

You to the Rescue

In this season of giving, consider supporting organizations taking a creative approach to homing the country's furry and feathered friends. **By Rachel Stearns**

Many a mug and bumper sticker proudly reads “Who rescued who?” And there may be something to that. Spending time with animals has been shown to lower blood pressure, stress and anxiety, and increase physical activity. Yet an estimated 6.5 million animals enter shelters every year—and organizations working to unite them with happy homes are constantly stretching their resources. This year, with more people stuck at home, many shelters have seen an uptick in adoptions, but the ongoing economic and eviction crises mean that there are still plenty of pets in need (72% of renters have pets). Here are four pet-rescue nonprofits to consider supporting this year.

Feeding Pets of the Homeless

petsofthehomeless.org Anyone can fall on hard times, and the people behind this organization believe no one should have to give up their companion due to a lack of funds. Since 2008, they've been providing food and medical care to pets of people experiencing homelessness around the country. Through partnerships with veterinarians, the nonprofit runs free pet-wellness clinics and provides free emergency vet care like tooth extractions, mass removals and parvovirus treatment. Its emergency hotline, which connects pet owners to participating vets, received more than 7,700 calls in 2019. Feeding Pets of the Homeless also donates crates to homeless shelters to make pet accommodation easier.

Susie's Senior Dogs

susiesseniordogs.com

In 2014, Erin Stanton and her 12-year-old Chihuahua mix, Susie, set out to show the world that senior dogs have loads of love to give. Since then, her nonprofit has connected more than 2,500 dogs 7 years and older with pet parents nationwide by sharing their photos and stories on social media. And Stanton's impact is even bigger than those numbers suggest: she says people are always writing to tell her they were inspired to adopt a senior dog in their area. Donations go toward expenses like dental work, heartworm treatment or special surgeries to help make dogs more adoptable.

Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation

trfinc.org

Once racehorses can no longer compete, their futures may be bleak. One Saratoga Springs-based organization has stepped in and rescued upward of 6,000 horses in the 37 years it's been in operation. (The city in upstate New York has a deeply rooted horse-racing culture.) TRF places horses with families or secures their peaceful

retirement on farms around the country. An initiative called Second Chances also maintains farms at six U.S. correctional facilities, giving people who are incarcerated the opportunity to develop specialized equine-care skills that can help them secure jobs after their release.

Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm

sanctuaryone.org

This southern Oregon farm provides refuge for abused or abandoned cats, dogs, pigs, horses, ducks, goats and more—for ever, if necessary. In fact, its ample space allows Sanctuary One to take in hard-to-adopt animals from overcrowded shelters so they can continue looking for their forever home, says executive director Megan Flowers. The sanctuary's residents are cared for in part by volunteers—including those in local enrichment programs like the Maslow Project, which serves youth experiencing homelessness—who themselves benefit from spending time on the farm. “People who are often marginalized in our communities find a home here,” says Flowers.

In parts of the U.S., up to 25% of people experiencing homelessness have companion animals. Pets provide support, friendship and protection for their owners in need. Nonprofits like Feeding Pets of the Homeless help dynamic duos like this stay together.

