

— A mid-year update from —

Fayette Friends Of Animals

January through June 2025



GIVING ANIMALS A SECOND CHANCE AT HAPPINESS
since 1998

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A Season of Hope and Homecoming

Recognizing a 45% increase in adoptions

Summer is in full bloom, and with it has come an incredible wave of love, compassion, and second chances at Fayette Friends of Animals (FFOA). Since the beginning of 2025, we're proud to share that over **100 cats and more than 150 dogs** have found loving forever homes. And that's not all! **54 dogs and 25 cats** have experienced the joys of foster care while awaiting adoption. Every tail wag, every purr, and every happy adoption photo is made possible because of you, our compassionate supporters, volunteers, fosters, and donors.



Celebrating

260



Adoptions in 2025

Trying to take cute photos of your dog?

Here are some tips from an expert! First, Amana recommends getting their energy out: run them around, let them sniff awhile, and wait until they seem like they're settling down. They'll be much better models afterwards. Next, find a good assistant to stand near the camera and use props to keep their attention. Squeaky toys, balls, and treats are all great props. Amanda's mom is her photography assistant at the shelter (Thanks, Marie!).



A Tale of Three Tails: When Amanda Met Aegon

Volunteer, Adopter, Superstar

It all started when Amanda Rawson came to adopt her dog, KC from the shelter in April 2022. Amanda quickly realized KC needed a playmate, and so she returned to the shelter in August to adopt Sky. After a few months, she realized she wanted to do more for all the animals she couldn't adopt, so Amanda and her mom began volunteering as dog walkers.

For the past three years, Amanda has been walking dogs, helping at events, and serving as our resident photographer. After getting her first camera in high school, Amanda fell in love with photography. At the shelter, Amanda shoots intake photos of our animals and some of our events. Her goal is to capture joyful moments at our events that help our new arrivals look their best for adoption profiles. As a side gig, she photographs senior portraits and family photos.

Our long-term residents have a special place in Amanda's heart. She remarked how, **"They get so excited to see you! It's the best part of their day. You can tell they truly appreciate the time you give to them."** Eventually, Amanda started to fall for long-term resident, Aegon. She wanted to make sure he would be a good fit for her home.



By night three, KC, Sky, and Aegon cuddled in bed together and Amanda knew it was meant to be. **"I think we knew from the moment we brought him home that we were going to be his forever home,"** Amanda recounts.

When she isn't at the shelter, Amanda enjoys spending time outside with her husband Chris. Amanda and Chris have a lot of love to give, and have started fostering displaced children on and off over the last year. We're grateful to Amanda, not just for her commitment, but for the heart she brings to everything she does.

Become a Shelter Guardian

Monthly giving helps us plan for the future and provide consistent care for the animals who need it most. It also helps ensure our long-term residents continue to receive the ongoing care and necessities they need until someone with enough love to give takes them home.



Supporters like her remind us that every act of care counts. **If you want to make an ongoing impact like Amanda, consider becoming a Shelter Guardian.**

To become a Shelter Guardian, visit ffoashelter.org/donate, scan the QR code on this page or contact us at (724) 245-7815.



Adoption Spotlight: Sir Didymus From Suffering to Safety



When Sir Didymus was found tied to our shelter gates, emaciated and wounded, our hearts broke. But thanks to your immediate outpouring of support, he received emergency medical care and was able to get the close attention, one-on-one care, and love he needed to heal. This brave, goofy boy recovered beautifully and this April he was adopted into a loving forever home. His journey is a testament to the life-saving work your donations make possible. Thank you!

Feline Feel-Goods: Tootsie & Sugar's Happy Ending

Tootsie (*far left*) waited over a year for a home. She was stressed in the shelter, quiet and reserved. But once in a loving home, her personality blossomed. Her adopter recently visited the shelter to share that Tootsie now cuddles like a puppy—content and happy.

Sugar (*left*), another long-term resident, was with us for over 15 months. Her adopter shared, "She completes my home and fills my heart with happiness and joy."

View all of our pets and apply to adopt online:
ffoashelter.org/adopt



Staff Spotlight: Amanda Mehalic



After many years working as a nursing home supervisor, Amanda became the Kennel Manager at FFOA in February of 2024. During the pandemic, she decided to pursue her lifelong love of animals, enrolling in a Veterinary Assistant program. Amanda loves working for FFOA, saying, **“When you have a passion for something, it makes the hard work easier. This doesn’t feel like work.”**

One of the best parts of Amanda’s day is being greeted at her home in Allison by her two sons, Gauge (16) and Gavin (12), three dogs (Pistol, Ryder, and Tex), and two cats (Lulu and Ricky Bobby). It’s no wonder why the shelter might feel like a little slice of home. The other best part of her day is saying hello to each and every one of the animals at the shelter, noting how happy they are to see her.

If you’ve ever seen Amanda in action at the shelter, you might have noticed she’s a bit of

a powerhouse so it makes sense that one of her most beloved past-times outside of work is weightlifting. When she’s not getting even stronger, you might find her singing “Give” by Sleep Token on her way to hike in Ohiopyle, the place she goes to ground herself in nature. On a rainy day, you’re more likely to find her curled up with some furry friends reading a book. Her favorite book? *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho.

