

JUNE 2026

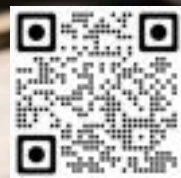
# THE PAW<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE

Elvis - Rescued 2022

## WELCOME HOME

Your practical guide to rescue dog adoption, trust-building, first days at home, and creating a lifelong bond.



[www.WPP.dog](http://www.WPP.dog)

**THE PAW<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE**

**VOL. 4 ISSUE 6**

JUNE 2026

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WOUNDED PAW PROJECT<sup>®</sup> EXISTS  
TO END THE CYCLE OF ABUSE FOR  
DOGS EVERYWHERE.

WE RESCUE, REHABILITATE, AND  
ADVOCATE FOR THE VOICELESS—  
AND WE FIGHT FOR SECOND  
CHANCES WITH COURAGE,  
COMPASSION,  
AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT.

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Sadie- Rescued 2016

HISTORY MEETS HUMOR. INNOVATION MEETS PAWS.

# PAWS OF PROGRESS™

Icons of Innovation as  
You've Never Seen Them Before!



THOMAS EDI-PAW



GEORGE PAWSHINGTON CARVER



BARKO WRIGHT



BENJAMIN FUR-LANKLIN



NIKOLA PAWSLA

**EVERY RESCUE DOG HAS A STORY WORTH SHARING.**

MEET THE "PAWS OF PROGRESS"™ — WHERE RESCUED DOGS BECOME ICONS OF  
HOPE. ★ RESILIENCE. ★ SECOND CHANCES.

**RESCUED DOGS. UNLIMITED POTENTIAL.**

**FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT.  
SEE THEIR STORIES. SHARE THEIR JOURNEY.**

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA → [@SavingAPaw](#)    

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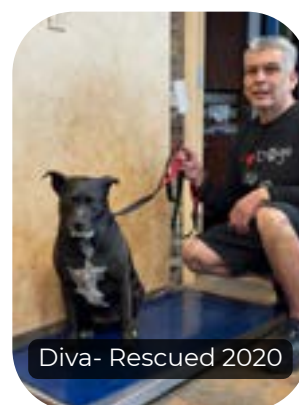
*Every Life  
Deserves  
A Second  
Chance.*

# A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER...

This month's issue of The PAW<sup>®</sup> Magazine is about more than adoption — it's about responsibility, patience, healing, and second chances. Across these pages, you'll find practical guidance for future pet parents, insight into rescue animal behavior, and honest conversations about what it truly means to welcome an animal into your home. At Wounded Paw Project<sup>®</sup>, we believe adoption is not a momentary emotional decision — it is a lifelong promise built on trust, compassion, and commitment. Every rescued animal carries a story, and every family that chooses adoption has the opportunity to become part of that healing journey.

As we continue advocating for animals across the country, I encourage every reader to remember that helping animals does not require perfection — it requires compassion. Whether you adopt, foster, volunteer, donate, or simply share the story of a shelter pet in need, your actions matter. This issue was created to educate, encourage, and inspire people to make thoughtful choices that strengthen the bond between humans and animals. Thank you for standing with us, for believing in second chances, and for continuing to Be The Voice For The Voiceless<sup>®</sup>.

With gratitude and determination,  
Ernesto P. Hernandez III  
Founder of Wounded Paw Project<sup>®</sup>



Diva- Rescued 2020

# WHY ADOPTION SAVES LIVES

Every day, thousands of dogs and cats sit quietly behind shelter walls waiting for someone to notice them. Some arrive scared and abandoned. Others are surrendered because their families face hardship, housing issues, or financial struggles. While many people see shelters as temporary holding places, the reality is far more urgent: adoption can be the difference between life and death. Animal adoption is not simply about bringing home a pet. It is an act of compassion that directly impacts overcrowded shelters, supports rescue organizations, strengthens communities, and gives vulnerable animals another chance at life.



## THE CRISIS OF SHELTER OVERCROWDING

Across the country, shelters and rescue organizations are struggling with overwhelming numbers of homeless animals.

Many facilities operate beyond capacity, forcing staff and volunteers to make heartbreaking decisions every day.

Overcrowding creates a chain reaction of problems:

- Limited kennel space
- Increased stress and illness among animals
- Reduced resources for medical care
- Burnout among shelter workers and volunteers
- Higher euthanasia risk in overcrowded regions

For animals, life inside a crowded shelter can be emotionally devastating. Dogs may become withdrawn, anxious, or depressed after weeks or months without a permanent home. Cats often shut down emotionally from constant noise and stress. Even the most loving animals can deteriorate in shelter environments when resources are stretched too thin.

Every adoption opens space for another animal in need. One family choosing adoption can save multiple lives by relieving pressure on already overwhelmed shelters.

## T H E   L I F E - C H A N G I N G I M P A C T   O F   R E S C U E

Behind every rescued animal is a story of survival.

Some were abandoned on roadsides. Some endured neglect or

abuse. Others were rescued from hoarding situations, puppy mills, or dog fighting operations. Yet despite unimaginable suffering, many rescue animals still learn to trust again.

Adoption transforms these stories.

The frightened dog hiding in the back of a kennel becomes a loyal companion sleeping peacefully at someone's feet. The neglected cat that once feared human touch begins purring in the safety of a loving home. Rescue gives animals the opportunity to heal emotionally and physically.

But rescue changes people too.

