

Northwoods Humane Society - Alecia Austin, Shelter Manager

Why foster a senior pet you might ask. I love fostering seniors for so many reasons and the top reason is that they are the very best snugglers!! So, let's talk about some of the other great reasons why you should consider fostering or adopting a senior pet and what to expect if you do.

Animal Shelters are an extremely stressful environment for any dog or cat but is especially hard on senior pets who are less able to deal with this type of stress and they often become despondent. Also, older pets find it more difficult to fight diseases at their advanced age and even trying as hard as we do, shelters often harbor contagious diseases. Every new animal that enters the building can increase their risk of contracting something.

Senior pets have a tendency to become depressed. 'A depressed pet does not look like a happy pet and most people searching for a pet to adopt won't consider any pet that doesn't look and act like it would be happy to have a new home. Most people who visit animal shelters are hoping to find a beautiful puppy/kitten or a young dog/cat.

If you choose to foster a senior this will make the pet more appealing to someone looking to adopt a new member of their family. By providing a pleasant and loving home while a pet is waiting for adoption it increases the odds of finding a new home. The foster home will know more about the pet's real personality and how they are in a home and can help steer possible families towards the right fit for their home.

If this is the first time you've fostered, the shelter will help you choose the right pet that will make the best companion for you during the fostering period. We can compare the needs of both the pet and your home to try to make the perfect temporary match. After all it is very important that your foster pet fit seamlessly into your life.

While you are fostering your pet, the shelter will provide everything you might need with you for the care of your pet. Everything from bowls and food to beds and toys can be provided.

Senior pets are typically housetrained, are calmer, quieter, are out of the destruction stage and are happy to just hang out and be! They are typically not stressed by being left at home while you are away, because that is going to give them uninterrupted time for their napping. And don't forget the snuggling! Seniors give the best snuggles, they are calm and just love to hug and burrow in and be loved on!

Fostering or adopting a senior pet is a win/win for everyone concerned. So if you think you might be interested in starting the process to either foster or adopt a senior pet, please go to our website at www.northwoodshumanesociety.org and then to the volunteer page to fill out our foster home application or to the adoptable animals page to fill out the adoption form.

Tiera was my family's last foster. She was a foster/hospice who came to the shelter in her late teens, blind, mostly deaf and without a tooth in her head. She was a super tiny, 4-pound Maltese. We set up a spot in the corner of our living room with an xpen, puppy pads and a comfy bed for her. When we were home, she was able to roam the house as much as she desired but when we were gone, we kept her in the pen for her safety. She never went very far, just ten feet or so from her corner. Her nickname jokingly became corner dog because she so loved her little corner of the world. It was hers and she was happy there. She managed to outlive all the estimates by a very long time and was able to be a part of our family for 22 months. Could you even have imagined being a 4 pound, blind, mostly deaf, and very senior dog in the stress and noise of a shelter. Just the barking and commotion of all the big dogs alone would have been terrifying. She didn't have to spend time terrified and alone in a shelter kennel. She got to spend the rest of her life with a family.



Think about fostering or adopting a senior pet. Trust me when I say that it will be the most gratifying, heartwarming thing that you have ever done!

DATES TO SAVE: April 7 and April 21, NHS BINGO at Powell's on Round Lake 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Written by Alecia Austin