When asked if Amanda had any ideas for ways the community could better support the shelter, Amanda said she hopes someone will start a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program in Fayette County as this would decrease the number of animals who end up without a home. Brains, braun, and a heart of gold, we’re lucky to have Amanda on our team. Next time you see her at the shelter, be sure to thank her for all she does for our dogs, cats, and staff. We wouldn’t be where we are today without this powerhouse caregiver!

Tye-Dye for Tails

Our friend Jess at Harvest is Life created one-of-a-kind tie-dyed shirts and matching pet bandanas to benefit our animals! Order online for delivery or pick up yours at the shelter today!



Board Member Spotlight: Lori Omatick

One of our newest FFOA Board Members

The universe got something right when it brought Lori Omatick to Fayette Friends of Animals earlier this year. With more than 16 years at Penn State Fayette as Director of Development and Alumni Relations, and a background in business development and capital campaigns, we can't believe our luck in having Lori on our Board of directors. Lori believes that, **"Pets are so much more than just companions. Pets are like medicine. People need them."**



Since retiring, Lori has been serving on several boards, traveling with her husband, and spending more time with her kids and grand-fur-kids. Most recently, she's visited Portugal and Scottsdale, Arizona. Once a professional singer, Lori enjoys finding live music in new cities, as well as trying different cuisines, architecture, and art museums.

When she's not exploring, you might find Lori in Baltimore visiting her two daughters and their fur-kids. She loves visiting her grand-cats, both of whom have special medical needs. Lori's former family dog, Lightning, an Italian Greyhound, was her wild-hearted and devoted companion for 16 years. Until she's jet-setting less, Lori takes every chance she gets to watch her grand-dogs, a husky-mix and pitbull, both rescues.

When she's not traveling, you might find Lori biking on the trail near her house in Connellsville or hiking in Ohiopyle. Born and raised in Fayette County, Lori has always believed in giving back to her community. She's especially proud of the shelter's growing impact and hopes to use her experience to help FFOA increase its capacity and community reach.

Lori encourages the community to get involved with the shelter in whatever capacity they can; whether in "time or treasure," as she so charmingly phrased it. Lori believes **"The best way to feel good about yourself is to support a cause you're passionate about."**

Help yourself feel good today by signing up to volunteer at the shelter, an event, or by becoming a Shelter Guardian. We double dog dare you!

Want to Help Save Animals?



Volunteer with us! From walking dogs and cuddling cats, to helping with adoption events or organizing supplies, there's something for everyone. Our orientation sessions are fun and informative and a great way to give back!

Sign up today at
ffoashelter.org/volunteer



Our First Annual Pup Crawl was a Huge Success!

A special thanks to The Trophy Husband



TheTrophyHusband.run
RUNNING. FAMILY. LIFESTYLE.

Our First Annual Pup Crawl was a tail-wagging success! With over 70 participants and 40 dogs, we spent the afternoon visiting four local pubs—Mom Marucas, Mahoney's Fork & Froth, DiMarco's, and Rizz's—all of which generously welcomed our furry friends.

Attendees enjoyed drinks, raffles, trivia, and plenty of puppy love, all while raising funds to support our mission of rescuing and caring for animals throughout Fayette County. Special thanks to our event sponsors—Henry & Stewart Audiology, Timmy Rodeheavers Hot Rod Shop, and Teaz Tanning—and to Laurel Highlands Brewing for the Trophy Husband Lager, created just for the occasion.

This event came about thanks to the vision of Joe Carei, also known as The Trophy Husband. Joe dreamed up the concept, led the charge, and brought the community together in support of our animals. To learn more about his coaching services and the exciting events he's organizing, visit thetrophyhusband.run.

We're already counting down the days until next year's Pup Crawl. Thank you for making the first one so special!



Enter our Annual Pet Pals Photo Calendar Contest



It's that time of year again...our Annual Photo Calendar Contest is officially open! Submit your adorable pets today!

It's 12 Days of Christmas in July!

Get your tickets today!



Helping Paws, One Meal at a Time

FFOA's monthly pet pantry

At Fayette Friends of Animals, we believe no pet should go hungry and, thanks to our amazing supporters, our Pet Pantry has been working overtime to keep local tails wagging and bellies full.

We know that times can be tough, and keeping a beloved pet fed shouldn't be the reason anyone has to say goodbye. Our Pet Pantry exists to lend a helping paw when it's needed most.

Over the past six months, we've distributed thousands of pounds of food to families in need. From kibble for pups to crunchies for kitties, our shelves have been stocked with love and compassion—and it's all because of you.



PROVIDING FOOD TO OVER

1500

Cats and Dogs



Ways to Contribute

Make a One-Time Donation

Every gift matters. A single donation helps cover emergency surgeries, food, vaccines, and other critical needs.

Become a Shelter Guardian

Join our growing community of monthly donors who help us plan ahead and respond quickly when animals need us most. Even \$10 a month makes a difference.

Donate Supplies

You can help us stock up on essentials by shopping our Amazon or Chewy Wishlist or donating items locally.

For more information visit:
ffoashelter.org/donate

