
Using barrier-free practices to get real results

— Even when you aren't very good
at marketing! —



A little background...

- SFC Virginia (Squishy Face Crew) is a **foster-based rescue** in Fredericksburg, VA.
- Our primary focus is on saving canines and felines in rural and underserved shelters in Virginia.
- 3 years old as of July 2022
- Average 150 animals in care at any given time
- Since time of formation, we have taken in **over 4100 animals** and have found adoptive homes for over 3800 of them so far (this year, we are averaging about 35 adoptions/week).
- 2 employees (director and foster manager). We currently have no one running our marketing and social media other than me! If we can still do this with me in charge of social media, so can you!

How can you be so bad at marketing and still help so many animals?

- Practice low-barrier, open, conversation-based adoptions.
- Offer same-day adoptions in almost all cases.
- Trust in and lean heavily on your foster parents to find adopters within a framework you've created that is fair, clear, and enforceable.
- Make your foster recruitment strategy and policies as open as your adoption policies. Your infrastructure needs to work together to create results.
- Set expectations from the beginning that **the goal is goodbye** and that you will ask for the foster parents' help and involvement in finding a new home.
- GET SEEN!

Promoting the Foster Program - Recruitment

WEBSITE + SIGN UP.

- a) Talk about fostering and foster parents all over your website!
- b) Clear link to sign up
- c) Why foster
- d) Expectations for foster parents/what we need from you
- e) Realistic timeline for fostering
- f) Who needs foster
- g) Basic application including contact information, what types of pets they're interested in fostering, home/family setup, other pets, and any relevant experience

<https://www.sfcva.org/foster.html>

*our foster contract is available in Spanish, but not our supporting materials - yet



Social Media Pleas



This post reached 9000+ people and had 700 engagements.

We received 16 foster applications over the following 72 hours, and sent 18 animals to foster on Wednesday 4/6

(bonus: they weren't all puppies!)



<https://www.facebook.com/squishyfacecrewva>

*make sure you crosspost to Instagram!

Foster Appreciation

(while simultaneously promoting the program!)



SFC Virginia

Published by Ryan Barker · February 7 ·



Today we'd like to honor our wonderful foster parent and integral part of sfc's TEAM CAT, Alyson of [Alyson's adoptables](#), for her role in saving Cabot from panleukopenia.


We have been fortunate not to see panleuk very often, a highly contagious illness similar to canine parvovirus that can certainly lead to death. Many shelters and rescues will euthanize at the first positive test, and this was actually the recommendation from our vet when he tested positive - however, when we asked Alyson if she would treat him at home, she didn't hesitate! Armed with our panleuk protocol and multiple days of meds and supplies for fluids and syringe feeding, she took on the challenge and we are happy to share that Cabot has made a complete recovery and is now in his forever home.

With only two of us who are dedicated to the rescue full time, it would be impossible for us to say YES to treating cases like Cabot without the help and hard work of our foster homes. Thank you to Alyson, and to all of the medical fosters who are critical to our ability to save lives!



Wishlist Wednesday

(while simultaneously
promoting the program!)

 **SFC Virginia**
Published by Alyson Edgecomb · January 8 · ...

PUPPIES ARE HERE! - at last count **54** of them - and we've exhausted our supply of puppy pads 🙄

Can you lend a paw?

📦 Send a box of 50 directly to our front door for \$24.99:
<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/33PFINSPASJ6F...>

🐾 Interested in fostering? Reach out via PM and complete our quick application:
www.sfcva.org/foster



Turn interested adopters into fosters (quickly)

This senior dog was in a foster-to-adopt home within 3 hours of posting.



SFC Virginia

about 2 weeks ago



A huge thank you to our friends at [Handsome Hound Pet Grooming](#) for coming to the rescue today! This little lady came in from a rescue partner this week looking pretty shabby, and they got her in right away and cleaned her up!

She is not available just yet, but stay tuned to our website (www.sfcva.org) for updates! If you need a pet groomer in the Fredericksburg area, make sure you check our Handsome Hound on Caroline St!



Other External Marketing/Recruiting

- Recruit fosters at open adoption events and community events- "foster" in your signage, signup sheets and business cards available.
- Foster flyers around community
- Turn former adopters into foster parents- include foster needs in weekly/monthly newsletters to former adopters.





