FOREVERtails NOVEMBER 2026

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Forever Family Reunion

Every year, we say, "let's do a reunion," and, every year, time gets away from us, and then we plan on "next year." This year, we finally did it and what an incredible event! Despite facing uncertain weather with a Nor'easter bearing down on us, it was a complete success. We had a better-than-expected turnout with more than 120 forever families attending with their alumni pups and we raised more than $17,500!

It was so much fun as well! The dogs absolutely loved playing in the dog park, the contests were a blast, the face painter was amazing, and the dog caricatures were fantastic. But the very best part was seeing so many of our alumni and their families, fosters, volunteers, friends, and supporters all come together. Just about everyone stayed to see the crowning of the Homecoming King and Queen, despite the rain finally joining us. What an amazing event!

Please save the date for next year's event, tentatively scheduled for September 19, 2027. We hope you will join us!



Homecoming King and Queen are Crowned

Santa Paws is Coming to Town



Get ready for a little holiday magic! Santa Paws is coming to town, and you're invited to bring the whole family for a special holiday photo experience!

Join us on Saturday, December 5, 2026, at Weber's Pet Supermarket in Chantilly (14508-G Lee Road, Chantilly, VA) for a festive opportunity to capture wonderful holiday memories with your beloved pets and family.

For a suggested donation of $40 you'll get digital photos of your family and pets to use as you wish. Best of all you are supporting your favorite rescue!

More details at www.aforeverhome.org, or e-mail maribel@aforeverhome.org.

Brinny's Valentine's Day Miracle



Brinny arrived at AFH on Valentine's Day 2026, bringing with her a story of resilience, patience, and the hope of finally finding the family she deserved. She spent years in the care of a Louisiana rescue, and while she had so much love to give, she struggled with reactivity toward other dogs.

She was fostered at The Dog Stop where the team struggled to find a suitable playgroup; we knew she needed a different approach. Our trainer, Bea Baires of Best Buddies, worked alongside our dedicated volunteer, Katie, to help Brinny find the right forever home.

And Brinny had so much going for her! She adored children and was incredibly loving with people. With Bea's guidance, Katie and her kids worked with Brinny every week, taking her to parks, shopping trips, and adoption events and helped Brinny build confidence so that others could see the wonderful dog she truly was. Then, just as we had hoped, the right person came along.

Aimee McClintock previously adopted a dog who was dog-reactive. With training, she successfully helped her dog work through those challenges and was able to welcome a second dog into her family. After losing her beloved companion, Aimee wanted to help another dog and knew she had the experience, patience, and heart to give Brinny the home she needed.

Brinny's happily-ever-after is already unfolding! Here is what Aimee shared with us: "Brinny has acclimated flawlessly. She loves her crate and her new toys. She has so much energy, I think because she's so happy to be here. She's learning how to relax and take nice long naps 🙂 She also loves her new brother. I haven't seen any signs of reactivity from her toward our other dog or towards other dogs on walks She is doing amazing!"

What a wonderful update! Brinny's journey reminds us that sometimes the path to a forever home takes a special team of people and someone who understands that every dog deserves a chance!

Breaking News - Pet Mayor of Chantilly Election Headquarters!



After careful consultation with Mayor Charlie and his administration, the Pet Mayor election is postponed until March 2027!

Mayor Charlie will continue serving alongside his distinguished administration, including Maya, Chief of Paw-lice; Gus, Fur Chief; and seven Pet Council members, including the first-ever leopard gecko to hold public office!

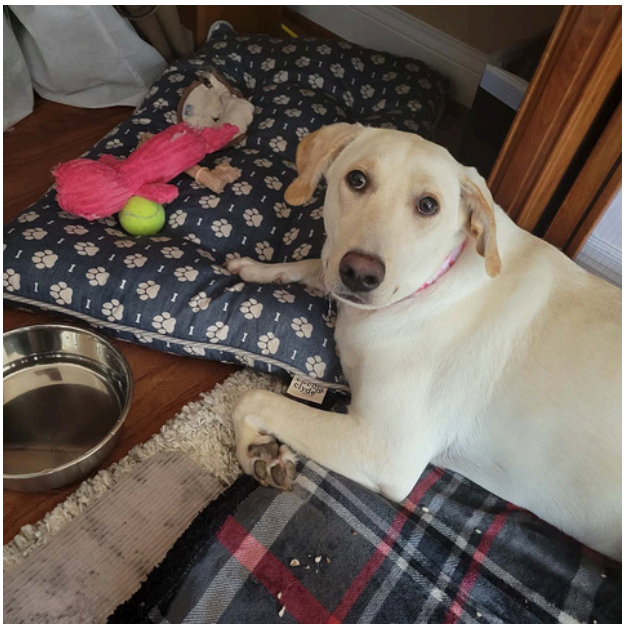
We will begin accepting candidate nominations in mid-February, so start grooming your future leaders now. No political experience required, just a winning personality, a loyal fan base, and the ability to charm voters into supporting a good cause.

