



REHOMING PACKET

Dear Pet Guardian:

Enclosed is a packet of information to help you rehome your pet(s). You should find the following:

PROJECT SAFETY NET INFORMATION

If you are considering relinquishing your companion, our Admissions team members are here to help you navigate that difficult decision. They can provide counseling about using the many programs and services—collectively referred to as Project Safety Net—we offer that will assist you in overcoming many of the challenges that you may be facing with your pet. Our goal is to help you resolve the problems you are experiencing so that you can keep your pet. We offer free pet behavior support provided by our expert animal trainers, a local directory of pet-friendly housing options in the community, access to low-cost, full-service veterinary care and temporary housing during times of crisis or transition. If, after exhausting these options, you still need to find another home for your pet, this packet contains important rehoming information to help you.

REHOMING SERVICE INFORMATION

A component of Project Safety Net, the ReHoming Service, offers tools for you to find a responsible and loving family for your pet without causing him or her the stress of entering an animal shelter. The service is designed to help people whose pets are already spayed or neutered and up-to-date on all age-appropriate vaccinations. Having your pet neutered and current on vaccinations makes it easier to find him or her a new home and improves his or her chance of forming a lasting and successful relationship with the new guardian. We have included in this packet contact information for several low-cost spay and neuter clinics, which may also offer low-cost vaccination options.

ADOPTION CONVERSATION GUIDE AND REHOMING INFORMATION

We have included a sample adoption conversation guide and a form to collect adopter information to show you how to evaluate potential adopters and give you guidance on the types of things to look for when finding your pet a new home on your own.

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

We have a knowledgeable Admissions team available to provide counseling and direct you to additional resources that can help you make the best decision for your pet. The procedures for appointments are explained later in this document.

Sincerely,

Richmond SPCA Admissions Team



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The goal of Project Safety Net is to provide alternatives to pet relinquishment so that pets may stay in the loving homes that they have and out of shelters. The Richmond SPCA has developed numerous programs and services that enlist the public as allies in keeping animals out of shelters. By creating a safety net through programs such as these, we save lives while educating our community in a meaningful, supportive way about the responsibilities of pet guardianship.

PET FOOD ASSISTANCE

We occasionally have available supplies of donated cat and dog food that we are able to provide to members of the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Pet food assistance is intended to help keep a pet in his or her home while the guardian overcomes short-term financial difficulty. For more information, please contact the Admissions Department at 804-521-1306.

PET BEHAVIOR HELP

We recognize that behavior issues are the number one cause of pet relinquishment, and the Richmond SPCA has developed programs that encourage guardians to resolve their pets' behavior challenges. Our free Behavior Helpline provides phone and email support, whether your pet was adopted from us or not. Call 804-643-SPCA (7722) or email behaviorhelpline@richmondspca.org. A knowledgeable animal trainer will contact you by the next business day. Additional resources are available at richmondspca.org/behavior.

PET MANNERS CLASSES

Ask how to sign up for a class specifically designed to help great pets that have minor challenges. Visit richmondspca.org/classes for a listing of the classes offered and to register online or call 804-521-1332 or email gbirdnecklace@richmondspca.org.

REHOMING

The Richmond SPCA offers pet guardians free rehoming services and guidance that enables them to find appropriate homes for animals they are no longer able to provide care to without ever having the pets enter a shelter. Submit your pet's information using the form at richmondspca.org/rehome.

PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING GUIDE

The Richmond SPCA offers a free online housing guide that lists local pet-friendly rental properties. Guardians are encouraged to use this resource so that they never are faced with having to give up a pet due to housing restrictions. richmondspca.org/petfriendly

LOW-COST, FULL-SERVICE VETERINARY MEDICAL CARE

Our Susan M. Markel Veterinary Hospital provides full-service, low-cost medical care to owned pets. It is our mission to ensure that all families have access to affordable treatment options for their dogs and cats, regardless of financial hardship. richmondspca.org/hospital

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LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER SURGERY

Our Susan M. Markel Veterinary Hospital provides full-service, low-cost veterinary care for dog and cat companions. If, however, you are only in search of low-cost spay or neuter services, those are also available through several area sterilization clinics:

A.L. Shilling Spay & Neuter Clinic (Mechanicsville) | 804-368-6232

Jessica Beath Spay/Neuter Clinic (Hanover) | 804-752-7729

Loving Spay+Neuter Clinic at Richmond Animal League (Chesterfield) | 804-379-9725

Prevent a Litter (Richmond City) | 804-359-6369

TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN FOR COMMUNITY CATS

If you have community cats (also referred to as feral (unsocialized) cats) in your neighborhood, visit us online at richmondspca.org/feralcats for information about their effective and humane management through programs of trap-neuter-return. The Richmond SPCA can also assist you with humane trap rentals and free spay or neuter surgeries and rabies vaccination for community cats. Call 804-521-1330.

