



# NEWSLETTER

A Forever Home Rescue Foundation • Spring 2009

## Imagine....the Future

After facing our most challenging year yet as a rescue, we here at A Forever Home Rescue Foundation are taking some of the lessons learned from 2008 and looking to a bright new future.

Without a doubt, 2008 had numerous challenges. As the financial crisis began to grip our country, our rescue group saw dogs being returned at an alarming rate. Adoptions began to drop, and donations fell to zero at times. We also saw pleas for help from the public increase dramatically as those who lost their homes needed help placing their pets in new homes and those who lost their jobs needed help taking care of their pets' medical needs. We have since overcome these challenges with the hard work of our volunteers and the generosity of our contributors, but now we wish to take a big step forward that will make our rescue better able to deal with these challenges in the future.

(continued on page 3)



Lottie



### Not Just A Run of the Mill Story!

On August 24, 2008, the Humane Society of Parkersburg (HSOP) undertook a raid on a “grossly overrun breeding facility wrought with abuse and neglect.” Once they entered the facility, they found 927 dogs and pups living in “darkness and despair” according to the Executive Director of the HSOP. After local authorities convinced the property owner to surrender all the dogs and puppies at the site, they were placed in a nearby, temporary emergency shelter. Vets were called in to treat each dog and calls were made to AFH and other trusted rescues to help with the placement of these dogs and pups. With just a few days notice, AFH quickly began to mobilize rescue operations. The three AFH vans were cleaned and prepped for travel and six faithful volunteers offered to help with the life saving mission by getting to Parkersburg as early as possible. On this trip, AFH would pick up and transport back over 100 of the rescued dogs and

pups. Despite such short notice, the AFH e-mail asking for fosters received an overwhelming response and the caring network of AFH volunteers (continued on page 3)

### Fostering - All in the Christensen Family

Marilyn Christensen, with the support of her husband Tom and their two daughters, joined AFH as a foster home in January of 2006. While even our best fosters take periodic breaks, Marilyn and her family have fostered nearly continuously from day one. At times, they have taken on multiple litters, large litters, loud litters, and hard to place adults. No matter what we ask of them, they are always up to the task. Here is Marilyn, in her own words...

Some months are busier than others in the fostering world...I told AFH that I would love to foster the Mountain Curs. I have a fascination with breeds that I know little or nothing about so I got on the internet and read...read...read. I love to learn about different breeds and so in came the cutest little brindled babies.



Brick had two sets of double, back dew-claws and Bryce had one set. That is exactly what I was told marked the breed...I was ecstatic. Brinley, had none but he was so cute that I forgave him. So we settled down to life with three dogs in foster care.



A week later, little Butch, a lab mix, came in all by himself. Because he was so brindled and came from the same shelter, I wondered if he had the same dad as the Mountain

Curs. We could not resist his little face! And now there were four.

Then came a half dozen beagle babies, nicknamed the "Beagle 6," including Brook with a cast, who had to live upstairs in the master bedroom with us.



**Brook with her cast**

If that was not enough, there was the big challenge of six large hound pups that needed a home so they would not be euthanized at the shelter....so

another pen was moved into the basement and six hounds moved in.

A couple of days later, five more arrived because they too weren't going to make the transport unless someone agreed to put up another pen. So the basketball team arrived. All that we were told was that they were Airedale mixes, but when they started getting REALLY big, we figured there had to be some Great Dane in there.

Christmas this year was a lot of fun at the Christensen house!

Now we are down to just two foster pups waiting to get their forever home.



**Willie on Marilyn's Bed**

Are there ever foster failures? You bet! Luke is our foster failure from two years ago: A foster failure is a dog that you foster that you end up adopting yourself...and yes, like Willie, he loves to eat bones on my bed!

AFH appreciates all of Marilyn's help!

## Imagine (continued from page 1)

Our goal is to create a new animal sanctuary, "Imagine"-- that will enhance our abilities to help the public with their pet needs. Imagine would be a place that would have limitless possibilities. It would be a place to temporarily house pets while waiting for a foster home to open up. A place for our medical dogs to convalesce. A place to temporarily house pets while their owners reestablish their lives. It would give us a badly needed office and an arena to show our available pets that would be our own. It would open up opportunities for volunteers of all ages to help with the rescue and enhance our ability to provide training for our pets. It also would allow us to open a low cost spay-neuter, shot clinic and to sell quality,

inexpensive supplies that will make dog adoption more affordable for the public. Imagine can be all those things and more...

To help us obtain the funding to develop this dream into reality, as well as other rescue projects, AFH has decided to employ the services of Watercrest Marketing LLC. Watercrest will host an assortment of events and fundraisers to benefit our rescue. As Watercrest says, "If you can conceive it, together we can achieve it!" If you would like to be involved in this amazing journey, please feel free to e-mail [info@watercrestmarketing.com](mailto:info@watercrestmarketing.com). We can use all the help we can get. Your resources and contacts will enable us to really get this ball rolling! Just IMAGINE...the Future.

## Puppy Mill (continued from page 1)

ensured that every pup and dog had a foster home waiting for them by the time the transport team arrived in the wee hours of the morning.

Numerous dachshunds and a number of Chinese-Cresteds, Chihuahuas, and Poodles were taken in -- all small breeds, but no small challenge. As most had never even set a paw outside their lifelong crates, socialization and housetraining were first priorities. At first, most covered in the back of their kennels. Their first trip outside led many to scream as they had never stepped on grass in their lives. It was quickly apparent that their foster families would need to work hard to gain their trust before they could even attend an adoption event.

