

# THE PET POST

Volume 61 Number 1  
Spring 2025

## Briton's bright new beginning

When our companion animals come to the end of their lives, we rely on veterinary medical professionals to give them a peaceful exit. That was the reason for one senior dog's visit to a local veterinary hospital in early January.

The dog's family, who could no longer care for him, thought the 12-year-old dog suffering from a host of medical issues had reached the end; however, the hospital's staff saw a patient who still had his golden years ahead of him. Thanks to them, he found a new beginning.



A veterinary technician at the practice called a volunteer who fosters senior dogs for the Richmond SPCA, Renai Bowers, and Renai immediately reached out to our Manager of Foster Care Kelsey Powell for help.

Upon hearing that Briton's owners turned him over to their vet, Kelsey rallied our team to create space in our full humane center to bring Briton into our care. Along with Jenn Walters, coordinator of foster care, Kelsey drove to meet the dog whom they knew would need treatment for skin problems and mobility issues. Briton greeted them with what we have learned is his trademark: he dropped to the floor, rolled over and demanded belly rubs. Kelsey said, "Even though he was in rough shape, with patchy skin from fleas and wobbly back legs, his personality showed how much love he had to give."

Once Briton was at the Richmond SPCA, Associate Veterinarian Dr. David Molinas and our shelter medicine team carefully considered how to renew Briton's quality of life. Briton would stumble and drag the tops of his paws on the ground, and a prolonged, serious flea infestation and severe allergies left him with extensive hair loss and rough, thickened skin along his back.

An X-ray showed that Briton's lack of coordination stems from damage to his spine caused by intervertebral disc disease and from arthritis in his hips and shoulders. Dr. Molinas started Briton on joint supplements and put him on a diet to lose 10 pounds. Strong flea control paired with a daily topical treatment has soothed his skin and encouraged his hair to grow.

Renai, who made the call that led to Briton's new beginning at the Richmond SPCA, came to meet him a month later. Though the senior fella is oblivious to the role Renai had in saving his life, he greeted her with his trademark full body wags.

"There's something so incredibly special about senior dogs like Briton," Renai said. "Though the amount of time you're committing to might be less than that of a younger pup, each day you get is so special and fun. You have the chance to make up for all of the love and life they lost on their journey, and the love you get in return is even more precious."





# INTRODUCING... PET SUPPORT SERVICES

## *A new name for a vital resource*

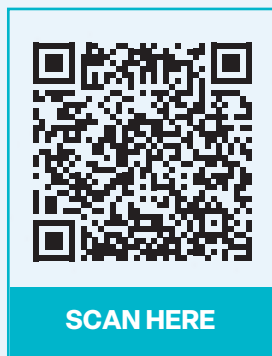
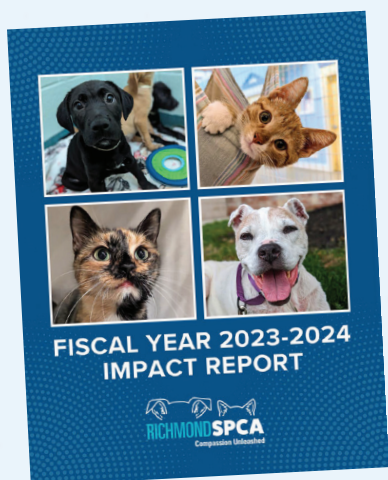
We're excited to share that our Admissions Department has gotten a new name: **Pet Support Services!** This renaming reflects the full scope of what our team does every day — not just bringing homeless pets into our care, but also providing guidance, education, and resources to help guardians keep their beloved companions in their homes and out of shelters whenever possible.

Our mission has always been to support pets and their people, and for more than 20 years, we've been delivering programs to reduce and prevent pet homelessness. From free and low-cost veterinary care at our **Susan M. Markel Veterinary Hospital** to trap-neuter-vaccinate-return services through **Smoky's Spay & Neuter Clinic**, crisis boarding, free pet food, rehoming support, and pet behavior and training support, our team is here to help. The name **Pet Support Services** better reflects this commitment and fosters trust with those seeking our help.

