



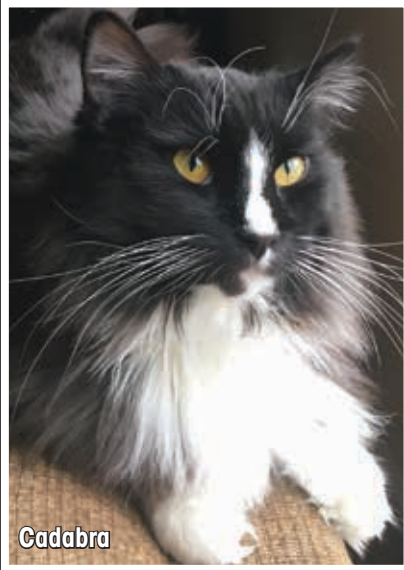
# Kennel Connection

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Vol. 3 Issue 1

Newsletter of Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center

Spring 2017



Cadabra

## Like Magic

How she ended up wandering as a stray on Rocky Springs Road, we may never know, but once this black and white, long-haired beauty found her way to Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC), her path led straight to her forever family.

Jennifer Knill and her family had been searching for a new feline family member for a few weeks before coming to FCAC. "We have always had luck finding the perfect pet at Frederick's shelter," says Jennifer.

Betty, who had been at the shelter for 2 months at that point, must have known that the Knill family was special because she did everything she could to get their attention. "She literally reached out through her cage to us and meowed as we were walking through," says Jennifer. "I knew I wanted a long-haired kitty and there she was reaching out to us."

Jennifer brought Betty home on September 30, 2015, and the family began a very gradual introduction to their 12-year-old Shi Tzu, Josie, and their

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## Independence

If you see something, say something. This is what we say to encourage people to report animal cruelty. But when Sarah Freitas saw a dog in trouble, she didn't just say something; she *did* something.

The pain and fear for this 5-year-old dog came to an end on July 4th, 2015, when his path and Sarah's intersected.

Sarah was celebrating the 4th with friends and family at her home near the Shab Row area of downtown Frederick. In the evening, they wandered away from their cookout, planning to catch the fireworks. What they saw instead was shocking and heartbreaking.

A man, clearly intoxicated, was kicking, punching, and dragging his dog, a red and white American bulldog named Zeus. According to the animal control officer's report, Sarah and two other witnesses described the man "getting on top of [Zeus and hitting] the dog with closed fists repeatedly." Witnesses said that when the man punched Zeus, "it appeared he was using a lot of force, like he was fighting another grown man." They described the sound of the punches as "the sound you would hear when someone gets punched in the stomach ... you could hear the impact of the punches and the hard contact that was made on the dog's muscle areas."

Witnesses described the dog's obvious fear: his tail was tucked and he was shaking. One of the horrified onlookers asked the man to stop, and he replied that he needed to be mean to Zeus to control him. He said that treating a dog this way is necessary to show him who's boss.

Children were crying, Sarah says, and families walked away, choosing to miss the fire-

works rather than continue to expose their kids to the abuse.

Sarah was one of at least three people who called 911. Police and animal control officers were dispatched, but Sarah decided not to wait for them. She approached the man and said, "Hey, can I see your dog?" He asked if she had a cigarette. Sarah responded, "Let me see your dog and I'll see if I have a cigarette." He handed Zeus' rope leash to Sarah and again asked for a cigarette. "No," she answered. "I don't smoke."

"Zeus was so friendly," says Sarah. "It was such sad situation. He had a blank stare," she says. "Obviously, he was used to being treated this way. He sat right in front of me and would not go back to his owner."

When the police arrived, says Sarah, the officer claimed that there was nothing she could do since officers had not witnessed the abuse, though the officer acknowledged having received calls about the same man abusing his dog on previous occasions. But Sarah refused to give

the dog back to the owner; instead, she waited with the police officer for an hour and a half until animal control officer Charlotte Branham arrived from Monrovia, where she had responded to an earlier call. By the time Officer Branham arrived, the dog's owner, whom the police officer identified as homeless, had left the scene.