Families who adopt often describe their pets as lifesavers in return — providing companionship, emotional support, comfort during grief, and unconditional love during difficult times. Veterans, seniors, children, and individuals facing mental health challenges frequently experience profound emotional healing through the human-animal bond. Adoption is not charity. It is a relationship where both lives are forever changed.

## C O M M U N I T I E S   M A K E   T H E D I F F E R E N C E

Saving animals is not the responsibility of shelters alone. Entire communities play a role in reducing homelessness and protecting vulnerable animals.

Community involvement can take many forms:

- Adopting instead of purchasing pets
- Fostering animals temporarily
- Volunteering at local shelters
- Donating food, supplies, or funding
- Spaying and neutering pets
- Sharing rescue animals on social media
- Supporting local rescue organizations



When communities come together, the impact becomes powerful.

A single foster home can save dozens of animals over time. A volunteer can help socialize fearful dogs and increase their adoption chances. A donation can provide life-saving surgery or vaccinations. Even sharing a shelter animal online may help them find their forever family.

Rescue is not built on one person's efforts. It survives because compassionate communities refuse to look away.

# T H E   N U M B E R S   B E H I N D A D O P T I O N   S U C C E S S

While the emotional stories are powerful, the statistics are equally compelling.

Millions of animals enter shelters every year, yet adoption efforts continue to save lives on a massive scale:

- Adoption rates have steadily improved through public awareness campaigns
- Communities with strong spay-and-neuter programs see reduced shelter intake
- Foster-based rescues dramatically increase survival rates for vulnerable animals
- Senior pets and special-needs animals are finding homes more often than ever before

Most importantly, adopted pets thrive when given stability, medical care, and love. Studies consistently show that adopted animals form deep bonds with their families and adapt successfully into homes.

Every adoption contributes to these successes.

Every empty kennel means hope for another life waiting to be saved.

# C H O O S I N G   C O M P A S S I O N

When people choose adoption, they send a message that every life matters — regardless of age, breed, medical condition, or past trauma.

Some of the most extraordinary companions are the animals who were once overlooked.

The shy shelter dog.

The senior cat.

The abused survivor.

The unwanted mixed breed.

They are not broken. They are waiting.

Adoption does more than save one animal. It strengthens shelters, empowers rescues, inspires communities, and creates room for hope.

And for the animal who finally walks out of the shelter doors into a loving home, adoption means everything.

It means safety.

It means healing.

It means life.



Jazmine- Rescued 2017



## ARE YOU READY FOR A PET?

---

### A GUIDE EVERY FUTURE PET PARENT SHOULD READ

Bringing a pet into your home can be one of the most rewarding decisions you'll ever make. Pets offer companionship, comfort, loyalty, laughter, and

unconditional love. But adopting an animal is more than an emotional moment — it's a long-term commitment that deserves careful

thought and preparation.

Every year, countless animals are surrendered to shelters because families underestimated the responsibility that comes with pet ownership. Before you fall in love with a wagging tail or a pair of hopeful eyes, it's important to ask yourself one very important question:

*Are you truly ready for a pet?*

### ***A Pet Is Family — Not a Temporary Commitment***

Dogs and cats are living beings that rely on humans for safety, care, affection, and stability. Depending on the animal, your commitment could be

anywhere from 10 to 20 years.

That means your pet will depend on you through:

- Moves
- Career changes
- Financial ups and downs
- Family changes
- Vacations
- Busy schedules
- Unexpected emergencies

Adoption should never be an impulsive decision. It should be a promise.

### ***Start With Your Lifestyle***

One of the biggest mistakes people make is choosing a pet based on appearance instead of compatibility.

A high-energy dog may

look adorable, but if you work long hours and rarely exercise, that pet may become frustrated, anxious, or destructive. Likewise, some pets thrive in quiet homes, while others need constant activity and stimulation.

Ask yourself:

- Am I home enough for a pet?
- Do I enjoy being active?
- Do I travel frequently?
- Do I have patience for training?
- Is my home suitable for an animal?
- Does everyone in my household agree on adopting?

The goal isn't to find the "perfect" pet — it's to find the right fit for your lifestyle.

### ***Can You Afford a Pet?***

Love is essential, but pets also require financial care.

Basic yearly expenses may include:

- Food
- Vaccinations



Kane - Rescued 2018

- Routine veterinary visits
- Flea, tick, and heartworm prevention
- Grooming
- Toys and enrichment
- Training classes
- Emergency medical care

*Unexpected emergencies can happen at any time, and veterinary bills can become expensive quickly.*

*Before adopting, create a realistic pet budget and consider:*

- Emergency savings
- Pet insurance
- Long-term care costs

*Responsible pet ownership means preparing for both the joyful moments and the difficult ones.*

## **Time Matters More Than You Think**

Pets need more than food and water — they need interaction, structure, exercise, and emotional connection.

Dogs especially require:

- Daily walks
- Playtime
- Mental stimulation
- Socialization
- Consistent routines

Cats may be more independent, but they still need:

- Attention
- Enrichment
- Clean litter boxes
- Play and affection

If your schedule is already overwhelming, it's important to honestly evaluate whether you can

Sadie - Rescued 2016



provide the time a pet deserves.

### ***Are You Prepared for Training and Patience?***

No pet arrives perfectly trained.

Puppies may chew furniture.

Kittens may scratch.  
Rescue animals may have anxiety or fear-based behaviors.

Some pets come from neglectful situations and need time to decompress and learn how to trust again.

Patience is one of the most important qualities a pet owner can have.

Training takes:

- Consistency
- Compassion
- Understanding

- Positive reinforcement

Remember: your new pet is learning an entirely new world.

