



wags & purrs

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Season's Greetings to Everyone!

Our S.P.O.T. volunteers are already looking toward the new year and continuing our commitment to our community and the displaced cats and dogs that will find themselves in our care in 2022. Our officers and board have been meeting to refine and expand our policies and procedures to better serve our community as well as to increase our efficiency when dealing with the mounds of paperwork that we face on a daily basis.

This was another year of challenges for many folks. We've heard many stories of distress at having to give up a pet and are thankful to be able to offer the assurance of care and comfort for a beloved animal until a new home is found.

And conversely, we're grateful for the richness of community support that comes our way. Donations of pet supplies show up on our doorstep regularly, often from families who have lost a pet and are offering to share items that may be useful in our rescue efforts.

Local businesses also reflect our community backing.

Early last winter the owner of Newton's Plumbing in Burlington came to the S.P.O.T. House and offered to install hot and cold water spigots outside our building for possible future use to bathe large dogs. He didn't know it at the time, but this was something we had muttered about every time a large or uncooperative dog had to be lifted into our inside tub. We quickly took him up on his offer and now have warm water access outside. Thank you, Tony!



Then with funds from a donation specific to this need, we started building the dog wash station. This will be so welcome when the next 75-lb. dog comes in the door coated in dirt and fleas!



Our outside dog wash station is currently under construction thanks to the donated installation of outside hot and cold water spigots.

The Country Stores' Paws-for-a-Cause and Pet-A-Palooza sponsorships have provided much appreciated funds from customer donations.



With S.P.O.T. volunteers Kathy and Dawn on each end of the check and Burlington's Country Store manager Rose in the Center, a check for \$2523 raised through their Paws-for-a-Cause fundraiser is displayed.



S.P.O.T. board members Sandy and Dawn (in center) receive a check for \$2065 from Sedro Woolley's Country Store employee Liz (left) and store manager Debra (right) through their Pet-A-Palooza fundraiser.

Target offers S.P.O.T. items that have been pulled from their inventory on a regular basis.



S.P.O.T. volunteer Dawn loads her car with pet supplies with the assistance of Mel, a Target employee.

Other local stores like Mudd Bay, Tractor Supply, Mount Vernon Country Store, Coastal and Petco donate items and offer discounts at times.

The community of Anacortes sponsors pet food drives a couple of times each year that S.P.O.T. benefits from, and Skagit Community Foundation approved our grant application recently. Another wonderful resource has been our PurinaPetCare consultant who has donated prescription food for dogs and cats and support for specific projects.

In a time when traditional fundraising is still limited, we are immensely grateful for the caring and generous spirit of this community and beyond, and for those individuals who recognize the need and send in monetary gifts, both large and small, that allow us to continue our passion for helping people and pets.

Best wishes for peace and happiness in the New Year!


Nina Spittle, President

The Big Orange Cat

This beautiful cat was porch surfing in a neighborhood, getting his pick of food dishes. After this had gone on long enough without being able to identify an owner, he was brought to S.P.O.T., believing that he'd been abandoned.



He was with S.P.O.T. for several weeks before the owners tracked him down. If he had been micro-chipped when brought in, he would have been returned to his family immediately. During his time with S.P.O.T., he was vaccinated, wormed & flea treated as well as tested for FIV/FelV. He had already been neutered so we micro-chipped him and posted him for adoption.

Instead of a new home, he went home with his own family—they lived just over the hill from the neighborhood where he was mooching meals. His family was very grateful that he was safe and gave S.P.O.T. a donation for his care.

Ginger: Appreciating the Golden Years

We see many senior pets that are abandoned or not wanted for one reason or another that still have plenty of life left to live. Pretty Ginger, a senior Golden Retriever mix, is a good example.



She was dropped or abandoned far from home. Thankfully, she wandered into the yard of a caring family who tried to find her owner.

When she finally came into S.P.O.T., she had a low-grade bladder infection, ear infection, serious dental disease and, it was later determined, deaf. She was about 12 years old, very sweet and easy to have around.

Treating senior pets has to do with deciding what treatments will address their quality of life. For Ginger, antibiotics cleared the bladder infection, she tolerated ear flushing and medication but her dental need was the big deal. Try to imagine eating your food with a mouthful of loose or painful teeth. Something had to be done!

Ginger came through her oral surgery minus a dozen teeth but feeling chipper. And, she had a new family waiting for her—a wonderful couple who look for larger senior dogs to adopt and give them the love and attention they deserve in the twilight season of their lives.



Adopting Billy...

My husband and I adopted a four-month-old kitten from S.P.O.T. We have had cats for over 47 years, and little 'Billy the Kit' is the sweetest, most loving, well-adjusted kitty we could ever have hoped to find.

He moved into our home with three adult cats; within a few short days, he was getting along with them, eating beside them and playing with everyone.

I attribute his laid-back loving personality, sweetness, curiosity, fearlessness and playfulness to being a kitten, after all, but mainly to his foster mom Pam's loving care. Her hard work and devotion gives these kitties the foundation on which to build a healthy, happy life in their new homes.