SFC VIRGINIA ANIMAL RESCUE

WE ARE LOOKING FOR FOSTER PARENTS!

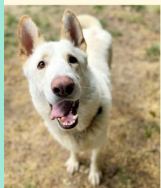
SFC Virginia is a foster-based rescue focused on saving dogs and cats in under-resourced shelters across Virginia.

We need your help TODAY to help pets in need! We provide supplies, training, vaccinations, treatments, and you get a volunteer Case Manager to assist you during your fostering journey.

FOSTERS NEEDED FOR PUPPIES, KITTENS, MOMS + BABIES, AND ADULT DOGS

Be part of our amazing team of volunteer foster parents, and help us save lives!

Sign up today at www.sfcva.org/foster or use our QR code below to get started!



sign up to foster



shop our wishlist!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

SFC VIRGINIA ANIMAL RESCUE

Our rescue started with 6 animal lovers, foster parents and volunteers, who had a vision and a dream to help homeless animals in our state.

SFC Virginia is a foster-based animal rescue group in Fredericksburg, VA. Founded in June 2019 with a focus on saving dogs and cats from rural and otherwise underserved shelters in the state, we strive to provide quality medical care including vaccinations and spay/neuter surgeries, and to find permanent adoptive homes in our area. Our goal is to make a positive contribution to the overall live release rate in Virginia and toward No-Kill Nation 2025.

2021 BY THE NUMBERS

1690 ADOPTIONS

1838 ANIMALS TAKEN IN FROM VA SHELTERS
OVER 200 FOSTER FAMILIES IN OUR NETWORK

FOSTER WITH US!



www.sfcva.org/foster

DONATE



venmo: @squishyfacecrew
paypal: paypal.me/sfcva

FOLLOW



@squishyfacecrewva

Quick Recap

- Make it easy to sign up to foster, and make sure they know it's easy! Include a link to the application or an email address on the physical post, no one is going to go out of their way to look for it.
 - Same-day foster signup and pickup, use your momentum to get people in the door ASAP.
 - Make sure to appreciate your fosters publicly (if they're into that!)
 - Clear photos, cute puppies/kittens, some sadder/harder cases all help engage your audience. Even if they can't foster, they might share/donate.
 - Talk about foster ALL THE TIME, even if fostering isn't the point of your post or your event.
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Part 2: Promoting Adoptions from Foster

Main Adoption Categories (based on Q1 numbers- 432 adoptions)

- Public Events: 45%
- Foster-Networked Adoptions: 25%
- M/G with Foster Parent from Public Application: 20%
- Foster Fails: 10%

Foster parents directly responsible for 55% of our adoptions!



Foster-Networked Adoptions (25%)

- Foster parents are your biggest asset in getting animals adopted. Wider and more diverse reach than the rescue itself ever will.
- Must make the process efficient and user friendly.
- Set expectations at or before pickup about expected length of time in foster and hope that they will post the pet on social media etc.
- Ensure you have clear deadlines for them to make decisions about foster failing and networking so we don't have hurt feelings or pets stalled in foster.

Trust your foster parents to make good decisions.

- Foster-networked adopters must apply like everyone else, but we rarely reject an adopter that the foster has met with/knows and recommends for adoption.
- Foster parents are often the harshest critics of the adopters!

How are fosters finding adopters?



Pictured: Ducky embarrassed to be seen at this impromptu donut meetup

- Social Media generally
- Local facebook groups and Nextdoor
- Foster-specific social media accounts/pages have helped many of our serial fosters to gather a “following” and very easily find adoptive homes for their foster pets.
 - @alysonsadoptables (FB/IG)
 - @laurens_fosterpaws (IG)
 - @breshike_foster_tails (IG)
- Bring pet around town/to pet-friendly workplaces
- Monthly social gatherings for fosters and adoptable pets in public places
- Encourage fosters helping fosters via sharing on our internal FB page
- If a foster parent has had an available animal longer than 6 weeks, we switch foster parents to give the pet a new audience

