

ALMOST HOME PET ADOPTION CENTER

Humane Society / SPCA of Nelson County



29 Stagebridge Road Lovington, VA 22949 434-263-7722

GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO LIVE



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Please visit us at www.nelsonspca.org or at www.facebook.com/nelsonspca



Winter 2017

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In April 2004, as we readied for the opening of our no-kill Almost Home Pet Adoption Center (AHPAC), our Humane Society/SPCA Board (HS/SPCA) had to develop a plan. Would we accept easily-adoptable animals only, or would we save all animals not considered dangerous to adopt? Ultimately, we chose to accept all non-aggressive animals on a space-available basis: all breeds, sizes, and ages; friendly or shy; healthy or needing medical treatment. Given our facility size and the numbers of animals coming through Nelson County Animal Control (NCAC), we knew this would be very challenging.

While our previous working relationship with NCAC had been rocky, new animal control officers began working with us as a team. Staff at NCAC worked with incoming dogs and emailed photos to prepare us for when their holding requirement was up. We also expanded our outreach in several ways: we revamped and kept our website current; linked to Pet Finder, an internet pet rescued organization; and expanded and strengthened partnerships with no-kill shelters in more densely populated areas, primarily Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Northern Virginia. We recruited volunteers to foster puppies and kittens and help staff care for and socialize animals, including regular dog walks. Volunteers took dogs for car rides for respite from shelter life. A retired couple made it their mission to find forever homes for our dogs by matching prospective adopters with shelter animals, and providing supports, such as play dates and specialized visits, to assure the adoption's success.

Most recently we have been blessed with volunteers who serve as a therapy team, working with shy dogs. Another volunteer works with shy cats, whom we refer to as our cat whisperer. Our ongoing spay/ neuter assistance program may be the reason for the significant reduction in the dog numbers coming through NCAC. Since NCAC now accepts only owner-surrendered cats, and not strays, most cats in their custody are turned over to AHPAC.

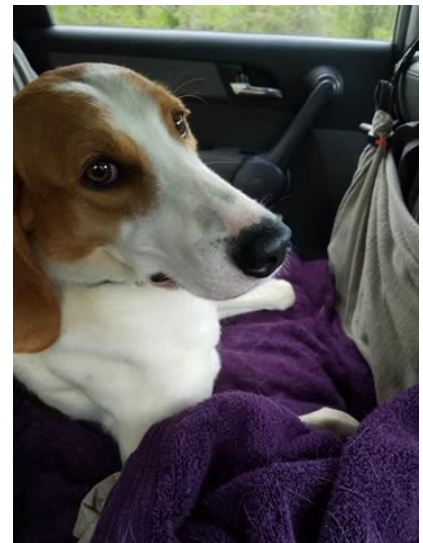
The HS/SPCA has an active Trap-Neuter-Release program that helps control the county over-population of feral cats. Since 2010, our 500-square-mile Nelson County has been considered a no-kill community, something we are very proud of. The key to achieving our goals is our recognition that each animal matters. Our caring staff and dedicated volunteers take a personal interest in every animal entering our facility. In the following pages you will see accounts of some of the ways that people are helping animals find loving, forever homes. None of this could have been achieved without the ongoing support of people like you.

Gratefully,

THE HUMANE SOCIETY/SPCA
OF NELSON COUNTY

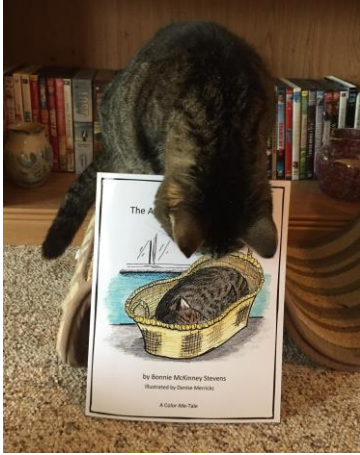
Bette Grahame

Bette Grahame, President



Jethro gets a treat in the form of a car ride.

Shopping at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)? Use [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and Amazon will donate .5% to the Humane Society-SPCA of Nelson County. We are also now participating in Kroger's Community Rewards program. Go to www.kroger.com/communityrewards or visit our website at www.nelsonspca.org for instructions.



The book, and its star.

'Dreamer Cat' Book Available

Need a special gift, and one that will help Almost Home? *The Adventures of Dreamer Cat* can be bought on Amazon. Written by Bonnie Stevens and illustrated by Denise Merricks, it is an endearing story of how a shy shelter cat dreams her way to adoption and love. It costs \$12, with all profits to Almost Home.

