



Rehoming Your Pet

Though we all consider our pets part of the family and find it hard to imagine life without them, we also know that life sometimes throws unexpected challenges your way and some of us will make the difficult decision to give up a pet. ACC recognizes this is a very difficult situation to navigate and is here to help you through it.

Why ACC Shouldn't be Your First Option

Shelters and rescue groups exist to find animals homes, so it makes sense that many people think we are the best place to bring an animal that can no longer stay with his or her family. However, ACC takes in over 30,000 animals every single year, trying to find homes for as many of those as possible. You likely have just one; giving you a unique ability to focus your efforts and attention on him or her. You can provide prospective new families the most information about your pet, what he or she likes, is afraid of, has experienced, etc. You know your pet best and will be better able to figure out whether a new family or individual is the right match that will continue providing the best care for your pet, just as you have.

Also, it's important to remember that any animal shelter is a stressful place for animals. Your pet will suddenly be exposed to stress as well as illness from other animals, and may not cope well; he or she may begin to display behavioral issues such as anxiety or aggression; and may develop health issues; all of which can make adoption difficult and sometimes impossible. Keeping your pet in a stable, calm, familiar environment will set him or her up for success during the process of finding a new family.

Steps for Success

Prepare Your Pet, Putting His Best Paw Forward

1. Make sure your pet is up to date on vaccinations and in good health.
2. If your pet requires grooming, consider grooming him or her to make a great first impression.
3. It's preferable that your pet is reasonably well behaved and housetrained, but if not, make sure to let interested people know that – they'll find out anyway and it may result in a revolving door of homes for your beloved pet.
4. Make sure your pet is spayed or neutered; many people do not want to take on future medical costs for a new pet, so having your pet already spayed or neutered eliminates that worry for potential new families. It also allows you to not worry about the fate of any future puppies or kittens your pet might have since now you will be unable to make sure they go to great homes yourself.

How to Find a New Home

The most important part of finding your pet a new home is spreading the word. You may have people already in your network of friends and family and within your community that are considering adding a pet to their family; if they know that you are looking for a new home for your pet, they may jump at the chance to adopt a pet they know has come from a loving home.

Post flyers: Flyers are inexpensive and highly effective. Including a few great photos and important details on your pet's behavior can grab the attention of potentially thousands of people in a city like NYC. Post your flyer near places where pet lovers tend to be – pet stores, groomers, dog parks, etc. www.petbond.com is a great tool to help you put an eye catching flyer together.

Connect online: The internet is a huge network of individuals sharing stories, experiences, and sometimes needs and solutions. There are many free options for people to share things like “home wanted” listings for pets including community websites and message boards, pet oriented websites such as www.petfinder.com, and even sites like Craigslist. It's important to know though, that sometimes opening your network in this way, can attract less than ideal homes, so it's essential that you take the time to really talk to anyone who shows interest in your pet to make sure they have only the best intentions; spend time with them to see how they interact with your pet and listen to your instincts.

Engage your community: You have a whole group of people available to you that can help, some of whom may even know your pet. Let them know you are looking for a new home for him or her. Tell your friends, your family, your neighbors, your co-workers, and your acquaintances through your house of worship or other community center. In many cases, you'll already have a good understanding of what their homes and families are like, which can help you feel good about your decision to trust your beloved pet with them.

You've Found Someone – What Now?

Perhaps the most important step – figuring out if this is the right next home for your pet. You're going to want to take your time getting to know them. Ask them about their experience with pets before and where those pets are now. See if you can meet as many people in the immediate family as possible and ideally see where the pet will be living. You want to have a fairly good idea of what your pet's life will be like if he or she joins this new family and you want to make sure you are comfortable with that. Remember, just because you meet with a new family doesn't mean you are obligated to give them your pet – if you don't feel like it's a good situation, it's ok to say no and keep looking.

Once you find the right home though, rejoice! You took steps to resolve an issue in your home and helped bring joy to a new family! To get them started on the right foot, provide them with any paperwork you have, including medical histories, dog licenses, etc., as well as a good phone number and email address where they may contact you with any questions. Setting your pet's new family up with support will ensure a long-term, happy and health situation for all involved.

For advice or questions about anything on this flyer, please reach out to ACC. We have resources that can help support you.