JustGiving** (<http://to-afh.org/Donate>) or through **Paypal** (Paypal@foreverhome.org) Recurring donations help us budget more efficiently and even \$10 a month makes a huge difference to a homeless, abandoned, or abused puppy or dog.
- **Corporate Giving Programs**
Does your company have a giving program? Many companies offer volunteer and donation matching programs that can significantly enhance your impact when supporting causes like **A Forever Home**. Speak with your company's benefits or human resources representatives to find out.
- **WoofTrax:** Donate just by walking your dog—visit to-afh.org/WoofTrax to download the app.
- **Karmakarma:** Offers you the chance to make an impact through micro-donations. Go to www.karmakarma.com and register. Log in, click on *Get Karmapoints* to see how to get points and/or click on *Make an Impact* and then *Animals* to navigate to **AFH's** page to make a donation.
- **Estate Planning:** Leave a lasting legacy. Email info@foreverhome.org
- **Donate Your Used Car:** Email info@foreverhome.org

HANDS-ON VOLUNTEER HELP

Email volunteer@foreverhome.org if you can help with any of the activities below.

- **Fosters:** Without fosters, the rescue ceases operation. Fostering can be long- or short-term. **AFH** provides all supplies and pays for all approved veterinary care. You can choose what dog(s) you want to foster too!
- **Transporters:** Drive a dog or dogs from our rescue/shelter partners to their **AFH** foster parents.
- **Home Checkers:** Home checks are done virtually.
- **Care Team Members:** Help fosters on a short-term, temporary basis.
- **Do you have a special talent or skill?** We would love to talk to you about using it to help us help homeless puppies and dogs.

SHOPPING

- **eBay Sales:** You can select **AFH** to be the beneficiary of a percentage of your **eBay** sales! Just select **A Forever Home Rescue Foundation** when you are creating your listing and indicate what percentage of the sale gets donated to **AFH**.

Shop with any of our partners:

- **Jeanne Taylor Pet Portraits** to-afh.org/JTPetPics
- **Hale Pet Doors** to-afh.org/Hale
- **Bissell** to-afh.org/Bissell
- If you or someone you know is looking to buy or sell a home, you can refer them to us by emailing Homes@foreverhome.net. For every home referral successfully closed through this program, **AFH** will receive a \$500 donation in your name.

SAVE A LIFE

Become a Foster!



A Forever Home
RESCUE FOUNDATION

AFH provides all the supplies you will need and pays the vet bills.
YOU PROVIDE THE LOVE!

To learn more about becoming an AFH foster, email:
volunteer@foreverhome.org