### **Think Beyond the Cute Stage**

Puppies grow into adult dogs.

Kittens become senior cats.

As pets age, they may require:

- Medication
- Mobility support
- More veterinary visits
- Dietary changes
- Additional care and patience

Adoption means committing to every stage of your pet's life — not just the easy or exciting parts.

### **The Emotional Reward Is Worth It**

*While pet ownership comes with responsibility, it also brings incredible rewards.*

*Pets can:*

- Reduce stress
- Improve mental wellness
- Encourage routine and activity
- Provide companionship
- Help children develop compassion
- Offer unconditional love during difficult times

### **Final Thoughts**

*Adoption is one of the most compassionate choices a person can make. When done responsibly, it creates a lifelong bond built on .*

trust, love, and second chances.

If you're ready to open your heart and home to an animal in need, you won't just be changing a pet's life — you may discover they change yours too.

Because every rescued animal deserves more than a home.

***They deserve a forever family.***



Jazmine - Rescued 2017

# 10 QUESTIONS

*to Ask Yourself*

## BEFORE ADOPTING


♥ A PET IS NOT JUST AN ANIMAL. THEY'RE FAMILY. ♥

- 1**  **DO I HAVE TIME FOR A PET EVERY DAY?**  
 Pets need daily care, attention, exercise, playtime, and companionship.
- 2**  **CAN I AFFORD LONG-TERM VETERINARY CARE?**  
 Consider food, routine care, vaccinations, grooming, training, emergencies, and unexpected expenses.
- 3**  **IS MY LIVING SITUATION PET-FRIENDLY?**  
 Check your lease, pet policies, space, yard access, and neighborhood environment.
- 4**  **AM I PREPARED FOR TRAINING AND ACCIDENTS?**  
 All pets need guidance, patience, and consistency while they learn. Accidents happen!
- 5**  **DOES MY SCHEDULE ALLOW FOR CONSISTENT CARE?**  
 Pets thrive on routine, stability, and daily interaction.
- 6**  **AM I WILLING TO COMMIT FOR THE PET'S ENTIRE LIFE?**  
 Pets can live 10–20+ years. Adoption is a lifetime promise.
- 7**  **DOES EVERYONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT ADOPTION?**  
 It's important that everyone is on the same page.
- 8**  **CAN I HANDLE EMERGENCY EXPENSES?**  
 Emergencies happen. Being financially prepared can save a life.
- 9**  **AM I ADOPTING FOR THE RIGHT REASONS?**  
 Adopt for love and commitment—never impulsively.
- 10**  **AM I READY TO TREAT THIS ANIMAL LIKE FAMILY?**  
 They deserve love, respect, and a safe forever home.

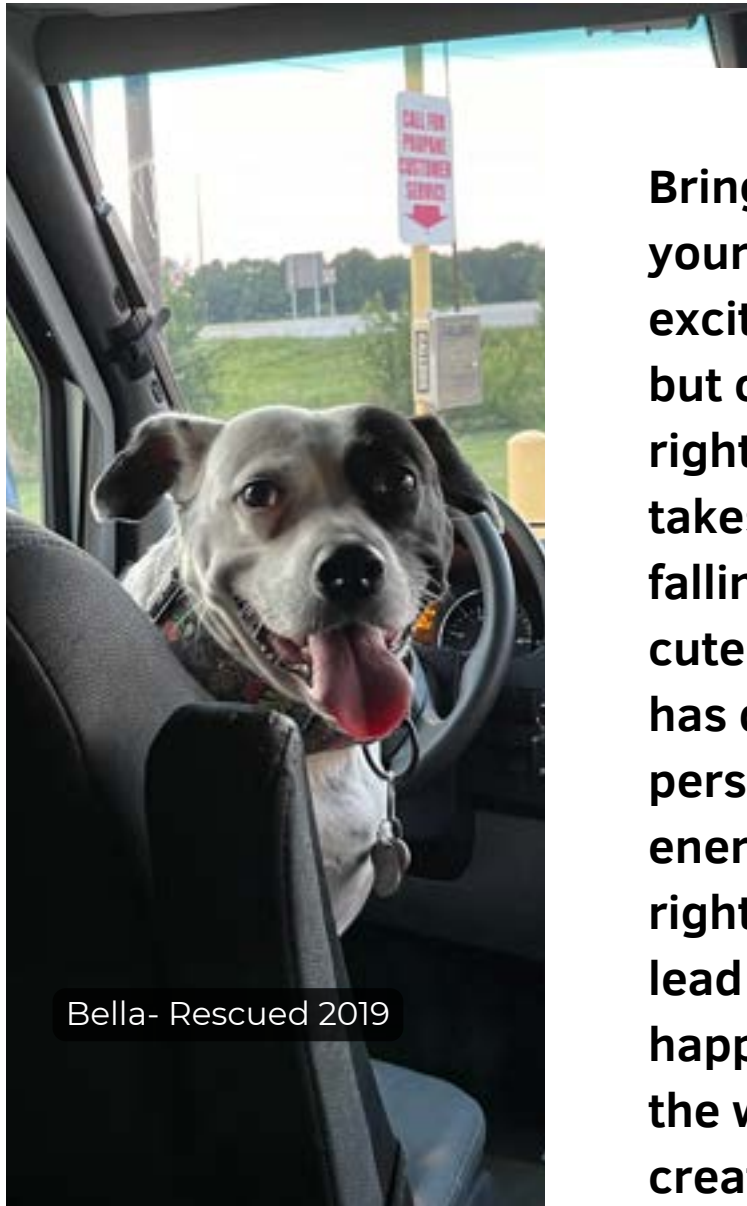


*Think.  
Prepare.  
Love.  
Adopt.*

BE THE VOICE  
FOR THE  
VOICELESS

 GIVE A SECOND CHANCE. *Change two lives.* ♥

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT PET



Bella- Rescued 2019

Bringing a pet into your life is an exciting decision, but choosing the right companion takes more than falling in love with a cute face. Every pet has different needs, personalities, and energy levels. The right match can lead to years of happiness, while the wrong fit may create stress for both the animal and the owner.