Mark your calendars for **March 20**, 2027 ,when we expect to officially welcome Chantilly's new Pet Mayor and administration at the Collaring Ceremony!

Stay tuned. The race for Pet Mayor is about to get unleashed!

Zara's Journey Home

Some rescue stories remind us that it truly takes a village to save a life. Zara's journey is one of those stories



Zara came to AFH from a rescue in Mississippi, where she and her siblings had been found abandoned in the woods. A shy, reserved girl, Zara needed patience and time to learn to trust. Her new foster mom, Amina, welcomed the challenge, determined to help Zara feel safe and loved. With guidance from AFH trainer Bea Baires, Zara made wonderful progress. Little by little, her loving personality began to shine.

Then, one day, Zara slipped her collar and ran into a wooded area. Because she was so timid, the team knew finding her would be only half the challenge–bringing her safely home would require patience and a carefully coordinated effort.

The AFH community immediately sprang into action. Sam Connelly of Pure Gold Petrackers, prepared signs and contacted a team of local trackers and provided overall coordination. Volunteers Annette, Thad, and Peter distributed posters and spread the word on social media. Kay Ward of Paws for Home and Carlyn helped set up humane traps and cameras, taking turns monitoring them through the night. Matt of Sky Sniff Technology, an experienced drone operator, was also called in to help search for Zara. Bea, Amina, and East Gate neighbors prepared to assist with the eventual recovery. Then came the breakthrough. Umar, a neighbor who spotted Zara near a marshy pond and kept watch until the team arrived.



There, curled up in the tall grass at the water's edge, was Zara. With Bea coaching her, Amina approached slowly, speaking softly, "You're a good girl, Mama," and, "I'm happy to see you, Zaza." After an initial attempt startled Zara, Amina tried again, moving carefully until Zara allowed her to pet her hind leg and slip a lead over her head. Matt and Bea stepped into the muddy marsh to help secure Zara and then carried her to the car….Zara was safe!

Overwhelmed with gratitude, Amina shared, "I just want to share my deepest gratitude for everyone's help… I would have been paralyzed into inaction if it weren't for this amazing tribe of caring and compassionate people!"

And the story became even sweeter. After Zara was found, Amina received a phone call from a group of elementary school children in South Riding who wanted to know if Zara was safe. When they heard she had been found, they cheered with excitement!

It seems Zara has become quite the celebrity in South Riding!

Time to Say GoodBye Old Friend



The Old Van covered in Lovebugs

After 23 years, it is time to replace our "Old Van," the first transport van AFH ever purchased!

If our loyal chariot could speak, oh, the stories it would tell! It would tell of the many dog transports--traversing the mountains of West Virginia, trips to the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, driving up and down the East coast to rural shelters and rescues. It would also tell of the many joyful arrivals, loaded with dogs and pups, as excited foster parents waited to see their newest charges. Those were some of the happies journeys of all!

Eventually, our faithful Old Van would transition into our Supply Van, carrying dog food, newspapers, leashes, collars, tables, chairs, and so much more to our many, many events.

During COVID, it sat quietly waiting for the day when in-person events could begin again. Even after its tires dry-rotted, its battery and alternator gave up, we brought it back to life.

Although the paint is fading and rust has appeared, our old friend remains strong and dependable! But when the passenger airbag was stolen and could not be replaced, we finally had to face the inevitable.

So, after thousands of miles on countless adventures, it is time to say, Goodbye, old friend. You will always be part of our history!



Passing by The Superdome After Katrina

Consider making a tax-deductible gift at https://givebutter.com/aforeverhome to replace our Supply Van!



Sweetie Pie's Campaign

When AFH alumni Sweetie Pie heard of our rescue's need for a new van, she decided to help! She is offering to match any donation for our new van with a very generous matching gift of up to $10,000.

While we search for the replacement van has just begun, we have set a goal of $60,000 in donations to buy a new one.

Donations can be made via the following:

- https://givebutter.com/sweetie-pies-new-van-campaign
- a check to AFH, PO Box 222801, Chantilly, VA 20153
- or send a donation by Zelle using zelle@aforeverhome.org.