We'd Like Your Opinion

Some in the county feel that country dogs should be allowed to roam freely. Others are concerned that not all dogs are friendly to strangers, well-behaved, or wary of cars, putting themselves, people, and other animals at risk. Would you support a county ordinance enabling Animal Control Officers to require pet owners to confine their pet to their own property, if a dog has been determined to be a nuisance by showing aggression to people or other animals, chasing cars/blocking traffic, or damaging others' property?

Please e-mail your response to pets@nelsonspca.org (with "Dog Survey" in the Subject line), or write to: the Humane Society/SPCA at:
29 Stagebridge Rd, Lovington, VA 22949-2446.



Dr. Robin Pullen with Bonnie Stevens.

Dr. Pullen Guides Us on New Cat Care Rules

AHPAC recently received new protocols from the state pertaining to animal care at public and private shelters. Included are more thorough examinations of shelter animals and appropriate record keeping on a daily basis. Dr. Robin Pullen, a retired veterinarian from Maryland now residing in Stoney Creek, offered her assistance to our staff. She came to AHPAC to train the staff on the proper way to examine cats and

to recognize signs indicating the cat should see a veterinarian for diagnosis and/or treatment.

The training session was videotaped for staff members unable to attend, for new hires, and for periodic information reinforcement.

Dr. Pullen will be doing a similar demonstration on dogs. AHPAC is very appreciative of Dr. Pullen for giving her time and expertise to help teach the staff.

Almost Home On the Road

In our ongoing efforts to reach out to the community and provide education and resources, the Nelson County SPCA takes frequent road trips. We travel regularly to the Wintergreen Resort, where you can usually find us on the major summer holidays. This year we added several new venues. In March and June, we hosted "Doggie Kissing Booths" at Silverback Distillery, and in August we took part in the Dog Days of Summer at Bold Rock Cidery.

Both events gave some of our dogs an opportunity to meet (and kiss) new people and potential adopters. In October, we hosted a booth at The Festy Experience at Infinity Downs, speaking with numerous visitors and hearing wonderful animal stories from all over the country. Our sincerest thanks to Wintergreen, Silverback, Bold Rock, and The Festy for opening up their venues to us, and to all the volunteers who gave their time and effort.

Shop dog food at Chewy.com to get a discount and help Almost Home. See nelsonspca.org



Andrew Stevens heads out in the Almost Home van before dawn with 23 kittens for the Northeast Animal Shelter in Massachusetts. Andrew and his family adopted from AH in 2004. Now, just out of college, he's volunteering.

Our Volunteers Go the Extra Mile



A few of the hundreds of kittens Georgie Shufran has cared for, some as young as one day old.



Volunteers sometimes give dogs a break from the shelter with car rides. Cecil, above, is a big fan.

At left, Sayoko MacDougall takes a special interest in blind dog Lloyd. He loves walking with her.



Mariclaire Hale, above at right, devised a two-leash approach to safely walk strong dog Cleo. Sayoko MacDougall helps.

Thrift Shop Open Holiday Sundays



Lena Davis and Toula are frequent shoppers.

Don't forget about the weekly raffles

The AHPAC Thrift Shop in Arrington will be open on Sundays through the holidays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Shop on Sundays through Dec. 17 to help AHPAC receive up to \$1,000 in matching funds from Community Cats for the Trap-Neuter-Release program. Krista Waibel, volunteer TNR coordinator, has come up with a variety of fun ideas to encourage shoppers to turn out, including weekly raffles, special items for sale, and warm beverages while you shop. The raffles will be drawn at 5 p.m. on Sundays, and tickets can be purchased at the shop and at the Almost Home shelter.

The thrift shop was started by former board member Kathy Miller. Seeing the need for increased funding in order to achieve no-kill status in Nelson County, Kathy resigned from the board and put her efforts into creating an exceptional shop. From a modest, first location in 2006, to its second, much-larger location, the shop, along with the Holiday Matching Fund, provides the bulk of AHPAC'S operating expenses. Kathy is now running eBay sales of thrift shop treasures, an ever-increasing spinoff. The shop, located at 4791 Thomas Nelson Highway (US 29), is also open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Please know your continued shopping (and donations) year-round is so important to all AHPAC activities.



The AHPAC Thrift Shop in Arrington has all kinds of treasures, including housewares, books, clothes, antiques, and much more. At left is Krista Waibel behind the counter. Above, Biscuit, on the way home from being adopted at Almost Home, is on her first foray. The shop is open seven days a week through the holidays.