After collecting information from the police officer and witnesses, Officer Branham took Zeus to Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC). It was clear that his injuries were more emotional than physical. "When I arrived at the shelter," notes Officer Branham in her report, "I took several photos for the intake process. Zeus had a depressed look to him.



Zeus

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# Director's Letter: Envisioning Success

By Linda Shea

Success for an animal shelter is defined in various ways and is subject to independent opinion. For example, members of the public often measure success as reduced animal euthanasia. Others consider success to be a reduced intake of owned animals. Still others measure success by programs that are innovative and yield more animals placed overall. In reviewing the past year, it is inspiring to see that our shelter has implemented strategies to improve operations, better serve our community, and enhance animal care.

In July 2016, we implemented Barn Cat Buddies, a program that has placed over 40 cats that were considered unadoptable by most standards—cats that don't enjoy sitting on laps or being an indoor pet. In February 2017, we implemented Fraidy Cats, a volunteer-based program that is designed to help socialize and build confidence in shy cats to make them adoptable. So far, we've had one graduate of the program—a cat named Sweet Thang, who was adopted in March. In October 2016, we implemented Canine Playgroups, another volunteer-based program designed to evaluate dog-to-dog interaction and allow valuable, closely supervised socialization time for dogs and puppies.

During this fiscal year, we have received grants from the Snyder Foundation for Animals and the Maryland Department of Agriculture totaling \$41,250 to allow spay/neuter for 412 cats for Frederick County Residents. Creative logistics allowed us to relocate an English Bulldog with a severe medical condition to an out-of-state rescue.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers allow us to move forward to best serve our citizens and the animals in our care. Our combined efforts on all fronts are reflected in a 25% decrease in intakes, a 39% decrease in euthanasia, and an overall increased live release rate of all animals. Not only have we envisioned success, we have witnessed it firsthand.

■ Linda Shea is Director, Frederick County Animal Control.

**Our Mission:** To prevent cruelty, abuse, and neglect of animals in Frederick County by enforcing all state, county, and city ordinances to the fullest extent possible. We will shelter homeless animals and attempt to place them in safe and loving home environments. We will educate the public on all animal issues to foster a more aware and caring community.

## Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center

1832 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick, MD 21702 • 301-600-1544  
frederickcountymd.gov/15/Animal-Control

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## INDEPENDENCE

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When taking the photos, I removed his leash and collar and he stood still, tail tucked, and wouldn't look at me."

Zeus waited at FCAC, in limbo, while the court case dragged on. During his stay, Zeus received all the kindness and love that shelter staff and volunteers could give him. On October 1st, Zeus' previous owner voluntarily relinquished him to the shelter and he was moved to the adoption floor.

The shelter is a bustling, stressful place for any dog; for one who's been abused by the person in whom he has placed his trust, and for one who must simply exist in his kennel, with only brief daily outings for months, it can be especially difficult. By the time he was available for adoption, Zeus was showing signs of stress and wasn't making a great impression on visitors.

Meanwhile, Zeus' case concluded. Though Zeus' abuser was sentenced to 90 days in jail, all but 20 days were suspended. The \$500 fine was suspended as well. The man was ordered not to own any pets for 18 months.

Expecting a homeless person to pay a fine may have been unrealistic, but those who were following the case were disappointed that the abuser did not receive a punishment that more clearly reflected the seriousness of the crime. "The final outcome was a slap on the wrist," comments Sarah. The man's homelessness is "no excuse," she continues. "His home status has nothing to do with the fact

that he beat his dog."

The next turning point in Zeus' life came when Tara's House Animal Rescue sent a volunteer to meet him at FCAC. The experienced volunteer saw through the dog's anxiety and knew he would make a wonderful pet. She brought

Zeus into Tara's House in December 2015; from there, the resilient dog won the hearts of his forever family, who adopted him in early 2016.

