



FOTAS News

FOTAS IS A RECIPIENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF S.C. ANGEL AWARD-ONE OF 10, OUT OF 14,000 ORGANIZATIONS, RECOGNIZED AS REPRESENTING THE MOST EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE CHARITIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Puppy love: Foster volunteers come to the rescue



The Aiken County Animal Shelter is filling up with homeless pets as it does every spring. It is a critical time when puppies and kittens (and their mamas) compete for space in our intake kennels. This influx of infants causes us to run short on room and increases the stress level in the shelter.

Thankfully, we have compassionate, dedicated fosters who come to the rescue, taking these babies into their homes, and nurturing them until they are healthy and socialized enough to be adopted. These volunteers save the lives of countless helpless pets that cannot get the same time and attention in a busy shelter.

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“Getting them out of the shelter, if even for just a few days, is such an asset to their adoption journey,” said Girl Conger, who has been fostering County Shelter dogs for 12 years.

The shelter still is in urgent need for more foster volunteers, and there is no expense to you. FOTAS will provide food, toys and a crate. Anything you need. We just ask that you pick up these wonderful pups and dogs, give them a safe place and provide them with love and kindness.

Finishing touches on P.A.W.S.

The new P.A.W.S. Center (Primary Learning, Adoption, Wellness, Socialization) is nearly complete and will include a mural of pets designed by photographer and FOTAS Volunteer Vince Verrecchio. The center will feature two meet and greet rooms as well as a cat room and catio. It will also have a large room for training and socializing shelter dogs, and holding educational events, with a primary focus on children.

The P.A.W.S. Center will help increase the rate of adoptions and reduce the length of stay for shelter animals. Thanks to two legacy estate donations and the generosity of our donors and the Aiken community, the shelter’s number one wish since the facility was built in 2014 will become a reality.





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FOTAS is a recipient of the Secretary of State of SC Angel Award – one of 10, out of 14,000 organizations, recognized as representing the most efficient and effective charities in SC.

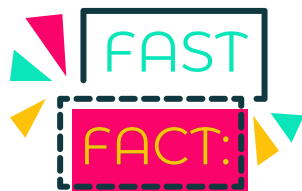
Despite challenges, County Shelter maintains high save rate in 2022

The numbers are in, and they confirm that 2022 was a challenging but successful year. The County Shelter achieved a live release rate greater than 90 percent for its fifth straight year. We saved 4,043 dogs and cats in 2022 – an achievement that could not have happened without your generosity and support. Thank you!

2022 Statistics:

- 🐾 Total animals received 4,369**
- 🐾 Total animals saved 4,043**
- 🐾 Total animals saved percentage 92.54%**

ALL ADOPTABLE ANIMALS WERE SAVED



FOTAS and Aiken County fund more spay/neuter pet surgeries for folks in financial need and more TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) surgeries for community cats than any other organization in the CSRA. FOTAS also saves more heartworm positive dogs than any other local charitable organization, thanks to your donations.

Local students are future FOTAS advocates

We love the opportunity to visit schools and speak to young people about the work that is done at the Aiken County Animal Shelter and with FOTAS. It gives us a chance to show kids how they can help the stray and surrendered pets waiting to be adopted at 333 Wire Road.

Thank you to educators that bring us into their schools and let us partner with them. If we ever want a solution for animal overpopulation and the countless stray animals wandering our roads, it is vital for this generation to learn about pet responsibility and caring for those that need help.



Puppies and students make a happy combination at Graniteville Elementary.

Group play enriches shelter dogs' quality of life



FOTAS engaged the services of the nationally renowned Dogs Playing for Life organization at the shelter, where dogs participate in managed play groups to help make the dogs more adoptable. Trained shelter staff work with volunteers to run the daily play groups.