We Need Your Help on Feral Cats

Nelson County is home to countless feral cats, which are extremely shy or averse to human interaction. They produce multiple litters of kittens each year, which promotes the endless cycle of untamed, often uncared for, cats. These cats often stick together to form groups called colonies. One solution to the problem of unrestricted breeding, disease, and lives of hardship is the Trap-Neuter-Release program, known as TNR. Cats are humanely trapped, neutered, identified with a tipped ear, and released in the same place they were caught. While they are being spayed or neutered, they are given rabies shots, flea treatment, and ear mite medication.

This methodology helps control the population and diminishes the odds of some health problems. While we have an abundance of colonies in our county, we have too few people who care about these deserving cats. Taking care of a colony can be a rich and rewarding experience; all it requires is providing adequate shelter from the elements, food, and fresh water. The



Suzanne took in a colony of seven cats.

cats often become accustomed to their caretakers. When shown this love and respect, some even become tame. These cats are wonderful at controlling rodent populations in barns, orchards, and vineyards. For volunteer Krista Waibel, who runs the TNR program in Nelson County, this is a full-time job. She tries to help people who contact her about known colonies. She is assisted by a few passionate volunteers, but is in desperate need of more support. Do you have a few hours a week to spare? Do you have a barn or shed that could provide a home to a few cats? Can you donate food or supplies?

Please contact Almost Home to volunteer. We need your help. A few months ago, we ran an ad in the *Nelson County Times* asking for help and Suzanne responded. She contacted Krista to say she had an empty shed and room in her heart. Krista and her team were able to help Suzanne set up her shed, and get a colony of seven settled in. Suzanne now reports the cats prefer to hang out with her on her deck, and two of them sleep on her bed at night. This colony had been cared for by Krista and her volunteers for years, and was much loved. Finding their forever home was a dream come true.

A Kitten Named Brandi

Brandi, or more fondly known as Ewok, is a sweet partially blind kitten. She is playful and cuddly. Her favorite pastimes include playing with other cats, snuggling up on her foster people's chests, pouncing on feet, giving wet willies, chewing on toys, chewing on her box, chewing on anything and everything.

You would never know this bundle of energy is sick – and neither does she!

Aside from being partially blind, she also has Persistent Right Aortal Arch, which is a band constrict-



ing her esophagus causing a narrowing and making it difficult for her to keep food down. She is currently on a liquid diet awaiting surgery to remove the band. For now, when eating, her food is

elevated so it goes down properly. After she finishes eating, she has to be held vertically for ten to twenty minutes so her food will stay down. The surgery has been scheduled in November at the Lovington Vet; Doctor Golla will be performing the surgery. Check our website for her updates!

Afterward, there is a recovery period and we hope her esophagus will grow with her. If it does not there is another surgery on the horizon. But she has no fear, she will face any challenge with a pounce.

He's One Lucky Dog

Lucky, born on May 28, 2008, lived his first seven years on a chain, pacing in circles around a tree. Animal Control found him medically compromised due to neglect and seized him. He entered AHPAC in July 2015 and received all necessary veterinary care.

Lucky lived his next two years at AHPAC, enjoying nutrition and love, yet he was constantly worried. Afraid of other dogs, he paced in circles, often injuring himself. Board member, Astrid Brock, drove him to the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech for a thorough evaluation. When they found no neurological issues, they suggested "his circling is likely behavioral in origin and that he would do much better in a home environment where he could get the attention that he needs." As a temporary measure, Astrid gave him rides and overnight stays when she was able. Then, in August, Lori and Michael Collins were studying our website



Lucky, with Lori and Michael.

because they wanted to adopt an older, needy dog. After reading about Lucky and his special needs, they determined he was the dog for them and adopted him on August 19, 2017. They kept his world small, to give him time to transition to a dog living indoors as a valued

family member. They slowly introduced him to new things and gave him boundaries. Lucky knows and obeys many commands, and continually looks to them for guidance. He has learned that they keep him safe and relaxes in that knowledge. Calm and no longer pacing, he now feels secure enough to take naps in the middle of the day.

After 3,285 days of earthly life, Lucky is appreciated for who he is and he is thriving. He enjoys lots of cuddles, lap time, sofa privileges, belly rubs, special food puzzles, dozing in the sun, leash walks, and car rides that he LOVES.

AHPAC is thankful for people like Lori and Michael who aren't afraid to fall in love with an older, needy dog and give it its best life ever! Lucky's mom wrote "We are nothing special. It's Lucky who's the special one! He's been through so much but it never damaged his spirit. He's a special dog and we're so blessed to have him complete our family."

