



# Paw Prints

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## QUOTE OF NOTE

"You cannot share your life with a dog ... or a cat, and not know perfectly well that animals have personalities and minds and feelings."  
Jane Goodall

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## A Moment's Paws ...

Saving animals takes a village, and it can only be done through collaboration with others in the animal welfare field. Thousands of Delawareans dedicate their days to better those of animals independently or with animal rescues, shelters, veterinary practices, and the Office of Animal Welfare (OAW).

In June, the Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) sponsored a multi-organizational Mega Adoption Event that placed more than 1,000 cats and dogs with new families in just two days.

Those who found their match helped other homeless animals, in turn. Animal adoption saves the life of the adopted animal and the life of the animal who can then be brought into that empty space at a shelter or rescue.

Many of the animals who found homes during the Mega Adoption Event were rescued by the OAW's Delaware Animal Services (DAS) enforcement unit through animal control and cruelty cases. This issue of *Paw Prints* highlights the work participating shelters did to prepare their animals for adoption. We included several photos of lucky animals and their life-saving adopters.

### Also in this issue:

Through collaboration, the Delaware

SPCA (DESPCA) transferred its Georgetown shelter to the BVSPCA. The deal allows BVSPCA to expand its services downstate, including the sheltering of animals picked up by DAS in Sussex County. This allows the DESPCA to focus on its Stanton location.

OAW Veterinarian Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus discusses how pet owners and animal advocates can help ensure proper animal care. Many may unknowingly put their pets in harm's way, and the OAW aims

to provide education about responsible pet ownership to keep animals safe and healthy.

Lastly, we celebrate the passage of legislation that will ensure animals and their owners are punished solely based on their actions, and not discriminated against due to their breed. This new law took collaboration from many animal welfare experts with the goal to help both animals and people.

Delaware is full of animal advocates, and there is a place and need in the animal welfare field for every skill and interest. While financial donations are always needed by shelters, saving animals can be as easy as donating empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls, making enrichment toys, or spending time with animals in shelters. Read on to learn how you can join the village.



# Microchips help OAW officers reunite owners with lost pets

When Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) Delaware Animal Services (DAS) officers were dispatched to two cases in June, microchips helped reunite two missing dogs with their owners.

In the first case, a DAS officer responded to a call about a dog that was seen thrown from a car in Lincoln the afternoon of June 29. A Good Samaritan contacted DAS and reported that they witnessed a red and tan Pomeranian thrown from a vehicle.

DAS Lt. Rebecca Stratton responded and scanned the male Pomeranian for a microchip. Luckily, she found one. The scan revealed an address just one mile south in Ellendale. The DAS officer brought the dog to that address, and the owners reported that the dog had been taken from their yard the night before. The owners informed the officer that they had let their three dogs outside in an area with an electric fence, during which time Buddy disappeared.

“Pet owners should be vigilant and keep an eye on their animals at all times. Never leave your pet unattended, whether in public or at home,” said DAS Chief Mark Tobin. “Make sure to have your pet microchipped and maintain a paper trail, which includes



**Buddy is one of two dogs returned home by OAW officers the last week of June thanks to their microchips.** Submitted photo

photos and veterinary records, in case you need to show proof of ownership. Additionally, dog licenses, which are required by law, can help your dog return home and prove you are its owner.”

The following day, DAS received a call about a dog that was stuck in a ditch in Ellendale, and appeared to be in distress. While riding a four-wheeler, the reporting person noticed a dog stuck in about 8 to 10 inches of mud within a deep ditch.

The responding DAS officer, Zack Kiner, was able to navigate down into the

## Tips for Microchips

The American Veterinary Medical Association gives the following information for checking and updating information for pets who already have microchips:

- If the number is not known, have a veterinary practice scan the animal and record the number. Keep this number on hand for easy access in the event the pet goes missing.
- Create an account with the chip manufacturer so registration information can be accessed and updated.
- Make sure the information is correct at [www.petmicrochip-lookup.org](http://www.petmicrochip-lookup.org). This is a national database used by veterinary practices and animal shelters.

ditch and lift the dog, a female Shepherd mix, to safety. He then scanned the dog for a microchip, and a chip was found. The officer then proceeded to the address registered to the microchip. An elderly woman burst into tears at the sight of her dog, who had escaped its fenced yard the day prior. She was so happy to see her dog home safe that she gave the mud-covered officer a hug.

Cases like these show the importance of making sure dogs are licensed and pets have microchips with up-to-date owner information.

Both microchips and dog licenses are easy and affordable ways to ensure that if your pet is lost or stolen, it can be returned to the owner once found.