Despite the difficult task, within a couple of months, there was remarkable progress. Former puppy mill dogs and pups were

now bright eyed with wagging tails. They were learning the joys of playing and getting the hang of housetraining. Soon they began showing up at the AFH Adoption Events and there was no shortage of people wanting to give these guys and gals their first chance at a loving forever home. Adoptions went quickly and smoothly and most were placed within just a month of the Big Puppy Mill Bust. Talk about a huge success story!

Of course, AFH could not make a difference in the lives of so many without the tireless efforts of our volunteers and concerned friends like yourself who made a donation to our Puppy Mill fund. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your continued support. If you would like to help in the future, donations can be mailed to AFH - Puppy Mill Fund, PO Box 222801, Chantilly, VA 20153



## Highlight on Volunteers – John and Matt to the Rescue

Few people, including many of our volunteers, realize all the hard work that goes into running a rescue of our size, with a volunteer-only staff. Despite having well over 1000 registered volunteers, much of the hard work is actually carried out, day in and day out, by a relatively small group of very dedicated volunteers. Without the hard work of these people, the rescue would certainly fail.

Despite their importance, these people are seldom recognized for their efforts. John Buchanan and his son Matt are two of these important, but often overlooked, volunteers.

John and Matt have been working with AFH from the time Matt was only 11 years old. They originally came to our rescue, not as volunteers, but as potential adopters. Instead of adopting a new member of the family, however, they ended up helping out.

At first they started holding dogs that were available for adoption and doing miscellaneous tasks. Soon, though, they began pitching in on the less glamorous work of set up and clean up.



**John (at left and top) and Matt (bottom right) are always there to help!**

Most AFH volunteers show up 1:00 after the set-up is done. Once 4:00 arrives and fosters begin taking their pups and dogs home, most volunteers head home as well. Not Matt and John.

Most adoption days, they would be the first to arrive to pull out adoption tables, set up pens, and fill up water bowls. Then, when everyone would get ready to leave, they would begin helping fosters clean up their pens and put away supplies. More often than not, donated items would pile up next to the vans and then John and Matt would have to sort through and reorganize the supplies to get them to fit in the van.

Both Matt and John were always ready to do the dirty work of picking up used newspapers, trucking tables and puppy pens to the van, and mopping up. They took pride in making Petco cleaner than when we got there, and Matt liked being treated like an important volunteer, which he is, and not just a kid. In fact, Matt and John are both an integral part of our team. Those of us who used to “do it all” were overjoyed at the new found help which made our lives so much easier!

Then one summer, Matt came up with the idea of selling sodas and water to make some money for

AFH. John donated the drinks and allowed AFH to keep the proceeds. Thirsty volunteers were grateful for convenient service that also allowed their purchase to help the dogs. Needless to say, the idea was a great hit.

Matt and John enjoy being a part of AFH because they know they are making a difference. Seeing the joy on the faces of families when they meet the right dog or watching a long time foster dog get that perfect forever home makes it all worthwhile.

Although Matt, now a Junior in high school and as a member of the crew team, he has much less time to dedicate to AFH, he drops by when he can. John still helps out as much as possible and is definitely missed whenever he can't make it. Many thanks to them both on behalf of all of us volunteers and all of the wonderful pets they have helped!

If you would like information on volunteering for AFH, please e-mail:

[volunteer@aforeverhome.org](mailto:volunteer@aforeverhome.org)  
or stop by one of our events.

### A Big Round of Applause

Every year, AFH is privileged to receive donations from young people around our community. Some collected donations through their schools or clubs, holding drives to collect supplies for our pets. In one case, Freedom High School, chose to collect old cell phones and chargers which were turned in for a cash donation to our rescue.



**Freedom High Phone Drive**

We also had a number of kids who chose to collect donations on their own. Some did this as part of their birthday celebrations by asking guests to make donations. A few chose to just ask their neighbors and friends to make donations for no particular reason other than to help homeless pets!

On behalf of all of our pets, we would like to give them all one big round of applause for a job well done!



**Sara collected \$430 for AFH on her 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

### Reaching Out to the Community

One of the missions of our rescue is to educate the public on the importance of animal safety and stewardship. To this end, a number of our volunteers periodically visit neighborhood schools and accept other invitations to teach children and adults about the role rescues play in our community to help homeless pets.

In January, AFH volunteer Sandra Harris visited a classroom in Rockville, Maryland for children that are home schooled. The children, ages 5 to 12, listened attentively to Sandra as she talked about rescue work. They were particularly interested in learning how to better care for their own pets, as well as hearing about the role of animal rescues and shelters.

Sandra also brought along Lil Bit, one of her own adopted rescue dogs. After Sandra's discussion, the class went off to visit the Montgomery County Humane Society. Thanks to Sandra, they did not go to the shelter without gifts. She had pre-ordered samples from Eagle Pak so the children could arrive with a little something for the animals they would encounter at the Humane Society.

We applaud Sandra Harris and all of our outreach volunteers who take time off of their busy schedules to do these outreach programs. Their work is a vital part in grooming the next generation of animal champions and responsible pet owners!



**Sandra and Lil Bit Visiting a School in Rockville**



P.O. Box 222801  
Chantilly, VA 20153

*Finding forever homes for pets in need*



**Fuzzy Can't Wait to Find His Forever Home**



**Join Us at Moe's!**

A Forever Home Rescue Foundation (AFH) is pleased to announce our partnership with Moe's Southwest Grill. On Wednesday, May 13th, AFH will be holding a fundraiser at Moe's from 5 to 8 PM at 5005 Westone Plaza in Chantilly. Come join us for a dinner of delicious burritos, fajitas, quesadillas, tacos, and salads. Moe's also has a great kids menu, so bring the whole family. For this one evening only, 15% of all proceeds will go straight to AFH. It is a fun, delicious easy way to give back. All you have to do is show up and enjoy. Hope to see you there!

For directions, visit our website, [www.aforeverhome.org](http://www.aforeverhome.org).