Ultimately, it took time and commitment from numerous people—witnesses, animal

control officers, animal

shelter staff and volunteers, rescue organization volunteers, and a loving adoptive family—to bring this deserving dog his happily ever after. But none of this would have been possible if Sarah and the other witnesses had not stepped in.

"I'm not one to sit back and allow something like this to happen," comments Sarah. "Seeing this first-hand, seeing a dog beaten ... the look in Zeus' eyes, as if he thought this was normal life, it's not ok. I feel it's very important for people to know that this stuff happens every day, not necessarily in public in the middle of a celebration, but behind closed doors, behind a fence. Too often people don't speak up, and it will keep going on. No animal deserves to be abused."

If you see or suspect animal cruelty—whether abuse, as in Zeus' case, or neglect—it generally isn't advisable to try to handle it yourself as you could be putting yourself in danger. But please, do say something. Call 911, or call 301-600-1544 to reach an animal control officer directly.



## Work with Us!

Interested in a job helping the county's neediest pets? Keep an eye out for job openings at Animal Control, posted here: [www.frederickcountymd.gov/jobs](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/jobs).

# HOMES WANTED

View all of our adoptable pets on Petfinder ([www.frederick.petfinder.com](http://www.frederick.petfinder.com)) or Petango ([www.petango.com/fcac](http://www.petango.com/fcac)).  
Or stop by for a visit—you never know, you might just find true love!



## SENSITIVE GUY

Smart, energetic, affectionate, goofy, good with other dogs. That's Brickle! So why is he at the shelter instead of home with a loving family of his own?

Brickle was abandoned by the first family we know of, then he was returned to the shelter by the next family. It seems the abandonment has gotten to this sweet boy because he displayed separation anxiety in his second home. Brickle is due for what he's always deserved: a true forever family that will never give up on him.

He'll need lots of patience, but he is so worth it! Brickle's adopter will have guidance from a professional trainer who has offered a free in-home consultation post-adoption. Think you might be a good match for this sensitive guy? Come meet him today!



## TRUE BEAUTY

With her patchy coat, Harriet might not have the superficial beauty of some of her neighbors on the cat floor. But give her a few seconds of attention and you will see *and hear* how beautiful she really is. This girl is a purr machine who cannot get enough attention!

Harriet's coat has been affected by a flea allergy that must have gone on, untreated, for a long time. No doubt she kept her sunny disposition throughout what must have been an uncomfortable—and itchy—period in her life. Keep her on basic flea preventatives and her coat will grow to match her inner beauty once more.



## MAGIC

*Cont'd from page 1*

8-year-old cat, Conan. "We had a perfect transition with the introduction with no hiccups," notes Jennifer. Betty, whom the family renamed Cadabra, is not a fan of the little dog, but loves to play with Conan.

"Cadabra lives up to her name," says Jennifer. "She is so quiet and she just will appear out of nowhere. She isn't a snuggle bug but she shows her affection in other ways." She'll follow Jennifer around—even to the bathroom, where she will take the opportunity to get a drink from the sink. And she requests belly rubs on the couch or in bed during the wee hours.

"I often look at her and wish she could tell her story," continues Jennifer. How such a wonderful cat wound up homeless is a mystery to us all.

## Upcoming Events



**Rabies & Microchip Clinic—Sunday, April 23, 11 am – 2 pm, at the shelter (1832 Rosemont Avenue in Frederick)**



**Open House—Saturday, May 27, 11 am – 2 pm, at the shelter**



**Yappy Hour (FFOCAS Fundraiser)—April 20, May 18 & June 15, 5-8pm at Barley & Hops in Frederick**

# Help Your New Dog Make a Fresh Start with the Rover Reboot

Many people, in their excitement over welcoming a new dog into their home, plan some of the following activities during their new dog's first week home:

- introductions to friends and family
  - playtime with their other dog
  - a trip to the pet store, groomer, or dog park
- Sounds reasonable, right?

