



News Release

Contact: Mike Warner
Interim Executive Director, RCACP
540-283-2670

Urgent Need for Adopters and Special Adoption Event

October 13, 2022—Roanoke, Virginia The Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection, in conjunction with Angels of Assisi, Franklin County Animal Shelter, Franklin County Humane Society, and the Roanoke Valley SPCA held a press conference Thursday morning to bring attention to the urgent need for adopters in the Roanoke Valley and the announcement of a large-scale adoption event October 13 – 15, 2022.

The Roanoke Valley has been experiencing an increase in owner surrenders and a decrease in adoptions leading to a situation that requires community action and assistance. The RCACP has experienced a 9% increase in owner surrenders from this time last year. We are working very hard to ensure that forever homes are found for these animals as well as the strays that we are legally required to house, but it is becoming more and more difficult to do. As explained by Donna Essig, President of Franklin County Humane Society, “Our intake numbers are lower than 2020 and previous years, but the length of stay has increased. Cat adoptions are down 35% and dog adoptions are down by 9%.” Due to the length of time that animals are staying in shelter, it prevents non-profit shelters from accepting animals from the surrounding municipal shelters.

Our rescue partners are consistently full with animals that are not being adopted and, therefore, they cannot transfer many of the homeless animals we have to their programs. Every shelter is struggling for space to handle the additional overflow and the staff to care for the current large number of animals in shelter. In prior years, the amount of times the shelter has been completely full has been minimal, it has now become a daily occurrence. When our rescue partners no longer have room and the animals keep coming in, hard decisions have to be made to fulfill our legal space obligations. Our local non-profits are doing their part as illustrated by Denise Hayes, Executive Director of the RVSPCA, “In our last fiscal year, 76% of the dogs and cats that passed through our shelter came from the Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection or from local community members who were no longer able to care for their pet.”

To that end, we have been working cooperatively with our rescue partners to bring some light to this situation and ask the community for their help, specifically to open their homes to these well-deserving animals. These animals are from our community and it is a community responsibility to address the issue. We are experiencing many surrenders due to the cessation of the eviction moratorium and through moving to other rentals, the new landlords are not allowing pets. As Cindy Lamm, Franklin County Shelter Manager, shares, “We have been struggling with adoptions even with adoption event specials. We've seen so many wonderful animals relinquished because of the economy, evictions, or residents simply cannot afford to care for their animals.” These owners do not wish to relinquish their animals, but there is no other choice in most of these situations. In addition, we are experiencing more owners who are relinquishing because they cannot afford the vet care that the animal needs. Just like everything else in our economy, the cost of vet care and pet food has increased significantly.

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Mike Warner, Interim Executive Director for RCACP, states, “We have been fortunate to have a great relationship with our rescue partners; however, we have reached a point where our efforts require a village approach – we all need to help each other to help the animals in our care.” To that end, this event is for animals that are currently in shelter. We are asking the public to not bring animals to the shelter to relinquish during this event as we will not be able to adopt them out into forever homes prior to being vetted and spayed/neutered. This event is solely for animals that are currently in the shelter system at this time.

All of the agencies have held engaging events to attract adopters throughout the year. Lisa O’Neill, Executive Director of Angels of Assisi, explains, “This summer Angels of Assisi and RCACP have been partnering with multiple adoption events with great success. Our hope is that by collectively using our resources with other non-profits, we can continue to build on that success.” Our combined adoption event will be held from Thursday, October 13 through Saturday, October 15, 2022. Please come out and visit any of these shelters and let us connect you and your family with the perfect animal to make your home complete.

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