A Dog on a Mission

He's on his way with a new name and a purpose. Frisco, aka Todd, has begun training to become a service dog for a disabled veteran. His mission began when Pamela Board—scouting for a potential service dog for her dream program to pair shelter dogs with disabled veteran—emailed AH about the heeler/hound mix on the website. Unfortunately, Todd had just been adopted, but a month later returned to AH. Pamela was contacted and told Todd was available. Todd's bio was reviewed by Pamela's service dog field trainers, who felt he sounded too highly prey driven. Sigrid, AH dog manager, said, *This didn't sound like the dog I know. So, I decided to see how he behaved around our cats—perfectly! Next we went on the wood trail where he displayed good*



leash manners and didn't go bonkers over the rustling animal sounds in fallen leaves. I called Pamela again, and she agreed Todd sounded like a perfect candidate. Pamela got the field trainer, Jenny, to set an appointment for evaluation. Volunteers Flower and Ed Vankan transported Todd to Lynchburg Station for his preliminary evaluation and then on to Roanoke to be assessed by Tiffany, another

field trainer. Tiffany put our boy through a serious temperament test, complete with Ed dressing up as a scary gorilla. Todd passed with flying colors and stayed with Tiffany to start pre-training.

A few days later Tiffany called to say how well Todd was doing. His new name is Frisco—a new beginning, a new name. Frisco had traveled to NC, back to VA, and is now with Hayley, the trainer who will see him through thirty days of basic training. If all proceeds well, he will be taken into the St Francis of Assisi Service Dog program to be paired with a disabled veteran, the first shelter dog so accepted. Tiffany says she may screen more of our animals in the future. A huge thank-you to Flower and Ed for making this happen!

Our Very Own 'Hometown Hero'

Charlottesville law firm Allen, Allen, Allen and Allen has announced the 2017 Hometown Heroes, and Almost Home board member Fonda Bell is among the honorees to be recognized at events in Richmond and Charlottesville. Hometown Heroes are celebrated for their acts of kindness and heroism. The winners "demonstrate an outstanding commitment to community and service," said Trent Kerns, president of the law firm. Community members were invited to nominate local heroes who have inspired positive changes in and around their communities. Thirty people were selected to be recognized this year. Fonda has been a tireless advocate for homeless animals in Nelson County for years. She has fostered hundreds of dogs and secured safe and permanent homes for them. She is also a board member of Almost Home Pet Adoption Center.

As a representative of the shelter, she has worked with Nelson County's Animal Control Department to make sure every adoptable dog finds a home.



Fonda and Biscuit, adopted as a puppy from the shelter 7 years ago.

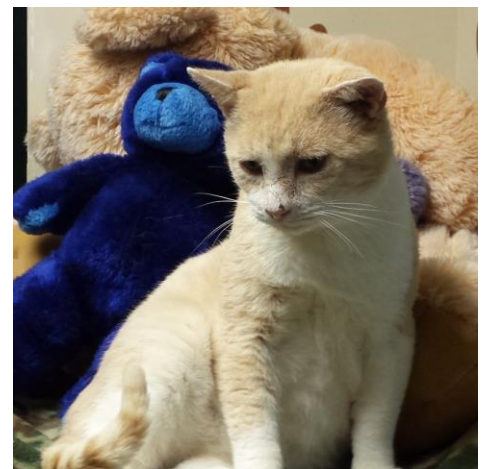


Brent

Looking to Adopt a New Cat or Dog?

Midas is an adult male cat who arrived at AH with a severe neck wound. He is recuperating nicely. Brent is a young adult hound who was originally quite shy. Both these boys and many other loving, wonderful animals are ready to go home with you!

To see photos and descriptions of our animals, visit the shelter website at www.nelsonspca.org.



Midas

**Humane Society/SPCA of Nelson County
29 Stagebridge Road
Lovington, VA 22949**

Almost Home Pet Adoption Center

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Permit No. 232**



Meet Henry. Your new dog or cat is waiting for you at Almost Home, at the corner of US-29 and State Road 624, about 2.5 miles north of Lovington. Stop by or visit our website at www.nelsonspca.org.

Holiday Matching Fund

Once again, we are pleased to offer our Holiday Matching Fund. Generous donors will double your December donations, and all funds will go directly to help the animals in our care. To qualify, please have your donations postmarked by Dec. 31, 2017. Thank you in advance!

**Donations can be sent to:
Humane Society/SPCA of Nelson County
29 Stagebridge Road
Lovington, VA 22949**