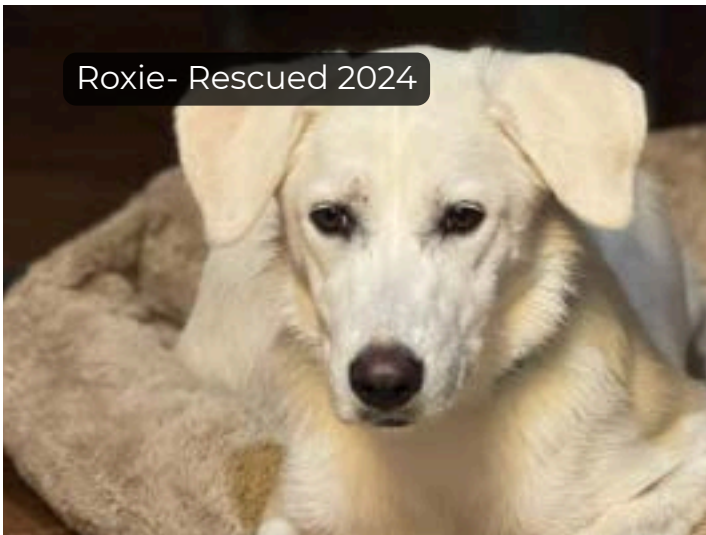
Bluez- Rescued 2020



Kane- Rescued 2018



Elvis- Rescued 2022



Roxie- Rescued 2024

## CONSIDER BEFORE ADOPTING:

- Daily walks are necessary
- Some breeds require extensive grooming
- Separation anxiety can occur if left alone too long



## DOGS VS. CATS: WHICH FITS YOUR LIFESTYLE?

### DOGS:

Dogs are highly social animals that thrive on companionship, training, and activity. Many breeds require daily exercise, regular outdoor time, and consistent interaction. Dogs are often ideal for active individuals or families who want a loyal, engaged companion.

Best for:

- Active lifestyles
- Families with children
- People wanting companionship and outdoor activities
- Owners with time for training and exercise



Lola- Rescued 2023



## CONSIDER BEFORE ADOPTING:

- Some cats dislike constant handling
- Litter boxes require daily cleaning
- Certain cats can still be highly energetic and social



## CATS:

Cats are generally more independent and adaptable to smaller spaces. They often require less hands-on attention than dogs, though they still need enrichment, affection, and veterinary care.

Best for:

- Apartment living
- Busy professionals
- Smaller households
- People wanting a lower-maintenance companion



## **PUPPIES VS. ADULT PETS**

Age matters just as much as species when selecting a pet.

### **Puppies and Kittens**

Young animals are adorable, playful, and easier to shape through training and socialization. However, they also require significant time, patience, and consistency.

Pros:

- Opportunity to train from the beginning
- Strong long-term bonding
- Energetic and playful

Challenges:

- House training accidents
- Chewing and destructive behaviors
- Frequent supervision needed
- Higher energy demands

Puppies are often compared to toddlers — they require structure, patience, and routine.

### **Adult Pets**

Adult dogs and cats are often overlooked in shelters, yet they can make incredible companions.

Pros:

- Temperament is easier to predict
- Often calmer than younger pets
- May already be house trained
- Easier transition for busy households

Challenges:

- Some may come with behavioral history
- Adjustment periods can vary

For first-time pet owners, an adult pet is often an excellent choice.

## **THE BENEFITS OF SENIOR PETS**

Senior pets are among the most loving and grateful companions you can adopt. While they may need extra medical care, they often provide a calmer and more predictable experience.

### **Why Consider a Senior Pet?**

- Usually house trained
- Lower energy levels
- Calm and affectionate personalities
- Perfect for quieter homes

Many senior animals struggle to

find homes simply because of their age. Yet they can offer incredible companionship and emotional connection.

### **Important Considerations**

Senior pets may require:

- More frequent veterinary visits
- Specialized diets
- Joint supplements or medications
- Mobility accommodations

For retirees, quiet households, or people seeking a relaxed companion, senior pets can be a wonderful match.

## **UNDERSTANDING BREED ENERGY LEVELS**

Not all dogs — or even cats — have the same activity requirements. Choosing a pet whose energy level matches your lifestyle is critical.

### **High-Energy Breeds**

Breeds such as Border Collies, Huskies, Belgian Malinois, and Jack Russell Terriers require significant physical and mental stimulation.

These pets thrive with:

- Daily exercise
- Training sessions
- Outdoor adventures

Without enough stimulation, high-energy pets may develop destructive behaviors.

### **Moderate-Energy Breeds**

Breeds like Labradors, Golden Retrievers, and many mixed breeds typically enjoy activity but can also relax indoors.

Good for:

- Families
- Moderate activity households
- Balanced lifestyles

### **Low-Energy Breeds**

Some pets are naturally calmer and better suited for relaxed homes.