Contact us with any questions or other donation options by e-mailing maribel@aforeverhome.org

VOLUNTEERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Wendy Epperly



Wendy joined AFH in February at a time we desperately needed foster parents. She now fosters, mantains our storage unit, and helps with special events, including our reunion and recently a Halloween parade.

"For many years, I have dedicated my time and energy to rescuing animals in need, driven by a deep compassion for those who cannot speak for themselves and often suffer in silence. I wanted to find a nonprofit rescue organization whose values and virtues aligned with my own–one that prioritizes kindness, advocacy, and unwavering commitment to giving every animal a chance at a safe, loving home. AFH embodies these principles, making it the perfect place for me to continue my mission of helping the voiceless and vulnerable.

I am proud to be a foster, and I especially enjoy caring for puppies. They often have the least chance without someone to step-in, and I love giving them that start in life. Large litters bring me joy–there's something special about watching each little personality emerge and knowing they're growing toward a safe, loving future."

Leslie Bloxam



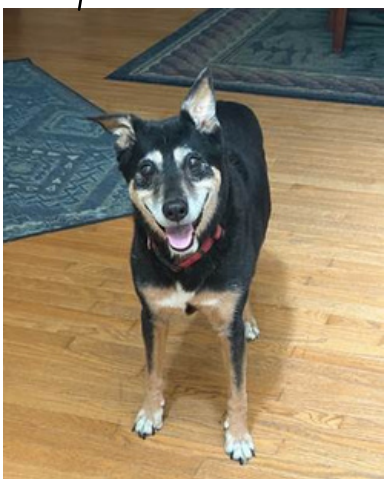
Leslie's first contact with AFH was when her family adopted their pup Milou from us way back in 2014. Then, after adopting her second pup, she joined us as a volunteer. *"I really enjoyed getting to know his foster, Jessica, and it was a good time in my life to help. So I signed up to volunteer and eventually, to foster. I wish I had done it sooner."*

Over the years, Leslie has assisted foster parents in need of help, fostered dogs and pups, transported foster dogs, made signs for our adoption events, posted dogs to social media weekly, and helped with special events (including the Leesburg Halloween parade). She also adopted her third dog through AFH! With her years of experience, she is a great mentor to new fosters.

Leslie has fostered 54 pups and counting! When asked what she enjoys the most, she responded, *"I enjoy being part of the AFH family, making friends, and helping dogs find homes.."*

IN MEMORY

Shep



Shep filled our lives and our hearts with beautiful memories. Whether he was wrestling with our other dogs over a coveted stuffed animal or running to the door as soon as his dad brought out his leash, his love of adventure fueled his journey. When he first joined our household, he weighed a little over 20 pounds. He easily conquered our 95-pound hound dog named Moe, but met his match in Ava, the unequaled alpha (among the dogs!). He always claimed Mom's lap to curl up in (or near, as he grew), and he loved snuggling between Mom and Dad at night in bed. We miss him more than words can say, but we will always remember his enthusiastic kisses, his cuddles on the couch, and always his love. Thank you AFH!

Winnie



Winnie, our beloved pointer-setter mix, lived a full and pampered 16 years, filling our days with quiet comfort, gentle companionship, and just the right amount of sass. She had a way of making even the simplest moments feel special, whether she was curled up in her favorite napping spot or giving one of her signature looks that said everything without saying anything at all. Winnie wasn't just a pet, she was a steady presence in our home, a source of warmth, and a true friend through every season of her life. Her spirit, her personality, and the love for her people will stay with us always.

Dixie



We adopted Dixie in 2015. Dixie was more than a companion she was our child. We loved her so much. Dixie was full of life, very friendly and one of the sweetest beagles you could ever meet. We lost her February 23, 2026, she was 11 years old. Dixie brought so much joy, comfort to our hearts and our home. Our hearts are broken and empty without her in our lives. Dixie has left her paw prints on our hearts forever , her gentle and loving soul will never be forgotten . We will always love and miss Dixie. R.I.P. my princess Dixie. – The Engle Family

Cooper



In the spring of 2016 we adopted Duke and renamed him Cooper. On January 18, 2026, we said our final goodbye to him, the cherished soul who blessed our family for ten unforgettable years. We are deeply grateful to "A Forever Home," for connecting us with Cooper and making it possible for him to become such a beloved part of our lives. From the moment we brought him home, his gentle spirit and playful energy filled our days with joy, laughter, and unconditional love. His absence has left an immeasurable void, a reminder of just how deeply he touched our lives. He will forever be missed, always remembered, and eternally loved.

