

NHS Article for February 5 edition

Northwoods Humane Society – Alecia Austin, Shelter Manager

### **Debunking the Myth—Pets in Shelters Aren't There Because They Didn't Make Good Pets**

When you think of a shelter pet, what comes to mind? For many, there's a myth that pets end up in shelters because they "weren't good enough" or because they have serious behavioral issues.

However, this couldn't be further from the truth. The reality is, pets often find themselves in shelters through no fault of their own. Today, let's debunk this myth and shed light on where these animals come from and why they're waiting for the right family to give them a chance.

### **Myth: Pets in Shelters Aren't Good Pets**

The truth is, many animals in shelters are friendly, loving, and well-behaved. They didn't end up there because of poor behavior; in fact, most of them were great pets, and they have so much love to give. Sadly, pets find their way to shelters for reasons beyond their control, and their behavior often reflects the stress of their circumstances rather than any inherent flaw.

### **Where Do Shelter Pets Come From?**

**Owner Surrenders:** One of the most common reasons pets end up in shelters is due to owner surrenders. This doesn't mean the pet was bad, but rather that their family's life situation changed. Pet owners may have to move to a place that doesn't allow pets, experience financial difficulties, face health challenges, or have a family situation change (such as a new baby or a relationship breakdown). These pets are often loved and well-cared for but have nowhere to go when their owners can no longer provide for them.

**Strays and Abandoned Pet:** Some pets enter shelters because they were lost or abandoned. In many cases, these animals were once someone's beloved companion but ended up on the streets due to neglect or misfortune. Strays may be scared, hungry, or disoriented when they arrive at a shelter, but with time, they can recover and be the loyal, loving pets they were always meant to be.

**Unwanted Litters:** Unfortunately, the overpopulation of pets is a real issue. Many shelters receive animals who were born into unwanted litters, often from families who didn't plan for the responsibilities of pet ownership. These pets can be playful, sweet, and full of potential—yet many find themselves in a shelter simply because of a lack of spaying and neutering. This highlights why adopting a pet from a shelter is so important, as it gives these animals a second chance at a loving home.

**Rescue Transfers:** In some cases, pets come to shelters through rescue groups or other shelters that may be overwhelmed. Often, they come from overcrowded facilities, particularly in high-kill shelters or communities struggling with stray animal populations. Many of these pets have never known the love and care of a family, but with proper training and attention, they can thrive and make wonderful companions.

### **The Truth About Shelter Pets**

**The misconception that shelter pets are somehow "flawed" because they didn't make good pets is simply not true.** Pets in shelters are often there through no fault of their own, and many are simply waiting for someone to give them a chance.

**Behavior:** Some pets may need time to adjust to a new environment, especially if they've been through trauma or have had a rough start. However, with patience, training, and care, these pets often

become the most loving, loyal companions.

**Temperament:** Animals in shelters come in all shapes, sizes, and personalities. From calm and gentle to energetic and playful, there's a shelter pet out there for every type of family. Shelters often provide behavioral assessments to ensure that animals are placed in homes that match their temperament and needs.

**Health:** Many shelter pets are healthy, fully vaccinated, and spayed or neutered before being put up for adoption. Shelters also work hard to ensure pets are treated for any illnesses or injuries, and they provide necessary veterinary care before placing them in a new home.

**Why Adopting a Shelter Pet is So Important:** When you adopt a pet from a shelter, you're not just giving them a home; you're also making a big difference in the lives of other animals in need. Shelters and rescue groups are often at full capacity, and adopting a pet frees up space for another animal to be saved. You're giving a pet another chance to thrive and ensuring that they don't become another statistic in the pet overpopulation crisis.

The pets in shelters deserve the same love, care, and respect as any pet you might buy from a breeder or pet store. In fact, shelter pets are often more grateful and more eager to please because they know what it's like to not have a permanent home. These pets are survivors—they've endured challenges, and many have come out stronger and more resilient because of it.

So, the next time you think about adopting a pet, remember: they didn't end up in a shelter because they weren't good enough. They just need someone like you to see their potential, give them a fresh start, and show them what it means to truly be loved.

**Northwoods Humane Society – Alecia Austin, Shelter Manager**

Dates to Save March 7, 20, May 3, 17, May 1 Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 pm

April 27 – Spay-ghetti and No Balls – Vet Center 5 pm

June 7 – Raise the Woof – Eagles Cover Band – Park Center – 7:30 pm