Examples include:

- Basset Hounds
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniels
- Persian cats
- Senior animals

Always research breed tendencies, but remember that every animal is an individual. Shelter staff and rescue organizations can often help match you with the right temperament.

## **APARTMENT LIVING AND PET OWNERSHIP**

Living in an apartment does not mean

you can't have a happy, healthy pet.

### **Best Pets for Apartments**

- Cats
- Small-to-medium dogs
- Lower-energy breeds
- Older pets

### **Things to Consider**

- Noise levels and barking
- Access to outdoor areas
- Exercise opportunities
- Weight or breed restrictions from landlords

Many people assume small dogs are always better for apartments, but energy level matters more than size. A calm large dog may adapt better than a hyperactive small breed.

Daily walks, enrichment toys, and regular playtime are essential for pets in smaller spaces.

## **CHOOSING A PET THAT FITS YOUR FAMILY**

Your pet should match not only your lifestyle but also your household dynamics.

### **Families with Young Children**

Look for pets known for patience and gentle temperaments.



Sadie- Rescued 2016

Often family-friendly breeds include:

- Golden Retrievers
- Labrador Retrievers
- Beagles
- Many mixed breeds

Teach children how to properly interact with animals, including respecting boundaries and gentle handling.

### **Multi-Pet Households**

Some animals are naturally social, while others prefer to be the only pet. Introductions should always be gradual and supervised.



Temper- Rescued 2024

### **Seniors or Quiet Households**

Lower-energy or senior pets may provide the best fit for calmer environments.

### **Allergy Concerns**

No pet is truly hypoallergenic, but some breeds may produce fewer allergens. Spending time around the breed beforehand can help determine compatibility.

## **MAKE THE CHOICE**

Choosing the right pet is about finding a companion whose needs

align with your lifestyle, space, and energy level. Whether you choose a playful puppy, a calm senior cat, or an energetic rescue dog, responsible pet ownership begins with thoughtful preparation.

Adoption should never be an impulse decision. Take time to research breeds, visit shelters, ask questions, and consider the long-term commitment involved.

The right pet can bring comfort, joy, companionship, and unconditional love for many years to come.



# Preparing for Adoption Day



A CALM, PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR WELCOMING YOUR NEW COMPANION HOME.

Having the right supplies ready helps your new pet feel safe, supported, and set up for success from day one.



Lola- Rescued 2023



You're not just adopting a pet— you're gaining a lifelong friend.



## FEEDING

- Food & treats
- Food & water bowls
- Measuring scoop
- Slow feeder (optional)
- Storage container for food



## TRAINING

- Collar or harness
- Leash (4–6 ft.)
- Treats
- Poop bags
- Training clicker (optional)



## GROOMING

- Brush / comb
- Nail clippers
- Pet shampoo
- Towels
- Ear wipes



## SAFETY

- ID tag (with your info)
- Microchip (ask your vet)
- Crate or carrier
- Baby gates (if needed)
- Pet-safe cleaning supplies



## COMFORT

- Bed
- Blanket
- Toys (variety of types)
- Chew toys
- Puzzle toys (optional)



RESCUE.  
REHABILITATE.  
REHOME.  
REPEAT.

Every preparation today helps create a *lifetime of love.*





Rosie- Rescued 2009

Diva- Rescued 2020

Lola- Rescued 2023

# *PET-PROOFING YOUR HOME...ROOM-BY-ROOM*

Bringing a pet into your home means creating an environment where they can safely explore, play, and relax. Dogs and cats are naturally curious, and everyday household items can quickly become dangerous if left unsecured. Pet-proofing your home not only prevents accidents but also gives you

peace of mind.

Here's a practical room-by-room guide to keeping your pets safe from common household hazards.

**KITCHEN SAFETY: THE HEART OF THE HOME CAN HIDE THE BIGGEST RISKS**

The kitchen is one of the most dangerous areas for pets because it contains food, cleaning products, sharp objects, and hot surfaces.

### **Pet-Proofing Tips for the Kitchen**

- Keep trash cans covered or secured with locking lids.
- Store cleaning supplies in cabinets with childproof latches.
- Avoid leaving food unattended on counters or tables.
- Keep knives, skewers, and sharp utensils out of reach.
- Never allow pets near hot stoves, ovens, or grills.
- Secure electrical cords from small appliances.

### **Dangerous Foods for Pets**

Many common foods are toxic to dogs and cats, including:

- Chocolate
- Grapes and raisins

- Onions and garlic
- Xylitol (found in sugar-free gum and candy)
- Alcohol
- Coffee and caffeine
- Avocado
- Macadamia nuts

Even small amounts can cause serious illness, so always clean up spills immediately.

## **YARD SAFETY: OUTDOOR SPACES NEED PROTECTION TOO**

Your yard should be a safe place for pets to exercise and explore, but outdoor hazards are often overlooked.

### **Pet-Proofing Tips for Yards**

- Inspect fences regularly for holes or weak spots.
- Keep pools covered or supervise pets around water.
- Remove sharp tools and lawn equipment after use.



- Avoid cocoa mulch, which can be toxic to dogs.
- Secure garbage bins and compost piles.
- Check for standing water where mosquitoes breed.

**Lawn and Garden Chemicals**  
Fertilizers, weed killers, pesticides, and antifreeze can all poison pets.

Always:

- Store chemicals in sealed containers.
- Follow product safety instructions carefully.

- Keep pets away from treated areas until completely dry.