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BEFORE YOU START LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME FOR YOUR PET, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Get help with behavior problems such as chewing, housetraining challenges, excessive energy, etc. Go to richmondspca.org/classes, richmondspca.org/behavior or call **804-643-SPCA (7722)**, and our trained staff will give you the information or referrals you need to resolve the issue. By working to solve behavior problems before you find your pet a new home, you'll help ensure a good, lasting home for your pet.

You do not have to give up your pet just because you're moving. Moving is stressful even in the best of circumstances, so give yourself extra time to find a residence where pets are permitted. When talking to landlords, be honest and offer to introduce your pets to the landlord. Many property owners will allow well-behaved pets, particularly if the owner behaves responsibly. Providing your pets' veterinary records, graduation certificates from obedience classes and references from past landlords can help to show a prospective landlord you are a responsible pet owner. For a list of many (but not all) landlords and apartment complexes that allow pets, please visit richmondspca.org/petfriendly for the Pet-Friendly Housing Guide. Once you have a new place, the Richmond SPCA can give you advice on how to help you and your pet cope with the change.

THE RICHMOND SPCA CAN HELP YOU FIND THE RIGHT HOME THROUGH OUR REHOMING SERVICE

First, be sure your pet is spayed or neutered and is up-to-date on all of his or her vaccinations. This will make it easier for you to find a new home for your pet and is a requirement for our posting.

Next, follow these guidelines. Be thorough and patient – finding the right home takes time, but it's worth it for your sake and the sake of your pet.

- **Take several color photos of your pet.** Show off your pet's cutest and most endearing qualities.
- **Write a story about your pet.** Include the reason your pet needs a new home, the kind of home he or she needs and would do well in, and some "human interest" information – for example, your pet's funniest behaviors, his or her favorite things to do or the thing you love most about your pet. Many people write the story from the animal's perspective, for example, "Hi, my name is Sabrina..."
- **Rehome your pet on our website.** Visit richmondspca.org/rehome to submit your pet bio and upload photos through our online form. Interested persons will contact you to learn more about the animal. Pets will remain on the website for at least 30 days. All pets must be spayed or neutered to be listed on the rehoming page of our website.
- **Network.** Give your photos, story and e-mail to everyone you know asking for their help. Search the internet for additional resources, such as breed-specific rescues. Use your Facebook profile or Twitter account to ask your network to share your pet and assist in the search for a new, responsible home. Advertise through your workplace email or your community bulletin board. Placing your pet with someone you know will ease the transition for you, the new guardian and for your pet.
- **Make a rehoming poster.** Simple templates can be found online, and free graphic design websites like canva.com and picmonkey.com can help you create a more eye-catching poster to print or share online. Place the rehoming posters in veterinary offices and pet supply stores near and far, where people who take good care of their animals visit often.
- **Charge a fee.** A modest rehoming fee can cover the costs of updating vaccinations or the supplies such as a crate, carrier or flea and tick prevention you plan to pass along to your pet's new guardian.

HELPFUL HINTS ON EVALUATING POTENTIAL ADOPTERS:

- **Interview potential adopters carefully.** Use the sample adoption questionnaire we have provided as a guide.
- **Review the Questionnaire forms.** Go over this document with each potential guardian to evaluate whether his or her home is compatible with your pet. Does your pet get along with other animals? Is your pet high or low energy? Make sure he or she fits into the lifestyle of the applicant's family, and your pet is what they're really looking for.
- **Along with collecting adopter information, you might consider the following (please note that with respect to some of these items, an open and honest discussion will provide you with the information you need to make an informed decision regarding your pet's placement):**
 1. Verify the name and address with a driver's license.
 2. If the prospective new owner rents a house or apartment, ask about the pet policy in order to assure he or she has permission to have a pet.
 3. Ask what veterinarian the prospective new owner has a relationship with. Inquire as to whether his or her other pets received routine medical care.
 4. Get references (friends, neighbors), and call to see if they can vouch for the person's ability to care for animals.
- **Take the time to consider applicants.** Don't allow yourself to be pressured into making a decision that you do not feel right about. Your judgment is your best guide.
- **Follow up.** Call to see how your pet is doing in his or her new home. A responsible guardian will welcome your concern for the animal.