Billy is a perfect example! We could not be more pleased with Pam and S.P.O.T. ...and Billy.

—Vicki and David McLain



Volunteers Make It Happen



The Willson S.P.O.T. Catio



S.P.O.T. is fortunate to have a great group of volunteers who do a multitude of jobs that keep us going. Looking through this collage, it's amazing how many dedicated folks are not even represented here.

From fundraising events to property maintenance to office and administrative responsibilities to fostering and animal care, this incredible gift of time, skill and support is all critical to the effectiveness of this organization and is so greatly appreciated.

There are a variety of ways to become involved in our mission to rescue displaced cats and dogs. We are willing to talk with potential volunteers to identify a niche that would be meaningful to them.

In Honor of Cat Foster Dick Willson



One of S.P.O.T.'s long-time cat fosters, Dick Willson, passed away this spring. Dick was always the go-to-guy for senior and feral cats that needed a safe place to live. He was often called by vet clinics for clients who had to give up a senior cat or a cat that was brought in off the street. He was the "cat man" and will be so missed!

When Dick died, he had around 20 cats on his property. S.P.O.T. offered to help his wife care for them and eventually removed as many as we could locate other than the 4 cats she wanted to keep.

The problem was, what we were going to do with them? We decided to build a catio attached to our existing cat recovery house. Several very dedicated and caring volunteers put in long hours building this enclosure. Within a month we had a safe place to move in 11 of the Willson colony. We found adopters for several of the cats, but those that are too old or shy are living comfortably with a choice of indoor and outdoor safe spaces.

We are so thankful for several dedicated S.P.O.T. volunteers who have become our Cat House caretakers, coming in regularly to feed, clean and socialize with the cats. The cats receive attention and see familiar faces at least twice a day.



Peaches and Her Tail-First Kittens

Peaches came to S.P.O.T. as a very pregnant, approximately 8- to 9-month-old kitten. When she stopped eating and drinking, our foster's first thought was that she was in early



labor; but when that did not progress as it should, a vet check determined the problem to be liver failure and a feeding tube was placed into her stomach through her esophagus. She needed to be fed a special formula every four hours via this tube.

As luck would have it, the foster was due to leave on vacation—a road trip—but made the decision to bring the very

Winky (aka Wynonna)

One of our little kittens came into S.P.O.T. with what appeared to be an eye infection that remained localized to the right eye. A visit to the vet determined the infection was likely secondary to an injury at birth or shortly thereafter. Our foster dutifully applied an antibiotic ointment and warm packs as the veterinarian directed.

Several days into treatment when the foster was starting to feel like the eye was clearing up, with a gush of pus, the eyeball came out! Horrified, the foster rushed the kitten and the eyeball back to the vet clinic where it was confirmed that this was the globe of the eye. The vet reassured a mortified foster that there was no

pregnant Peaches with her. She and her husband created a custom crate, utilizing wire dog crate panels placed across the back seat of their car.

All went well, including the every-four-hour tube feedings, until they arrived at a pre-planned stop to stay in a cabin for a few days. At 10pm on their second night there, Peaches went into labor on the living room sofa.

The first kitten was presenting its tail first, which was a bit alarming because the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary hospital was an hour and a half away.

In the end, our foster and her husband managed to deliver all four kittens alive. All were born breech, tail first! It was quite a night, but all the kittens did well and have been adopted to wonderful homes, as has our lovely Peaches.

healthy tissue in or around the kitten's eye, meaning that there was no blood circulation to that area and that the tissue was indeed 'dead', which resulted in the eye falling out.



Winky eventually became Wynonna and continued to grow and thrive. She had many applications for adoption and has since gone on to her forever home.

Penney and Her Loading Dock Kittens

A call came in on our message line about a cat with three kittens that was found in the loading dock mechanism at a local JC Penney's store. Word spread quickly among the store staff, most of whom were extremely worried and protective of the little family—to the point that they stopped delivery trucks from backing in and operating the lift mechanism to deliver merchandise!

A man who specialized in rescuing cats from trees was called in. He

crawled into the lifting device and, with a bit of effort, got the kittens and momma kitty out.

After scanning the mother cat for a microchip and checking with local vet clinics to see if a similar female had been reported missing, with no results, S.P.O.T. assumed the care of the little homeless family.

This was a collective effort of some very caring people. The kittens and Penny, their mom, have all been adopted and now have loving families.

Fostering Support

This year was unusual for me; I was fostering kittens that were born from a feral cat. The kittens required a lot of socializing, and I was pleased and excited about their progress as they were right on schedule for being spayed/neutered and posted for adoption.

Heartbreakingly, I suddenly became very sick and was not able to continue caring for these eight



kittens—four were ready for adoption soon and four were just beginning the socialization process. I was so sad, sick and disappointed but out of options.

I had to email the cat coordinator at the height of kitten season when all the foster homes were already overwhelmed and ask her to take my eight foster kittens back.