For information about dog licenses or to search a dog license number, visit [petdata.com/Delaware](http://petdata.com/Delaware). Fees start at \$10 per year, or \$7 for dog owners who are senior citizens. Microchips typically cost only a few dollars and can be implanted into the back of a pet’s neck by veterinary hospitals and clinics throughout Delaware.

## TOP 3

### Reasons to License Your Dog

- 1 Easy identification is a lost dog’s ticket home.
- 2 Prevents the spread of rabies.
- 3 It’s state law! (fines are \$50 and higher)

To apply for a license, call 877-730-6347 or visit [www.petdata.com/Delaware](http://www.petdata.com/Delaware)

DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health  
Office of Animal Welfare

A close-up photograph of a black and tan dog, possibly a pit bull mix, looking upwards and to the left. Its mouth is open, and its pink tongue is hanging out. The background is a blurred green lawn.

# DESPCA transfers Georgetown shelter to BVSPCA

Sussex county now has expanded low-cost veterinary services and a shelter for animals picked up by Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) Delaware Animal Services (DAS) enforcement unit. The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) recently acquired the Delaware SPCA (DESPCA) shelter in Georgetown. The BVSPCA will expand its services in Sussex County, while the DESPCA focuses on reopening its Stanton shelter, which closed in 2016.

BVSPCA provides sheltering and adoption services for the animals DAS officers pick up through statewide animal control and cruelty cases. In 2016, a third of the stray dogs entering BVSPCA from DAS cases came from Sussex County. Previously, those dogs were held at a kennel facility in the county for three days during a stray hold period before they were transferred to the BVSPCA's New Castle shelter.

Adding the Georgetown location gives those animals an opportunity to be re-homed locally and allows the BVSPCA to provide adoption outlets in all three counties, complementing the New Castle shelter and its PetSmart Everyday Adoption Center in Dover.

## About the Georgetown Shelter

### Location

22918 Dupont Highway, Georgetown

### Shelter hours

Noon-7:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday  
10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday

### Wellness clinic services

Low-cost spay neuter, vaccinations,  
wellness appointments

### Information

Visit [bvspca.org](http://bvspca.org) or call 302-856-6361.

The BVSPCA plans to grow adoption services, low-cost spay/neuter, affordable veterinary care, safety net services that help families avoid pet surrender, and focused programs like trap-neuter-return (TNR) for community cats.

Under BVSPCA, the shelter will have new cat community rooms, upgraded dog housing, adoption lobby improvements, and clinic equipment upgrades.

## DAS officer goes above and beyond to help resident during case

Delaware Animal Services (DAS) officers go beyond the call of duty every day to help Delaware animals and residents. This case highlights how animal welfare officers go the extra mile.

### Officer DaFonte helps clean up

Officer Rick DaFonte responded to a cat hoarding situation in May after a resident was found deceased among 34 cats. Upon arrival, he noticed the house was cluttered with empty cat

food bags and empty litter containers. The resident's daughter informed Officer DaFonte that she had been caring of her mother for several years and doing everything she could to take care of the cats, too.

"[She] asked me if I knew anyone who could help her remove some of the garbage from her home," he said. "Now that she didn't have her mother to take care of anymore, she would

have the time to do so, but did not have the means."

Officer DaFonte then located a pick-up truck and dump trailer, and made arrangements with the daughter to help clean out and transport the trash. He then drove all 920 pounds of trash with the daughter to a Delaware Solid Waste Authority facility.

## Delaware Animal Response Needs You!

Hurricane season is here. Winter is right around the corner.  
Volunteers are needed to keep Delaware's animals safe.

Find out how you can help ensure Delaware's animals  
are safe and cared for during emergencies and disasters.

Contact DAR Coordinator Karen Clark  
at [karen.clark@state.de.us](mailto:karen.clark@state.de.us) or or 302-242-3594.



# Shelters offer pets for any family, budget year-round

**By Shauna McVey**  
Program Coordinator

While 1,134 lucky cats and dogs were adopted at the Mega Adoption Event held in June at Bellevue State Park, hundreds more are available year-round at Delaware shelters. The adoption event allowed the Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) New Castle shelter, Delaware Humane Association (DHA) and Faithful Friends Animal Society (FFAS) to open their catteries and kennels to even more animals in need of homes.

Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to care for, enrich, and find homes for the animals brought into their shelters.