## **MEDICATIONS: ONE PILL CAN BECOME AN EMERGENCY**

Human medications are one of the leading causes of pet poisoning. Animals often chew through bottles or eat dropped pills before owners notice.

### **Keep Medications Secure**

- Store all medications in closed cabinets.
- Never leave pill organizers on counters.
- Pick up dropped pills immediately.
- Keep pet medications separate and properly labeled.
- Avoid giving pets human medication unless directed by a veterinarian.



### Common Dangerous Medications

- Ibuprofen
- Acetaminophen
- Antidepressants
- ADHD medications
- Sleep aids
- Vitamins with iron

Even medications meant for pets can become dangerous in the wrong dose.

### **TOXIC PLANTS: BEAUTIFUL BUT POTENTIALLY DEADLY**

Many decorative plants are harmful to pets, especially

cats that like to chew leaves.

### Common Toxic Plants

- Lilies
- Sago palms
- Aloe vera
- Pothos
- Philodendron
- Tulips
- Azaleas
- Oleander

Symptoms of poisoning may include vomiting, drooling, lethargy, tremors, or difficulty breathing.

## Safer Alternatives

Consider pet-friendly plants such as:

- Spider plants
- Areca palms
- Calathea
- Boston ferns
- African violets

When in doubt, research any plant before bringing it into your home or garden.

## ELECTRICAL HAZARDS: HIDDEN DANGERS BEHIND EVERY WALL

Pets—especially puppies and kittens—love chewing cords and investigating small spaces.

### Electrical Safety Tips

- Use cord protectors or conceal cords behind furniture.
- Unplug unused electronics.
- Block access to outlets and power strips.

- Keep charging cables out of reach.
- Watch for damaged cords and replace them immediately.

Chewing electrical cords can cause:

- Severe burns
- Electrocution
- Fires
- Lung damage from electrical shock

## ADDITIONAL PET- PROOFING ESSENTIALS

### Secure Small Objects

Items like batteries, coins, jewelry, hair ties, and children's toys can cause choking or intestinal blockages.

### Create a Safe Space

Give your pet a quiet area with:

- Fresh water
- Comfortable bedding

- Toys
- A crate or secure resting area

### **Keep Emergency Numbers Accessible**

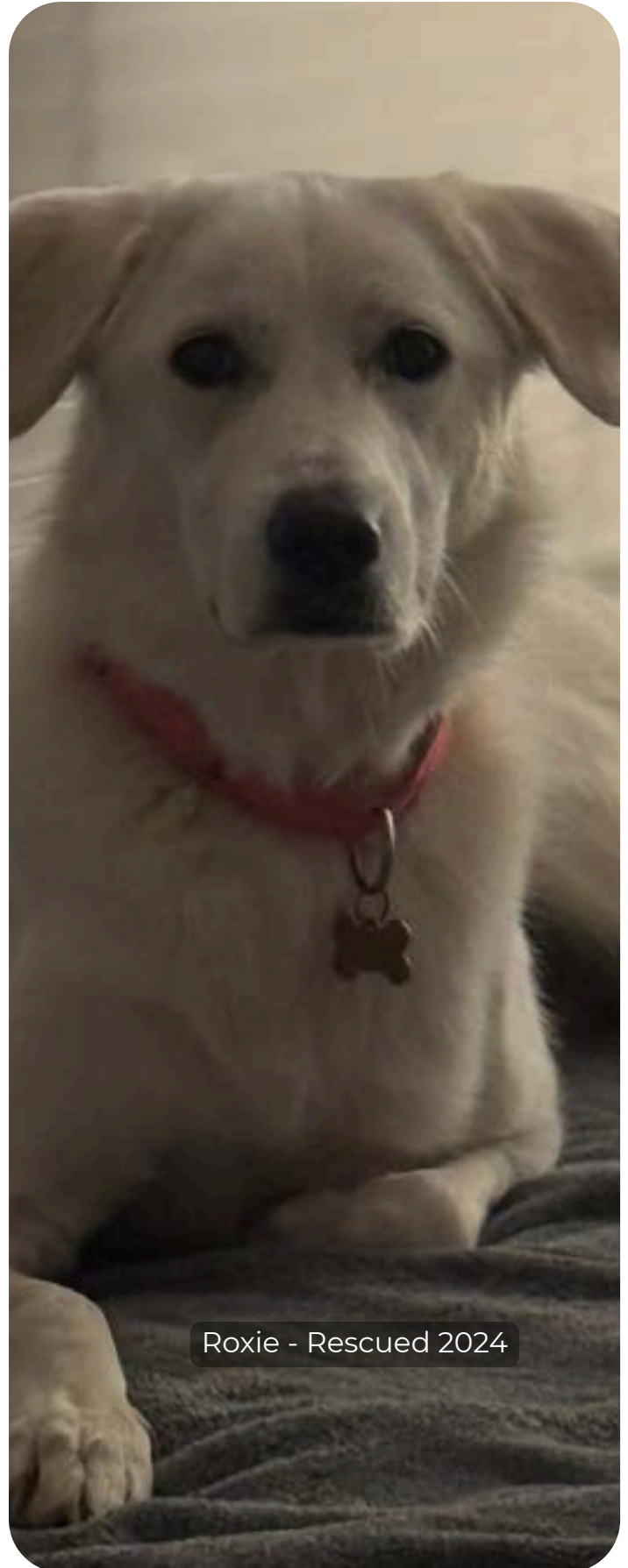
Have these contacts easily available:

- Your veterinarian
- Emergency animal hospital
- Pet Poison Helpline
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

## **CREATING A SAFER HOME FOR EVERY PAW**

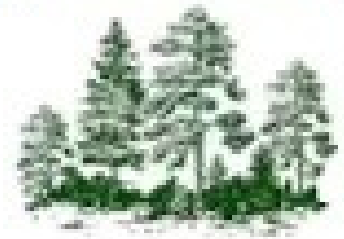
Pet-proofing your home is an ongoing process. As pets grow and their behaviors change, new risks can appear. A safe home environment allows your pets to thrive while reducing preventable accidents and emergencies.

