



West Columbia Gorge Humane Society

Washougal, Washington



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The mission of the West Columbia Gorge Humane Society is to end the unnecessary euthanasia of adoptable companion animals in our community. Since 1994, we have strived to be a caring, permanent presence in Clark County.

Solutions for common dog behavioral issues

By Katie Fjellman

One of the major reasons why dogs are brought to the shelter is because of complaints about their behavior. These unwanted behaviors are almost always created by the owners themselves either through faulty training or ignorance, and most can be solved by providing more exercise. When dogs do not get the proper release of energy, they will find a way to release it themselves by barking, running away and other destructive behavior. Providing enough mental and physical stimulation for our dogs will make most of these common behavioral issues fade away.

Walking is rarely enough exercise for a dog. Many dogs need a specific job in addition to walking. Providing more activities in our dogs lives help challenge them mentally and physically:

- Get a backpack to add some weight to provide more purpose for walks
- Ask your dog to sit and lay down three times at every curb to practice obedience
- Teach hide and seek with either a toy or treat
- Feed your dog by throwing the food in the grass so they have to use their nose to hunt



Christy Stevens teaches Jagger not to jump in a recent training session. (Photo by Diana Alderman)

Common Behavioral Problems

Running away and jumping up are two of the most common complaints I get from dog owners. When your dog jumps up, they are demanding attention and trying to get closer to your face. First, think about how you react when you come home and they jump up excitedly. Do you talk sweet? Look at or pet your dog? Say "no" or "off"? Push or knee them away? All of these actions, whether in approval or disapproval, are providing your dog with the attention they are asking for. If you are doing any of these things, you may be inadvertently teaching your dog to jump up on people.

Instead, when you walk in the door, completely ignore your dog—no touching or even looking at them. When your dog jumps on you, turn your back. You will be taking away what your dog wants. As soon as your dog settles down, have them sit and get down at their level to say your hellos.

If you are 100% consistent with this, your dog will stop jumping and begin to automatically sit when you come home because this is the quickest way to get your attention. Let any guests know that you are training your dog before they arrive, and have treats close by that they can grab to give your dog when they settle down and sit.

When many people say "come," the dog runs the other way. This is often because we have taught our dogs that coming to us is not a great idea. For example, "come" inside means the fun is over or "come" back means you are doing something

wrong. On top of this, many of us get frustrated or embarrassed when our dogs do not come. When they finally do, we get mad at them.

If you think you are guilty of this, change the word to "here" and retrain the recall. Teach the recall on a 30 foot line or rope. When you call your dog, say the word **once** and act really excited. Act silly in the teaching phase—be a ball of love and fun for your dog by offering play, toy or a treat when they get to you. Always praise your dog when they come to you and teach them that play does not end when they come. Practice often by calling them and releasing them back to play over and over. When your dog is consistently coming back every time you say the command once, you can get rid of the long line.

The key to a happy, well-behaved dog is exercise and the appropriate training. By being patient, calm and consistent you will see great improvements in your dog.

Spotlight on a program: WCGHS foster care

By **Becky Boesch**

West Columbia Gorge Humane Society has a variety of programs in place to help in the housing, care and adoption of our animals. One of these critical programs is foster care. This program is staffed by volunteers who are willing to open their homes to our animals when they need special care and attention. Those that we usually place in foster care are:

- Animals recovering from medical procedures such as spay/neuter, dental or even amputations
- Pregnant mothers awaiting delivery
- Kittens or puppies whose immune systems are not strong enough for the shelter environment
- Animals who need special socializing or training
- Animals who do not do well emotionally or behaviorally in the shelter setting

Fosters also provide homes for animals when the shelter is facing times of overcrowding. Some fosters specialize in certain areas of care. For example, one foster home is particularly good in socializing shy adult cats while another excels in caring for nursing orphans.

While we have permanent volunteers who foster our animals, we often have additional foster-to-adopt homes. These are people who either can no longer keep their pet, or have rescued an animal and are willing to care for that animal until it is adopted. Although the number of foster homes varies depending on the time of year, we have approximately 15 cat foster homes and 10 dog foster homes caring for at least 40 cats and 10 dogs in foster care at any one time.

Our current foster program is overseen by volunteer Claire Coop. If you are interested in joining our foster network, please contact the shelter. Claire will supply you with the appropriate forms, educate you on how to care for our animals and visit your home to help ensure that you are able to offer the best environment. Our greatest need for foster homes is during the spring and summer kitten and puppy seasons.

Foster volunteer work is rewarding for many reasons. Heather Aldrich, a foster, states that it is a wonderful learning experience for both herself and her children. But more importantly for her, the ultimate reward is “the knowledge that we made a difference in the life of each animal. A cat cannot speak up for itself and say life is not fair. They did not ask to be forgotten or neglected.”

Adoptable Animals



Kyle came to the shelter as a very shy kitty, but he is now a major love bug who loves attention. He will bring a smile to your face when you pet him and rub his belly. It would make him even happier to find his own forever home.