“[We] ensure they have a good quality of life in the shelter, and that they’re getting enrichment and training to help present themselves as the great



Exchange students from Northern Ireland volunteered to make cat and dog enrichment toys and treats during a July 14 visit to the OAW’s home campus. Pictured, from left to right, are Eoin Doyle, Lauryn Smyth, Lucy McQuaid, Claire O’Keefe and Eimear McMullan. Shauna McVey photo

family pets they can be,” said Linda Torelli, BVSPCA director of marketing and programs.

BVSPCA is the shelter partner to the Delaware Animal Services (DAS) animal cruelty and control unit. Animals picked up in the field as strays or through cruelty cases are transferred to BVSPCA. DHA and FFAS take in owner-surrendered pets and transferred animals from other non-profit organizations.

## Enrichment and socialization

Patrick Carroll, DHA executive director, said it’s an unfair myth that shelter animals have behavior or medical issues.

“We have many animals that just need a second chance because they ended up stray or their family had to give them up, and it’s not their fault,” he said.

DHA and FFAS bring dogs together to play for exercise and enrichment outside their kennels.

“Dogs want to play with each other and it really helps them work out their own behavior issues,” said Jane Pierantozzi, FFAS executive director.

BVSPCA aims to get their shelter dogs outside for walks three times daily, depending on volunteer capacity.

All three shelters have rooms where cats can roam free in groups. The open spaces allow cats to lounge and become social with each other in a relaxed setting. Enrichment toys help keep cats busy between naps.

“We have back scratchers to touch them to get them used to touch,” Pierantozzi said. “Having playgrounds in the cattery helps cats with people.”

The shelters also address medical needs and utilize trainers to work on any behavioral issues that may hinder an adoption.

“It’s a lot of time and observation, giving them love and comfort, and helping them feel content here,” Carroll said. “It’s a beautiful thing when you see them going out the door with a family or an individual. They’re wagging their tail, they seem happier, and they’re redirected.”

## Volunteer opportunities

Those with time to volunteer can find a duty that matches their interests and skills.

“Volunteers play an absolutely essential role in both quality of life and match-ups with families,” Torelli said.

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## How You Can Help

All shelters are in need of dog walkers, monetary and food donations, and the sharing of social media posts.

### **BVSPCA, New Castle & Georgetown** bvspca.org

- Stuff Kong toys for dogs
  - Read to cats
- Take dogs to public places to meet potential adopters

### **Delaware Humane Association, Wilmington** delawarehumane.org

- Cuddle cats

### **Faithful Friends Animal Society, Wilmington** faithfulfriends.us

- Donate paper towel and toilet paper rolls
- Take dogs on small trips, such as trail walks and car rides
- Use back scratchers on cats

Contact each shelter to find out how you can help.

# Mega Adoption event sends 1,134 animals to new homes



Mattie Sweeney and her daughters, Audrey and Brianna Obegi, were happy to adopt Rita the kitten at the multi-organizational Mega Adoption event held June 17 and 18 at Bellevue State Park.



William and Melinda Torain are the proud new parents of NuNu. Photos courtesy of Brandywine Valley SPCA.

This three-legged Beagle who was picked up as a stray by DAS and brought to the BVSPCA, went home with his new mom, Emily Nedblock, during the Mega Adoption Event in June.



Sisters Jilly and Jody Mayo are thrilled with their new kitty, Bailey.

Continued from p. 4

Volunteers at DHA can cuddle with cats for socialization, while BVSPCA has visitors spend time with cats in their free-roaming rooms and even read to the cats.

## Year-round adoption fee specials

Local shelters have animals that match any family and adoption fees that match any budget. Each shelter runs reduced-rate adoption promotions throughout the year.

Torrelli said while some believe low adoption fees mean animals will go to irresponsible owners or be returned to the shelter, national data shows otherwise.

"If you've been thinking about doing something and all of sudden you can do it for less money, it's going to motivate you to do it," she said.

To find the right fit for your home, go to each shelter's website or visit in person, any time of the year.



Caleb and Darielle Bradshaw were first in line for the Mega Adoption event. They arrived at 4:45 a.m. to ensure they could bring home Bailey, a Chihuahua. Also pictured is Bugs, who they adopted last year from BVSPCA's New Castle shelter.

# OAW veterinarian offers tips to prevent dog bites

By Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus

Chief Veterinary Advisor

*Any dog can bite, despite its appearance or past history. When a dog bites, it can jeopardize its victim, itself, and its owners.*



Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus

*Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus, Office of Animal Welfare chief veterinary advisor, offers the following tips on how dog owners and those who come in contact with dogs can prevent dog bites.*

All too often we hear the phrase from dog owners “They will never bite me,” but if a dog is stressed and has given warnings, they will bite whomever is closest.