With a little preparation and awareness, you can create a home where every room is safer for the animals who depend on you.



Roxie - Rescued 2024


***Our mission is stronger because of partners like you. Together, we are creating safer futures for animals in need.***





# THE FIRST 72 HOURS

WHY THE FIRST THREE DAYS MATTER MOST

for a Rescue Dog 

For a rescued dog, the first 72 hours are **survival mode**. New places, people, and sounds can overwhelm even the bravest dog. The goal isn't training—it's safety, comfort, and trust. These first three days set the foundation for everything that follows.



  
SAFETY.  
PATIENCE.  
LOVE.  
THAT'S ALL  
THEY NEED.



**3 DAYS**  
to decompress

**3 WEEKS**  
to learn routines

**3 MONTHS**  
to feel at home

Every dog is different, but healing takes time.



## UNDERSTANDING DECOMPRESSION

Decompression is the process of allowing a dog's nervous system to settle after stress or trauma.

During decompression, dogs may:

-  Sleep excessively
-  Startle easily
-  Refuse food
-  Guard food or toys
-  Hide under furniture
-  Have digestive upset
-  Avoid eye contact
-  React unpredictably to touch or noise
-  Pace or whine
-  Become overly clingy








THIS IS NORMAL.  
THE GOAL IS SAFETY.



## ANXIETY IS OFTEN INVISIBLE

Some dogs panic. Others shut down. Inside, they may be terrified.

Dogs are asking:

-  Is this person safe?
-  Will I be hurt?
-  Will I be abandoned again?
-  Do I have to compete for food?
-  Can I rest without danger?

### AVOID

Large gatherings • Loud noises • Dog parks  
Too many visitors • Excessive handling  
Overstimulation • Forced affection

### INSTEAD







Create predictability.  
Dogs heal faster when they know what comes next.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP ROUTINES

Many rescue dogs are severely sleep deprived. Rest is essential for healing.

During the first 72 hours:

-  Keep lights dim in the evening
-  Maintain a quiet sleeping space
-  Use consistent bedtime routines
-  Avoid waking the dog unnecessarily
-  Limit overnight disruptions
-  Provide a crate or safe den-like area if the dog prefers it

SOME DOGS MAY SLEEP  
16–20 HOURS.






LET THEM.

HEALING HAPPENS DURING REST.



## FEEDING TRANSITIONS MUST BE SLOW

Stress can upset digestion. Sudden food changes can make it worse.

-  Continue the same food if possible
-  Transition slowly over 7–10 days
-  Offer smaller meals
-  Keep feeding times consistent
-  Ensure constant access to fresh water










Some dogs may not eat right away.  
Anxiety suppresses appetite.  
Avoid hovering or pressuring.  
Let them eat when they're ready.



## BUILDING TRUST TAKES PATIENCE

Trust is not built through commands. It is built through consistency.

In the first 72 hours:


-  Sit nearby without forcing interaction
-  Let the dog approach you first
-  Speak softly
-  Move slowly
-  Reward calm behavior
-  Respect boundaries
-  Avoid punishment entirely



Control equals safety for many traumatized dogs. Let them make **choices**. Give them **space**.

## REMEMBER

“The dog you meet on day one is often not the dog you will know months later.”

Once fear fades and safety becomes real, personalities emerge.  
Playfulness returns. Confidence grows.  
Trust deepens. 




RESCUE BEGINS  
WITH PATIENCE.

The first 72 hours are not about perfection. They are about creating a space where fear can slowly loosen its grip.

A quiet room.  
A soft voice.  
The decision to stay.

THAT'S WHERE HEALING BEGINS.



Every dog deserves the chance to feel safe.  
Thank you for being their person. 

Be patient. Be kind. Be their safe place. 



**SADIE**

**SAYS**

**HIDE SHOES. SAVE FRIENDSHIPS.  
SERIOUSLY.**

New rescue dogs often explore the world with their mouths while adjusting to a new environment. Shoes, remotes, socks, and furniture can quickly become stress-relief chew toys during the decompression phase. Setting your dog up for success early helps prevent frustration, protects belongings, and builds trust instead of punishment.



## **Understanding Rescue Animal Behavior: Healing Through Patience, Trust, and Compassion**

Every rescue animal carries a story. Some stories are filled with neglect, abandonment, abuse, or fear. Others are marked by survival against impossible odds. While rescue animals often arrive in safe homes with wagging tails and hopeful eyes, emotional healing takes time. Understanding rescue animal behavior is one of the most important steps in helping them feel safe, loved, and secure again.

At Wounded Paw Project®, we believe that healing begins with compassion, patience, and trust-building. Many behaviors seen in rescued animals are not signs of aggression or disobedience — they are trauma responses developed as survival mechanisms.

## **Trauma Responses in Rescue Animals**

Animals experience trauma much like humans do. A dog that has been abused, chained, neglected, or abandoned may develop emotional and behavioral responses designed to protect itself from future harm.