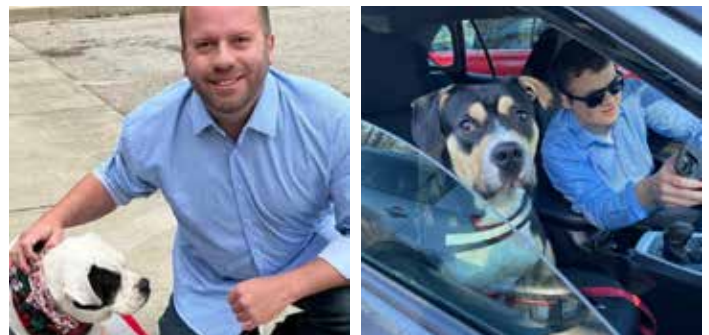
Simply allowing dogs to be dogs in a group play setting is making a big difference at the shelter. Scared and painfully shy dogs are blooming into gregarious canines. Dogs without manners are learning better behavior and those with low self-esteem are becoming superstars who mentor new pup participants.

Group play also enriches our shelter dogs' quality of life while they wait to be adopted. Group play provides them with exercise and interaction they can't get from a simple leash walk.

Local news personalities bond with shelter dogs

FOTAS has developed partnerships with local media outlets that care about the homeless pets in our shelter. The Aiken Standard and three Augusta television news stations often cover our special events and promote our pets that desperately need good homes.

John Hart, board member and news director for WJBF NewsChannel 6, has emceed some of our big adoption events and Meredith Anderson, shelter dog adopter and news anchor for WRDW News 12, has served as the emcee for our Woofstock Festival. Her colleague at Channel 12, Reporter Will Volk, also covers the County Shelter. Both he and John Hart have even taken shelter dogs on dates to give them a break from kennel stress.



John Hart takes Faith on a Doggie Day Out. Will Volk takes shelter dog Aiden out to lunch.

Pet Food Drive-Thru program helps local residents



FOTAS purchased pet food for a recent pet food assistance drive-thru event, helping 289 dogs and cats that Saturday! FOTAS schedules these pet food assistance events every month, helping residents in need.

FOTAS volunteers Dennis Brite and John Sauer with some of the pet food provided to local residents in need.



Drive-by shooting victim Panda now living his best life

Panda, a sweet mixed breed with a warm smile, lost his leg when it was shredded by a stray bullet during a drive-by shooting. But FOTAS went the extra mile, and his story has a very happy ending. He was adopted by a woman in Canada and is now living the good life. Congratulations, Panda! You finally have the life you deserve. Thank you to everyone that helped make this wonderful adoption happen!

Three-legged Panda celebrates his "Gotcha Day".



FOTAS brings shelter dogs to retirement homes

FOTAS volunteers take the County Shelter's sweet dogs to local retirement homes. The residents enjoy the company of a furry friend and the dogs love getting out of the shelter and meeting new people. Some senior facilities have pet restrictions, so these visits from our dogs often help raise the spirits of people who miss their own animals.

County Shelter dogs visit the residents of Cumberland Village in Aiken.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Saturday, May 20, the **Furry One Mile and 5K Run & Walk** will take place at Generations Park. Proceeds from this event, held by 2 Girls and a Clock Race and Timing Services, will benefit FOTAS and the shelter.

On May 27, FOTAS will host a **Children's Book Release & Adoption Event**. Author Casey Mason will read from *I Just Want to Snuggle*, her incredible children's book about her adopted Pibble from the County Shelter.

The **FOTAS Playing Fore the Pets Golf Tournament** is on Monday, Oct. 23 at the Reserve Club.

We also will be hosting more Saturday **Dog Ears Reading to the Pets** sessions for kids.

Our monthly **Community Pet Food Drive-Thru** events will continue throughout the year.

Look for more event updates and details on the FOTAS Facebook page and our website, fotasaiken.org.

Margery, Merry and Hutch find great homes!

Margery, Merry and Hutch, three of the shelter's long-term residents, recently found homes and are doing extremely well with their new families. These happy outcomes are why we do what we do!



Margery holds her new best friend.

Merry sticks her head out as she leaves with her adopter.

Hutch goes home with his new family.



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