## Learn to spot signs of stress in your dog

- A dog may have wide eyes with the whites visible, like a half moon.
- The dog may look away from you and look down with their eyes, avoiding eye contact.
- Their ears may be pulled back and flattened.
- Their lips may be pulled like they are smiling.
- They may lick their lips.

If you notice any of these signs, take a step back and leave your dog alone. You should always aim to de-escalate the situation and arousal to the dog to help prevent a bite incident.

## Be a responsible pet owner

**Do not try to remove food/toys from a dog,** or have your hands in the food while they are eating. This leads to stress and anxiety for the dog and you can cause it to have food or resource insecurity. They will eventually guard food and toys, may growl, and may eventually bite.

**Train your dog to obey simple commands,** such as sit and stay. In a stressed situation, they will look to you for direction. Make sure your dog is socialized when young so they do not fear people.

**Remember leash laws.** When outside of your home, you should always have control of your dog.

**Get your dog checked by a veterinarian for health issues if they suddenly start growling or snapping.** Speak to a veterinarian about possible medical conditions that can cause pain, such as arthritis or other diseases that can cause a change in behavior.

**If the behavior gets worse, consider seeing a veterinary behavioral specialist.** These are veterinarians with extensive additional training to help dogs with psychological conditions. They will be able to help with behavior modification training and prescribe medications to help your dog.

**Keep your dog up to date on its rabies vaccination.** Not only are rabies vaccinations required by law, they also protect your dog from a costly and stressful quarantine away from home if they do bite someone.



## Keep children safe

**Most bites happen to children. Never leave dogs and children unattended.**

Often children do not understand when the dog is telling them to stop, and a child can unintentionally cause a bite situation.

**Teach children to use caution around unfamiliar dogs.** Check with the owner that the dog is fine with children, then make sure the children know how to correctly interact with the dog.

**Teach children to not reach through fences to dogs they don't know.** This is an invasion of the dog's personal space, and can be perceived as a threat.

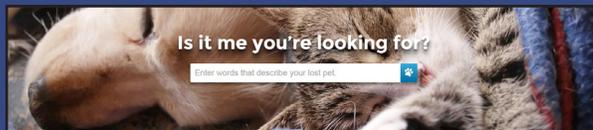
**Children should not hug a dog without adult supervision.** Dogs have personal space issues just like humans. Never let children stand on or “ride” on a dog.

**Children running and making high-pitched sounds can stimulate dogs.** Adults should monitor the excitement level of both children and dogs, and separate them as needed.

## GET LOST AND FOUND ANIMALS BACK HOME

Animals rescued by Delaware animal welfare officers are featured on the Lost & Found Pet Registry. Anyone can visit the registry to look for a lost pet or post a lost or found pet notification.

Find Delaware's Lost & Found Pet Registry online at [animalservices.delaware.gov](http://animalservices.delaware.gov).



# Reduce the risk of human or pet exposure to rabies

**By Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus**  
Chief Veterinary Advisor

Rabies is a 100-percent preventable virus that is fatal to humans if not treated properly. It is also fatal to pets that are not vaccinated against rabies.

Rabies is caused by a virus that animals and people can contract through certain exposures to the saliva or fluid from the central nervous system of a rabid animal. It is zoonotic, which means it can spread from animals to people, and is nearly always fatal without proper post-exposure prophylaxis treatment (PEP) in people. There is no PEP for pets.

Rabies prevention starts with the pet owner. By state law, all dogs, cats, and ferrets must be vaccinated against rabies. Failure to do so puts a pet's life at risk, puts other humans and animals at risk of exposure should an unvaccinated pet bite, and puts the pet owner at risk of being fined.

To reduce the chance a pet will come in contact with the rabies virus, owners and caretakers should help their animals avoid all contact with wild animals.



**If a pet not current on its rabies vaccination bites, the owner will be responsible for the costs of quarantine and fines. Pet owners may also incur additional expenses if their dog harms a human or another animal.**

The following tips can reduce the possibility that your pet is exposed to rabies.

**Vaccinate all pets and keep them up to date on their vaccinations.**

Delaware law requires rabies vaccination for all dogs, cats, and ferrets age six months and older.

**Do not let pets roam free.** Maintain control of your pets by keeping cats and ferrets indoors and keeping dogs under direct supervision when outdoors.

By law, dogs must be under the control of their owner/keeper at all times. If a dog is outside, it should be either in a fenced area or on a leash.

**Enjoy wild animals from a distance. Rabies is most common among wild animals such as raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes.**

Wild animals should not be handled or kept as pets, which is against the law.

