



Re-Homing Your Pet

Thank you for caring enough to try to keep your pet out of the city shelter. It is important to be aware that The Cattery receives many requests every day to place cats with us. Because we are a no-kill facility, we are not able to take every single cat. We limit our intake based on the current capacity of the adoption rooms at our shelter. Heartbeats does not take dogs from the public. They pull straight from the euthanasia list at Corpus Christi Animal Control and are the last chance for the pets on that list. For each animal we would take from the public that is one more pet that has to die in the shelter.

Because like you, we don't want to see your pet turned in to animal control where it could be euthanized, we'd like share a few tips with you that have really helped our success rate with our adoptions.

With a little effort, most people are able to find a good new home for their pet themselves. As you go through the process of placing a homeless pet, keep in mind that creativity, persistence, and a positive attitude are usually rewarded. Think about the best possible environment for the pet and explore all the options you can think of.

Get medical help

The first step is to get the animal to a veterinarian. The vet will be able to determine the age, breed, and medical status of the pet you are rehoming. This will help market the animal to potential adopters. Animals that are deemed healthy by a veterinarian and are current on their vaccines are much more likely to find a forever home. It might take some work finding an inexpensive veterinarian. Try contacting Belcher Animal Hospital, Everhart Animal Hospital, or Crosstown/Baldwin. Spay/neuter the pet prior to them being rehomed. This makes sure they will never be used for breeding and will guarantee they will never contribute to the homeless pet population. The Cattery has a low cost spay/neuter clinic for cats and dogs- <http://thecatterycc.org/info/spay-neuter/>.

Marketing you pet

A good bio of the animal is how potential adopters will learn about your pet. In addition to telling the basics (age, breed, sex, medical status, activity level), a great bio will tell the adopter about the personality of the pet. Share his/her likes and appealing qualities. Make sure to highlight the pet's good qualities. Try to focus on what type of home would be great for the pet, not just on what type of home he/she wouldn't be fit for. Not good with children? Then she's great with adults!

Include a good picture of the pet. A clear, high quality, color picture with minimal back ground is best. Try getting a few different types of pictures. Three is best; one of the face, one of the body showing the size of the animal, and one showing the pet in action doing something he/she enjoys. Ideally, the main photo you choose for the flyer should have the eyes of the animal in focus.

If you need inspiration, or just an idea of what works, try looking through Craigslist posts. Pick a few you think are good, ones you think people would respond to. What about that post made you like it? Was it the pictures, or maybe the way the animal was described? Use those things as a starting off point as you write your own post.

Getting the word out

You will want to advertise as widely as you can. In this day and age, the internet is the number one way to advertise your pet. Facebook and Craigslist are the two main websites. Craigslist has a pet section that is very popular and will reach many potential adopters.

<http://corpuschristi.craigslist.org/> Of course, you will be screening potential adopters so it doesn't matter where they hear about your pet. It matters if they are a good home and the right fit. Share a picture with the bio on your personal Facebook page. Ask all your friends and family to share the picture. There are many Facebook groups that pertain specially to rescue animals. Most will share your picture and help get the word out. Here are a couple:

Rescues Unite 361 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rescuesunited361/>

Corpus Christi Furbabies <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CorpusChristiFurbabies/>

Making flyers is another way to draw adopters. Placing them at high traffic places and veterinary offices is key.

Screening Potential Adopters

It is up to you to decide how carefully you want to screen any potential new homes for your pet. Depending on the time you have available, you may wish to be very careful to ensure your pet is going to the best home possible. Ask open-ended questions and really listen to the answers. Be non-judgmental and you will get more honest answers.

Here are some things you'll want to ask:

What kind of life will your pet have with its new owners?

Will they view it as a member of the family, or just a dog/cat?

What will they do if it gets sick, or tears up their house, or doesn't get along with their other pets?

Will it have daily exercise, quality food, and regular vet care?

Do they have experience with your pet's breed or specific issues your pet has?

How do they plan to discipline your pet or train it?

How much time will it spend in a crate or in the yard alone?

If they have cats or kids or dogs, does your pet get along with those?

How does their activity level fit with that of your pet?

Consider your personal safety when arranging to meet strangers who express interest in your pet. Use common sense. Best Friends Animal Society has adoption packages for dogs and cats that go into great detail about how to screen an adopter and include sample applications and contracts. http://bestfriends.org/uploadedFiles/Content/Resources/Resources_for_Rescuers/Adoption/HowtoFindHomesforHomelessPets.pdf

Finding a home can take some work and some time, but if you persevere, you are sure to find a new person for your pet. If you have a time limit and it expires with no home in sight, then consider boarding the animal to buy some more time. If you are trying to place your own pet in a new home, you are this pet's best option for finding a good new home. Since you know the animal, you can provide the most information to prospective adopters and you can best determine the appropriateness of a new home. Please remember that your dog or cat has been a faithful companion to you, so he/she deserves the best new home you can find. You will sleep better knowing that your pet is happy, healthy and safe in a wonderful new home.