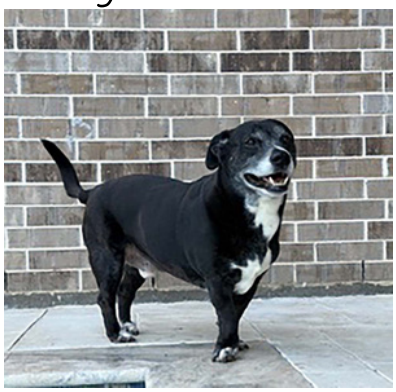
IN MEMORY

Willie



Rescuing Willie was one of the best decisions our family ever made... while we were vacationing in Maine, a derecho swept through Virginia, postponing the local Petco Adoption Day. This gave us the opportunity the following weekend to meet Willie. For 14 years following, nobody was safe from opening a container of watermelon or grabbing an ice cube without "Great White" (Willie) nearly biting their fingers off. He spread happiness to everyone he encountered and never missed the opportunity for a long walk or nap in the sun. He loved his friends–old and new–often ending up with his leash wrapped around mailboxes and trees out of excitement. Willie showed us every day what it means to love unconditionally, and we will forever cherish our many memories with him and the infinite joy he brought to our lives.

Harley



With heavy hearts, we had to say goodbye to our beloved Harley, who filled our lives with nearly ten beautiful years of unconditional love, laughter, and light. He faced life with a gentle spirit and a joyful heart, reminding us daily to find happiness in the little things: a warm patch of sunlight, a favorite toy, a familiar voice, stealing his spot on the couch with the armrest. Even in his final days, as he battled an aggressive cancer with quiet bravery, his love and cheerfulness never wavered. He gave us strength, just as he always had. Run free, sweet boy. You are deeply missed, forever loved, and never forgotten.

Dozer



Dozer was the BEST dog ever. He was an amazing older brother to his kitty sister, Macey, then Lucy and Josie. Lucy followed Dozer around like an annoying little sister everywhere he went, often snuggling up next to him. Dozer loved to RUN FAST and loved pup cups during COVID. He was handsome and puppy dog cute. He loved snuggling and giving hugs to his mommy and daddy. He leaves a HUGE void in our hearts and our home, but we feel blessed to have been able to have him as a huge part of our family.

Why Foster? You Can Save a Life

Have you ever thought about fostering a dog but worried about the time, supplies, or experience needed? At AFH, we make fostering easier than you might think!

You provide the love and a safe place to land. We provide the support!

AFH provides food, medical care, and supplies for your foster dog. We also have experienced volunteers to offer advice, and a professional trainer to help you every step of the way. You are never on your own! E-mail us at **foster@aforeverhome.org** to get started.

A Birthday Celebration with Heart – and Paws

For Scott's 50th birthday, we asked for gifts that would give back, in honor of Charlie.



When my husband, Scott, celebrated his 50th birthday, we decided to put a different spin on birthday presents. Instead of gifts for him, we asked our guests to bring dog treats, dog toys or dog beds in honor of our beloved rescue dog who we lost in December 2025, Charlie.

Our plan was to donate those gifts to A Forever Home, the rescue organization where our fur baby, Rocco, came from. It was a way to celebrate Scott's milestone while giving back to an organization with a special connection to our family.

A dog treat, toy or a bed might seem like a simple gift, but that simplicity was part of what made the idea meaningful. Rather than choosing something for the birthday guest of honor, our guests could help provide play and comfort for dogs in the rescue's care.

Charlie was at the heart of the request, and Rocco was our connection to a great cause and organization – A Forever Home. Bringing those two parts of our family's story together gave the celebration a purpose beyond the birthday itself.

Thank you, A Forever Home, for all that you have done and continue to do to bring joy and love into the lives of those who adopt animals. The love in our home was expanded since bringing Rocco home in May 2014.

Kindly, Jess & Scott Newman, and Rocco

Halloween Fun with the Scream Pups

AFH had a howling good time at the Leesburg Kiwanis Halloween Parade! With spooky floats, numerous community groups, and lots of candy! It was a fantastic event.



Our float featured Fred the skeleton, skele-kitty, lots of candy, and the Scream Pups. Our amazing volunteers. Adam, Leslie, Wendy, and Taylor carried our adorable pups to the waiting crowds, while Maribel pushed our Scream Cart. Of course, the Scream Pups were an absolute hit!

When we ran out of candy, nobody cared, they just wanted to pet puppies! We had so much fun we are hoping to do it again next year!