**Spaying or neutering your pet may reduce any tendency they might have to roam or fight** and, thus, reduce the chance that they will be exposed to rabies.

**Make sure to pick up bowls when pets are finished if they are fed outside.** Even empty bowls will attract wild and stray animals. Do not feed wildlife.

**If you suspect a wild animal is acting rabid, call the Division of Fish and Wildlife** at 302-739-9912.

Do not approach any wild animal that is acting strangely.

**Bat-proof your home in the fall and winter.** Visit [www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/keep\\_wildlife\\_out.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/keep_wildlife_out.html) for bat-proofing tips.

## Pets at heatstroke risk inside vehicles in warm weather

The OAW reminds residents that pets should not be left in vehicles during warm weather, even in mild temperatures. In June, a DAS officer had to break a car window to save a dog showing signs of distress. The officer's temperature gauge showed the interior of the car had reached 116 degrees. Fortunately, the dog was rescued in time.

Call DAS at 302-255-4646 immediately if you see a pet left unattended in a vehicle in warm weather. By Delaware law, only emergency responders are authorized to break windows to rescue a pet.

Animals kept inside a vehicle in warm or hot temperatures are susceptible to heatstroke. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the inside of a car can reach 89 degrees in just 10 minutes when the temperature outside is just 70 degrees. At 80 degrees outside, a car's interior can reach 99 degrees in that time. As time passes, internal vehicle temperatures continue to rise.

Delaware law prohibits owners from leaving animals unattended in a vehicle when temperatures are either too hot



**This car window was broken by a Delaware Animal Services officer to save the life of a dog in distress. The officer's internal temperature reader showed the car's interior was 116 degrees.**

or too cold for their safety. Leaving an animal in a vehicle under these circumstances is animal cruelty.

# Dog breed discrimination now illegal in Delaware

By Shauna McVey

Program Coordinator

A tan and white pit bull-type dog named Tator Tot smiled in the background June 2 as a law to protect dogs like him took effect. Surrounded by legislators and animal welfare advocates, Gov. John Carney signed House Bill 13 (HB 13) at the Delaware Humane Association (DHA) in Wilmington.

HB 13 provides statewide consistency in the law that protects the public from dangerous dogs and clarifies that dogs may not be declared potentially dangerous or dangerous for animal control enforcement or for purposes of criminal liability based solely on breed-specific criteria. The bill also prohibits municipalities from enacting breed-specific ordinances or regulations.

“Dangerous dogs can’t be identified by breed,” Carney said. “I was a paper boy. The worst bite I got was from a little Poodle. It’s proof that you don’t have to be a pit bull ... to do a dangerous thing. [Dog bites are] mostly due to the actions of the owner.”

Rep. Charles Potter sponsored the legislation with the help of Best Friends Animal Society, a national animal rescue and advocacy organization, and the Office of Animal Welfare. The bill also ensures dogs in Delaware will be deemed dangerous based on their actions or an individualized demonstration of vicious behavior, not by breed.

Tanya Charles, who visits dogs at DHA regularly, was happy to learn about the new law when she stopped by the



Gov. John Carney and Chloe Taylor hold the newly signed House Bill 13 June 2 at the Delaware Humane Association (DHA). Also pictured, from left, are Walt Fenstermacher, Brandywine Valley SPCA director of operations; Patrick Carroll, DHA executive director; Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Department of Health and Social Services secretary; Hanifa Shabazz, Wilmington City Council president; Rep. Charles Potter, HB 13 sponsor; Lee Greenwood, Best Friends Animal Society legislative attorney; Chris Motoyoshi, OAW acting director; and Patti Blevins, former OAW executive director. Shauna McVey photo.

shelter during the bill signing and said a dog’s behavior is the responsibility of its owners.

“I think it’s a good thing. It’s bad to discriminate against one breed,” she said. “You just have to find the right animal fit for you and your family.”

## Adoptable Pet Spotlights

Available at Brandywine Valley SPCA

### Gumdrop

Her name is Gumdrop for a reason; she’s the sweetest treat around. Gumdrop is a loving, good-natured 2-year-old who could make a great family cat. She loves everyone she meets, and her easy going nature would help her fit into most homes.



### Clover

Clover is 2-year-old cutie who’s been patiently waiting for a forever home. Her spotted feet aren’t the only unique thing about her; she’s got a personality to match. Clover is great with children and would be a wonderful only pet for any home.



To adopt Gumdrop or Clover, contact BVSPCA at [office@bvspca.org](mailto:office@bvspca.org) or 302-516-1000.