Carmel is a sweet and petite young lady. She is a little on the shy side, but with love and patience, she will blossom into a wonderful companion. The markings on her tortoiseshell coat are very beautiful. She will make a special addition to her new forever home.



Oliver is one of Penny's puppies, who has been featured in our newsletter before. He is a wonderful young boy with lots of energy. He loves going to the dog park to run and play with other dogs. One of his favorite things to do is hug— he loves to give hugs and be hugged. He is looking for a forever home to call his own.



Roscoe is a wonderful family and companion dog who does really well around children. He loves to go running and play ball. He has a great temperament—he plays well with other dogs, knows basic commands and has great manners. He would love to be a part of your family.

See our available pets online at WCGHumaneSociety.org.
Also, visit our pets on display in our Adoption Centers in PetSmart (SE 192nd Ave.) and Petco (Cascade Park and Orchards).

A true Christmas Story



By Diana Alderman

Dorothy (right) and her new friend Clayton.

A stray cat and four kittens were found in Carol and Jim Fisher's hedge and woodpile. It took weeks of coaxing them with food to safely catch them all. Carol's extreme patience was rewarded as she lured and caught them one at a time. In desperation, the Fisher's brought the little cat family to our shelter. They were rescued just one day before the first December snow storm. If the kittens had remained outside, they could have perished.

In honor of Christmas, they were named: Mrs. Claus, Donner, Dancer, Prancer and Blitzen. The kittens were weaned and placed in foster care. Mrs. Claus stayed in the shelter to recover from a kitty cold and to be spayed prior to adoption.

The Fisher's told their daughter, Cath, the story of rescuing the kitties. She and her husband, Brian, were very moved by their plight. They are involved with animal causes in Seattle and know cute kittens are more adoptable than their mothers. They decided that Mrs. Claus deserved a home and agreed to adopt her on Christmas Day; goopy eyes, stuffy nose and all. They would pick up Mrs. Claus on their way home to Seattle after visiting family in Vancouver.

The weather turned appropriately frightful at the arranged pick-up time. Heavy snow was falling in the Gorge by afternoon, and Highway 14 quickly became slick with snow. The road to the shelter was dicey at best. Cath and I were in frequent phone contact checking road conditions, but luckily we both had drivers with experience driving in snow. We were also thankful for 4WD and AWD.

After much loving care, Mrs. Claus recovered from her cold and was spayed. She now lives a very happy life with her new family in Seattle. She also has a new, special name shared with Cath's grandmother—Dorothy.



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Board celebrates 2008, looks forward to event-filled 2009

From the WCGHS Board

We are happy to report that over 230 cats and 85 dogs found new homes through us in 2008!

We hope this year we can exceed those adoption numbers. In order to do that, we need two things—financial support and volunteers. The more animals we shelter, the more people we need to care for them and the more medical expenses we incur. Last year we spent just over \$9,000 dollars providing extraordinary care to animals that needed such procedures as dental work and amputations. Many of these animals would have faced euthanization at other shelters, but, for us as a no-kill, every animal that can be saved will be saved.

Please lend your support by attending several upcoming events:

1. Our first annual walkathon, "Hike on the Dike," will be on May 16th at Captain William Clark Park/Cottonwood Beach from 8:30-1:30 p.m. We will have raffle prizes, a rock-wall climb, agility course, bobbing for balls, face painting as well as an open house at both shelters. If you have never visited our shelters, this is a great opportunity!
2. Mark your calendars for August 29th when we will host our 2nd Annual Benefit Auction and Dinner. Please check our website at www.wcghumanesociety.org for additional information.
3. We are also in the planning stages for a Garage/Rummage Sale and participating in other community events.

We look forward to seeing you at these fun events!



Shelter residents room free in one of two free-room areas of the new shelter. See our update below for the newest additions to the shelter. (Photo by Diana Alderman)

New cat shelter nears completion

By Becky Boesch

Our new cat shelter is officially up and running just in time for kitten season. The new building offers us several different spaces for cats. We have an intake room to house new residents to the shelter just long enough to make sure they are free of disease and acclimated to their new life. We have a large free-roam area for a majority of our shelter residents as well as a second for our older and/or shy cats.

Rick Krahn, one of our volunteers and a general contractor, has just completed an isolation room with its own exterior entrance, washer/dryer hookup, sink and isolation cages. This will allow this area of the building to be totally self-contained when we are dealing with infectious illnesses. In addition, a wall was added in the large free-roam area so that cats no longer have access to the exterior door, and we can have a small office that is free of destructive teeth and paws.

We are hoping to be able to remodel an additional room now currently being used to house cats for a medical clinic. We currently have all the equipment we need for the room through grant donations, but still need to raise the funds for the room remodel. We hope to be able to paint the exterior of the building this summer as well.

We are very excited to have this new building. Thank you to everyone who helped make this happen!