Wait! Your new dog needs time to decompress and process all the changes she's experienced. She probably lost at least one family. Either she spent time as a stray or watched her family walk away, leaving her at the shelter, where she had no idea what would happen to her next. Her family never came for her, but it's probably safe to assume that she looked for them every day. If you rush her into too much too soon, she may develop behavior problems.

To give your new dog the best chance of success, we urge you to use the *rover reboot* (also known as the *2-week shutdown*) during her first few days or weeks in her new home. Use the behavior of your new dog and other pets, if any, to determine how long to continue the reboot (2 weeks is average). This will help your new dog begin to see you as her protector and kind leader; to understand that she is home; and to let her true personality shine through.

How does one "reboot" a dog?

## Gentle Restriction

During the reboot period, keep your new dog either in a crate or on a leash—yes, leashed *inside* your home as well as outside. (Remove the leash when she's crated.) Keep the leash attached to you or let her drag it. Introduce her to the house and yard by walking her around (on leash) a couple of rooms per day. **Do not allow your new dog to have free run of the house.** Avoid taking her to the pet store, groomer, or dog park. The only car rides should be to the vet.

If she misbehaves, calmly say, "ah-ah," gently tug on the leash, and redirect her. If she starts to have an accident in the house, say "ah-ah" while you pick up the leash and hurry her outside. (And be sure to praise her every time she pees or poops outside so she gets the idea.)

Not into crating? Don't worry—you can ditch the crate once you feel she's "rebooted." To make crating work for you for now, try these tips:

- Provide all the dog's meals and toys in the crate.
- If you don't want to use a crate, keep your



new dog in a small, dog-proofed room or hallway. Try this for short periods at first to be sure she doesn't chew furniture or wood trim.

- To minimize her anxiety (and yours), family members can take turns sleeping next to her crate at night. Put her breakfast in kongs when you leave for the day.
- Try to ignore any crying or barking when she's confined; go to her only when she's quiet.

## Very Gradual Introduction to Your Other Dog(s)

The first day, walk the dogs together (one handler per dog) before bringing the new dog into the house; let the dogs' behavior tell you how far apart they should be on the walk. Do *not* allow them to rush up to each other face-to-face; if both dogs are relaxed, they may approach each other at an angle or they may sniff butts. Try to keep the leashes loose—a tight leash can frustrate some dogs. If possible, walk them together like this daily for the first week.

When you feel they're ready, you can allow the dogs to spend a few minutes of supervised time together inside the house or fenced yard. Keep a hold of the new dog's leash at first; later she can drag the leash. Use the leash to gently remove the new dog if play seems to be getting too rough or if either dog seems uncomfortable. If all is going well, increase the time they spend together; if not, take a step back and slow

down the process.

If you're not feeding your new dog in her crate, feed the dogs in separate rooms to avoid a fight over food.

## Even Slower Introduction to Your Cat(s)

Keep the new dog separated from your cats using closed doors for at least a week. Let them slowly learn each other's scent: rub a towel on the dog and leave it where the cats hang out; leave a cat-scented towel in the dog's crate. Gradually replace closed doors with baby gates, allowing the new dog and the cats to see each other for short periods (with the dog leashed and with you). If the cats are afraid or if the dog is too excited, take a step back. **Avoid any situation that might cause the cats to run away and the dog to chase them—this would reinforce the cats' fear and the dog's excitement.**

## Show Your Dog How Great Your Kids Are

Children can be scary to dogs. To help create a bond between your kids and your new dog, have your kids regularly provide the dog with the best treats. Make sure the dog is taking treats gently from adults first; if the dog is not taking treats gently, an adult can hold the dog's leash while the child tosses treats to the dog. Help your children learn about dog body language and remind them that most dogs do not like to be hugged.

## Sources and Additional Reading

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