WHEN YOU'VE FOUND THE RIGHT HOME:

Once you've identified a loving, responsible new guardian for your pet and confirmed with that person that he or she is ready to commit to becoming your pet's new owner:

- **Arrange the drop off.** A public meeting place is recommended. To help your pet transition to the new home, provide favorite toys, bedding, a litterbox, carrier or other familiar items. It's also nice to give any remaining food you have to the new guardian.
- **Transfer vet records.** Provide the new owner with copies of any written veterinary records you have. To simplify the transfer, you can ask your veterinarian to send records directly to the new owner's preferred clinic. Your vet may require this request to be provided in writing.
- **Document your pet's new ownership.** Create a written record, signed by you and the new owner to document that the adopter is taking title to the pet.
- **Update microchip information.** If your pet is microchipped, contact the database where the chip is registered (usually the chip manufacturer such as 24PetWatch or HomeAgain) to notify the company of the change of ownership and provide the new owner's contact information.

Rehoming a pet who was adopted from the Richmond SPCA

If you decide to utilize our rehoming board to find another loving, lasting home for your adopted pet rather than returning the pet to the shelter, please make sure to call our Adoption desk at 804-521-1307 and provide us with the new guardian's contact information so that we can update the pet's information in our system. Additionally, please know you are welcome to contact our Admissions department to discuss returning your pet as well. We are here to help assure your pet is well cared for and loved.

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WHAT TO DO IF YOU NEED TO SURRENDER YOUR PET

You have several choices, the last of which should be surrendering your pet to a shelter. If you have exhausted alternatives to relinquishment (including trying to work through challenges or trying to find a new home for your pet yourself with friends, neighbors, family or co-workers), here is how our admissions process works.

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT

The vast majority of pets in our humane center are ones we have transferred from government shelters where those animals' lives were at risk. As a no-kill humane society, the Richmond SPCA saves the life of every healthy and treatable homeless animal in our care. We care for more than 4,000 homeless animals annually. We cannot always accept every animal brought to our shelter immediately—but we can immediately start offering support and assistance through our Project Safety Net programs. We treat every animal's life as precious and will not resort to euthanasia to control the number of pets at our Robins-Starr Humane Center. Therefore, we bring into our care owner surrendered cats and dogs by appointment. We do charge a modest surrender fee for dogs and cats, which will be applied to the costs we will incur providing care to the pet. If you do not have the funds to pay a surrender fee, please just share that information with our staff. It will never prevent us from taking your pet into our care.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

Each day Richmond SPCA Admissions staff assess the amount of space available in the shelter as animals find homes through the Adoption center. The goal of this process is to have spaces filled as efficiently as possible, keeping cages from standing empty and maximizing our lifesaving capacity. We are typically unable to accept same-day surrenders, but we do our best to keep the surrender process moving quickly.

HOW TO PREPARE

- Submit an Admissions Appointment Request Form through our website. The Admissions staff uses this form to gather information about your pet. You can find the online form by visiting richmondspca.org/admissions.
- Fax all veterinary records to 804-644-8327 as soon as possible. Ask your veterinarian to send your pet's full written veterinary medical records and write "Admissions" in the attention line along with your name, phone number and pet's name.
- An Admissions counselor will return your call to discuss the surrender process, and when appropriate, set an appointment. We receive a high volume of phone calls daily, which are returned in the order they are received. Appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Each appointment should take approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.

BRING TO THE APPOINTMENT:

- Your pet's medications
- Your pet's bed, toys, leash and other belongings from home

For everyone's safety, all dogs must be leashed and all cats must be in a carrier.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- Your cat will be tested for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and the feline leukemia virus (FeLV), or your dog over 4 months of age will be tested for heartworms. The Richmond SPCA takes into our care many pets with these conditions annually. Testing positive for one of these illnesses will not prevent the Richmond SPCA from bringing your pet into our care.
- A staff member will evaluate the behavior of your pet.
- Once your pet has been evaluated, and the Richmond SPCA decides we have the resources to take your pet into our care, you will be asked to complete surrender paperwork. Virginia law requires the owner's signature in order to relinquish title to the pet. If the pet is brought to the appointment by someone other than the owner, please inform an admissions counselor of this in advance.
- Your surrender fee will be collected. The surrender fee is usually \$50 (exceptions may apply for litters of infant animals). Accepted forms of payment are cash or credit/debit card.