S.P.O.T. teamwork is the most amazing thing; faster than ever, she found two foster homes willing to take on the responsibility of caring for those kittens. I was amazed and truly touched at how quickly it was arranged.



I am grateful to be fortunate enough to know a team of such caring volunteers and foster families who give so much-needed love to the animals of this community.

—Christina, S.P.O.T. Volunteer

Lovely Lady Lu

Miss "Lady Lu" came into the M.S.P.O.T. foster system this past summer accompanied by her sister and nine puppies. This sweet crew had been removed from a hoarding situation.

At three years old, Lu was already on her second litter of puppies. Many dogs and cats come in with physical conditions that need veterinary care that can be challenging to manage. But the dogs that come in with emotional and behavioral issues are often even more of a challenge. Neither of these adult dogs were socialized with people, and that lack of trust became a big factor in caring for them.

One way of creating a bond with a fearful dog is through edible enticements. Thankfully, Lu developed a highly motivating addiction to hotdog slices. With reward-based training, Lu eventually let the foster touch her and handle her pups.

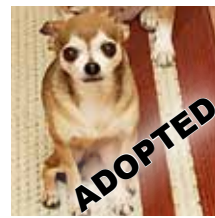
After six weeks of daily playtime with the foster as well as dedicated friends and neighbors, the pups were ready for adoption at eight weeks of

age; and Lu moved into the house with her foster family and canine foster sisters.

Her next big hurdle was learning to trust a man; it took time and gentle persuasion, but eventually she would cuddle in the recliner with her foster dad.

We knew it would take a special person with a lot of patience to adopt Lu, and we were prepared to wait for the perfect situation. However, shortly after she was posted for adoption, a kind woman applied to adopt her. She asked to meet her with a friend who lives in the same complex and was hoping to share in Lu's care. They recognized her need for patient and consistent handling to build her confidence as well as her desire to be loved and were committed to providing Lu a wonderful new home.

Lady Lu now walks the neighborhood on-leash with her new family and even runs happy-dog zoomies around the yard. She is well loved and becoming more trusting and affectionate all the time.



Sissy & Bow

We never know what situation will come up next at S.P.O.T. On a busy yard sale Saturday last summer, a lady from the neighborhood walked into the yard and asked if we could help her with two puppies.



The story was that her sister had “rescued” two pups in California and brought them with her on a road trip to visit family. When she was leaving her Burlington family’s home, she asked her sister to keep the pups and find them homes. Not set up to care for puppies, the Burlington resident saw the activity at the S.P.O.T. house and stopped to ask for our help.

The puppies were sweet but looked pretty rough when they came in a short time later. They were obviously uncomfortable with itchy, scabby skin that looked like serious skin infections and potentially contagious. The vet clinic was completely booked but gave us some advice over the phone and an appointment later in the week.

We set the pups up in the S.P.O.T. house kitchen for several days so they could have daily baths and start treatment until we got them in for a professional diagnosis.

It took several weeks of antibiotics, parasite control, bathing and decent food for the infection to clear and their coats to grow back. Once they started feeling better, the puppy play commenced; and they were ready to join the pack in a S.P.O.T. foster home.

My Name is Daisy

They tell me I had a rough start in life. I don’t remember being taken to the shelter in San Antonio, Texas as a pup where I spent my first year. But, eventually, God’s Dog Rescue took me away from the shelter and put me in foster homes for another year until I was finally adopted by a family in Washington.



My new family was good to me AND they had a coop with a bunch of cackling hens! ‘Chase the Chicken’ is the best game! I was made for it. But, I guess my people (and the chickens) didn’t share my enthusiasm. So, at three and a half years old, I needed another home.

That’s when I came to S.P.O.T. and my life truly changed. I met my new mom and my new best-bud Charlie! Charlie and I have so much fun running and playing; we get so tired that we actually have to rest before starting again. We have a big yard with toys, a pasture to hunt and chase critters and a wading pool for warm summer days. Mom has what she calls her dog van; and we all go for rides to the park, run errands and visit friends.

Every evening Charlie and I get treats; then mom and I have ‘cuddle time’. Mom says she loves me and feels so much joy just watching my whole body wiggle when I’m happy. She loves seeing Charlie and me play together. I never dreamed that the day I was taken to S.P.O.T. I would find such a happy family and fun life in a wonderful home. —Love, Daisy

I couldn’t buy what Daisy has given me. She is so sweet, eager to please, affectionate, playful and happy. Daisy greets me with a smile as her whole-body wiggles; she warms my heart and Charlie’s too!
—Gratefully, Kathy

Motherhood—So Tiring

I love this image of MewMew and her litter. Mewmew was brought in by a woman after her family discovered the neighborhood stray cat had broken into their boat and had her litter behind the bulkhead where they couldn’t be reached.

It wasn’t until the kittens were about four weeks old that they were lured out and brought to S.P.O.T. with momma, now named Mewmew.



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