Common trauma responses may include:

- Flinching when touched
- Hiding or avoiding people

- Excessive barking or growling
- Destructive behavior
- Separation anxiety
- Food guarding
- Fear of loud noises or sudden movements
- Difficulty trusting new people or animals

These reactions are often rooted in fear, not defiance. A rescue animal's nervous system may remain in "survival mode" long after the danger has passed.

For example, a dog that was once punished harshly may cower when someone raises their voice or hand. Another may panic when left alone because abandonment has taught them that being alone means they may never be safe again.

Understanding the "why" behind behaviors changes how we respond. Instead of



punishment, rescue animals need reassurance, consistency, and emotional safety.

## **Fear-Based Behaviors Are Communication**

Fear-based behaviors are often misunderstood. Growling, retreating, barking, or even snapping can be forms of communication. These behaviors are an animal's way of saying:

- "I don't feel safe."
- "I'm scared."

- "I don't know what will happen next."
- "Please give me space."

Punishing fearful behavior can increase anxiety and damage trust even further. Instead, caregivers should focus on identifying triggers and creating calm, predictable environments.

Rescue animals thrive when they learn that:

- They will not be hurt
- Their needs will be met consistently
- They can relax without fear
- Humans can be trusted again

## **The Power of Patience**

Healing does not happen overnight.

Some rescue animals adjust quickly, while others may take weeks, months, or even years to fully trust. Progress is rarely linear.

There may be setbacks, fearful moments, or periods of regression.

Patience is one of the greatest gifts a person can offer a rescue animal.

Patience means:

- Allowing the animal to move at its own pace
- Respecting boundaries
- Avoiding force or intimidation
- Celebrating small victories
- Understanding that trust must be earned

A dog that finally accepts gentle touch after months of fear is making enormous emotional progress. A previously shut-down animal that begins making eye contact, wagging its tail, or seeking affection is showing signs of healing.

These moments matter.

## **Positive Reinforcement Creates Confidence**

Positive reinforcement is one of the most effective ways to help rescue animals learn and feel secure. Instead of focusing on punishment, positive reinforcement rewards desired behaviors with praise, treats, affection, or play.

This approach helps animals associate people and training with safety and encouragement rather than fear.

Positive reinforcement can help:

- Build confidence
- Reduce anxiety
- Strengthen trust
- Improve communication
- Create healthy routines

Simple actions like rewarding calm behavior, offering treats during

stressful situations, or using a soft encouraging voice can make a significant impact.

Rescue animals often need to relearn that the world can be safe. Positive reinforcement helps replace fear with confidence and stability.

## **Trust-Building Takes Time**

Trust is the foundation of recovery.

For many rescue animals, humans were once the source of pain. Rebuilding trust requires consistency, kindness, and emotional safety. Trust-building is not about forcing affection — it is about showing animals they have control, security, and respect.

Ways to build trust include:

- Maintaining consistent routines

- Using calm body language
- Allowing the animal to approach first
- Providing safe spaces
- Speaking gently
- Avoiding punishment-based training
- Spending quiet time together

Sometimes trust-building looks simple:

- Sitting quietly beside a fearful dog
- Hand-feeding meals
- Taking slow walks
- Allowing rest without pressure

These quiet moments teach rescue animals that love does not have to hurt.

## **Every Rescue Animal Deserves Understanding**

Behavior is communication. When rescue animals act out in fear, they are not

being “bad” — they are responding to experiences they may never fully forget.

Healing requires empathy from the people around them. With patience, positive reinforcement, and trust-building, even deeply traumatized animals can learn to feel safe again.

At Wounded Paw Project®, we believe every rescued animal deserves the opportunity to heal emotionally as well as physically. Compassion changes lives — not only for animals, but for the humans who choose to walk beside them on their journey toward recovery.

Because sometimes the most powerful rescue is helping an animal believe they are finally safe.



Jazmine- Rescued 2017

Elvis- Rescued 2022

# HOW TO HELP ANIMALS — EVEN IF YOU CAN'T ADOPT

Not everyone is in a position to adopt a pet — and that's okay. At Wounded Paw Project®, we believe helping animals goes far beyond bringing one home. Every act of compassion can make a difference for abused, neglected, abandoned, or rescued animals waiting for a second



Rosie - Rescued 2009

chance. People can support rescue efforts by fostering pets temporarily, volunteering at shelters or events, helping with animal transport programs, donating food and supplies, or using their social media platforms to share adoptable pets and fundraising campaigns. Even the smallest actions can help save lives and create more opportunities for animals to find safety and love.

Animal rescue depends on compassionate communities working together. At Wounded Paw Project®, our mission is to Be The Voice For The Voiceless®, and that mission belongs to everyone — not just adopters.

Whether you donate a blanket, drive a rescue dog to a foster home, volunteer your time, or simply share a post online, you are helping animals heal, rebuild trust, and find hope again. Adoption is powerful, but so is every act of kindness that supports the journey toward a better life for animals in need.



Roxie - Rescued 2024

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# This is what a second chance looks like.

The ride that changes everything.



Kane didn't always know what freedom felt like.  
He came to Wounded Paw Project from Washington, D.C.,  
having survived a life no dog should know.  
Today, what you see in the mirror isn't his past-it's his future.  
Vehicle donations help make journeys like this possible.  
They support rescue, rehabilitation, and the road forward  
for dogs like Kane-and the people who walk beside them.  
Turn your vehicle into a second chance.  
[woundedpawproject.org/vehicle-donations](http://woundedpawproject.org/vehicle-donations)



*From shelter to riding shotgun.*