

Rehoming a Pet

Has something happened in your life and you can no longer take care of your pet? Maybe a friend or relative has died, leaving one or more pets to be placed in a new home. You want to be able to do something to help find a new and loving permanent home, rather than turning the pet over to the local shelter where the animal may be put down.

How to get the word out

If you do need to find a new home for a pet, you'll want to advertise as widely as you can, in as many places as possible. Creating a flyer is a great way to start. Here's what to put on the flyer:

- Describe the appearance, size, and age of the animal.
- Include the pet's name and a good photograph of the pet (see the sidebar below).
- If the pet is spayed or neutered, include that information.
- Describe his/her nature and appealing qualities.
- Define any limitations the pet might have (e.g., not good with cats or small children).
- Don't forget your phone number and the times you can be reached.

When you've made copies of the flyer, post them throughout your community, wherever a good prospective adopter might see them. Ask to put them up at veterinarians' offices, pet supply stores, and the workplaces of your family and friends. Places like health food stores, supermarkets, libraries, churches, and health clubs often have community bulletin boards where anyone can post flyers.

Tips on Taking Good Animal Photographs

Since photos really help people make a connection to an animal, you'll want to use a good-quality photograph. Color is best. (If you don't have a color printer, copy places like Kinko's can print the flyers for you.)

When you take the photographs, use a background that is in contrast to the animal, to highlight his/her best features. Keep the photo simple and clear, with few background distractions, though you might want to use a person, a hand or some other means to show the scale of the pet.

Before snapping the photos, take the time to get the pet as calm and relaxed as possible, so the photos don't show an animal who looks anxious or scared. Ideally, the photo you choose for the flyer should have the eyes of the animal in focus.

But don't stop with posting flyers. There are many other ways to spread the word:

1. Contact as many shelters and rescue groups as possible. Most agencies will be overloaded, but they might allow you to bring your pet to one of their adoption days. They might be able to put you in contact with someone who is looking for the kind of pet you are trying to place, or they could have some other suggestions.

Friends for Life can share the photo and biography of the pet on our FaceBook page and provide your contact information. We also send e-mails to our members and can ask them to include this on their social media.

2. Contact breed rescue groups if you're trying to place a specific breed. If you have a pug or a Persian cat, for example, there may be rescue groups or clubs that have lists of people looking to adopt that particular breed. Some breed rescue groups might even be willing to place a mix, as long as the animal is close to purebred.

You can find local listings of breed rescue groups by doing an Internet search on a search engine such as www.google.com or www.yahoo.com.

Here's a sample search combination:

Siamese + breed rescue + Montana

www.rescueme.org has breed specific contact information listed by state.

3. Place a classified ad in your local paper. When you write the ad, be creative. (See the sample ads on the next page.) Try to make the animal as appealing as possible, but tell the truth. If you're trying to place a dog who absolutely can't be around cats, put that in the ad. Run the ad as many times as you can afford – you are looking to reach a wide audience. sales@westokweekly.com offer free ads in their weekly paper.

4. Post your pet on adoption websites. There are general adoption websites, as well as specific sites for certain types of animals (for example, FIV-positive cats, disabled pets, or senior dogs). Petfinder (petfinder.org) and Pet Bond (petbond.com) are good examples of general adoption websites.

5. Use any and all of your community contacts. Ask friends and family to mention the animal in their church or community newsletter; send an e-mail about the pet through your office memo system; post a notice and photo on your Facebook page; or share some flyers with members of clubs or associations to which you belong.

6. Don't underestimate word of mouth. Tell anyone and everyone about the pet who needs a home, and ask friends and family to help with spreading the word. You never know – your father's neighbor's daughter could be looking for just the pet you have to offer.

7. Get the pet out there. (This works especially well with dogs.) The more your pet interacts with people, the more likely he/she will charm the right person. If you're trying to place a dog, take him/ her on walks, to pet supply stores, to the local park. Put a colorful bandana on the dog that says, "Adopt me."

Sample Classified Ads

Betty Lou has a new pair of shoes and she is ready to walk right into your heart! Betty is a two-year-old spayed female terrier mix. She loves to dance, prance and play. She is a doll! She is good with cats as well. Call Kelly or Doug at 555-3576 after 7 p.m. weekdays or all day Sunday. Adoption fee required.

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Joe Cocker is coming to town and wants to sing for you. Joe is a three-year-old neutered male cockapoo with a great personality. Loves kids and dogs, but isn't as keen on cats! He has had all his shots. Call Morris after 6 p.m. at 555-4674. Adoption fee required.

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Persian cat with attitude. Martha thinks she rules the world! She is gorgeous, and knows it. She loves to sit on laps and be petted. She would prefer a home where she is the only cat. Adoption fee required. See her at the Petco on Broadway, Saturday, June 10, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Ask for Beth.

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SHAMBU is the kind of companion that we all long to have. Loyal, playful, tender and kind best describes this beautiful orange tabby. He is 3 years old, neutered, and has had all his shots. He prefers an adults-only home. Call Jeremy at 555-2189 before 11 a.m. any day. Donation for my favorite animal charity required. No bunchers.

Special considerations if your pet is a pit-bull terrier type dog:

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/finding-new-home-pit-bull-terrier-type-dog>