Our **Pet Support Counselors** (formerly Admissions Counselors) will continue to work closely with guardians, ensuring they have the resources they need to make the best choices for their pets. And when taking a pet into the shelter is the most appropriate option, we will continue to provide compassionate care for pets and the families who need our help. Each year, we shelter, rehabilitate and rehome about 4,000 animals.

This new name aligns with our mission **to provide education and resources to achieve and sustain a no-kill community** by offering comprehensive support.

Next time you visit our humane center, come say "hi" to our dedicated **Pet Support Services** team! When you support the Richmond SPCA, you make compassionate programs like this possible. Thank you!



Our 23rd Annual Dog Jog, 5K and Block Party presented by **Holiday Barn Pet Resorts** on March 22 was a smashing success thanks to the support of thousands of animal lovers communitywide. With your enormous help, we raised **\$215,000** for our lifesaving programs!

# From heartbreak to hope: A Valentine's Day rescue

This Valentine's Day, love took on a whole new meaning for a group of cats rescued from a heartbreaking situation. On Friday, February 14, a Greenville County Animal Control (GCAC) Officer conducted a wellness check at a local home after receiving a tip from a concerned resident in the same county.

What he found was devastating — 33 cats confined to a cramped, unsanitary garage, exposed to freezing temperatures and lacking access to clean water. Many of the cats suffered from matted fur, dehydration and untreated medical conditions. The homeowner surrendered the cats into the care of GCAC, ensuring they would receive the care and medical attention they desperately needed. However, as a small municipal shelter, GCAC lacked the resources to accommodate and treat such a large influx of unwell cats. That's when they turned to the Richmond SPCA and other partners for assistance.

At 9 p.m. on Valentine's Day, our Director of Shelter Operations Carly Sgueo met GCAC staff at our humane center to receive 13 of the rescued cats, who were immediately provided with clean water, food and their own safe, comfortable — basic necessities they had been deprived of for far too long.



Manager of Annual Giving Erin Tidsworth spends some quality time with Twisty.



Towel



Thirty

In the days that followed, each cat received thorough medical evaluations and necessary treatments. Some required care for upper respiratory infections, dental disease or flea infestations, while others simply needed time to regain their strength and trust in people. Through the dedication and compassion of our team and the generous support of a restricted special fund dedicated to cat lifesaving, these cats were given a new lease on life.

Today, all 13 of these resilient cats have found loving, lasting homes. No longer struggling to survive, they are now cherished companions, bringing joy to the families who welcomed them with open hearts.

This Valentine's Day rescue serves as a powerful reminder that love isn't just about romance — it's about kindness, compassion and second chances. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the GCAC and the Richmond SPCA, these cats' heartbreaking pasts have been replaced with futures filled with warmth, care and unconditional love.

# ALUMNI UPDATES



Demi, adopted in 2024 and Johnson, adopted in 2025



Lettie, adopted in 2024



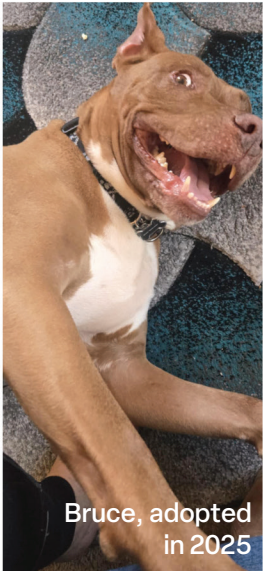
Nugget, adopted in 2024



Gizmo, adopted in 2025



Bart, adopted in 2023



Bruce, adopted in 2025



Toberman, adopted in 2025



Winston, adopted in 2024



Teddy, adopted in 2025



The Richmond SPCA, founded in 1891, is central Virginia's oldest full-service humane society. Each year we serve more than 18,000 pets across the community in our shelter, veterinary hospital, spay and neuter clinic, training programs and pet retention services. Since becoming no-kill in 2002, the Richmond SPCA has found loving adoptive homes for more than 75,000 dogs and cats. We are an independent nonprofit and not a chapter or affiliate of any other organization with Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in its name, including but not limited to the ASPCA.

The Pet Post is published for friends of the Richmond SPCA. A copy of our most recently-audited financial statements is on file with the Virginia Division of Consumer Affairs.