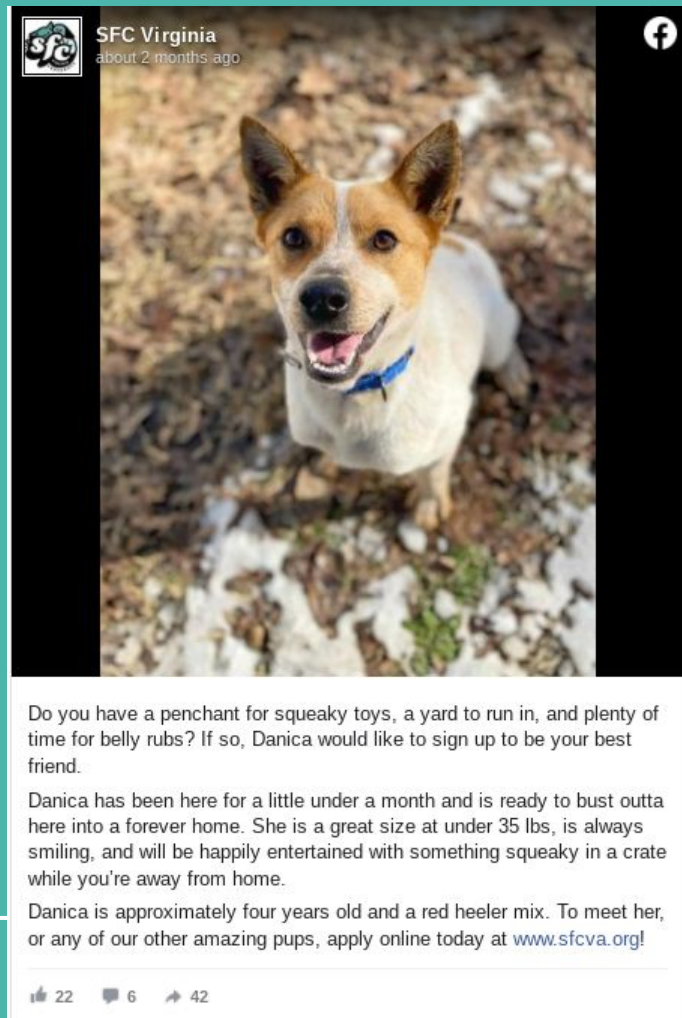
Helping the foster network - meet and greet with public application (20%)

Once the foster has indicated they do not intend to adopt or network, we place the pet up for public application.

- List pets online on multiple sources: your website, petfinder, adopt-a-pet, etc.
- Make your animals front and center on your website. You should be constantly linking people there on your social media, and they shouldn't have to hunt through multiple tabs to find the animals looking for homes.
- Our list of adoptable pets is on our homepage via a live listing from Shelterluv
- Social media - highlight one pet or a litter at a time with a link to the website to apply. Even if the pet you highlighted isn't of interest, they can easily see who else is in need. Make sure you include the link - no one is going to go looking for it.

Highlighting adult pets from foster

- We pick 1-3 adult animals that have been available for over a week to highlight on our pages each week.
- **Keep marketing separate from adoption counseling.**
- **The value of good, clear photos can not be overstated.**
- "Adoption marketing survey" google form to collect info from foster parents:
<https://forms.gle/sbFmvPHjmFqbUjIG8>
- Can also be used to collect simple info for bios/website profiles. Make sure you look over it to make sure the bio language matches your guidelines before posting.



Application Review

- Apps reviewed by volunteer case managers in a first come, first served manner and sent to foster parents 1-3 at a time.
- Review process is simple, mostly looking for appropriate fit and home/family setup and any major red flags. No home checks, no vet checks.
- Foster parents contact applicants and do meet and greet(s).
- Processing applications in this manner is the fairest way to avoid bias and efficiently get animals into homes so you can help more.
- Make sure that whoever is reviewing your applications has clear guidelines and belief in your process and commitment to low barrier, but appropriate, adoptions.



POST ADOPTION PHOTOS! We take photos of every adoption and I review those weekly. This is a super quick way to see if your process is working the way it should and figure out where the problem is should one arise. It's also one of our most popular weekly posts! **Your adopters should not all look the same.**

Open Adoption Events

(45%)

Sometimes, you just have to get animals out in front of the people.

- Have multiple event avenues to get your pets seen.
- Adoption process should be easy, allow same-day adoptions on the spot, takes credit cards, and enables you to move pets to forever homes NOW.
- We do Petsmart adoption events every weekend at two different locations.
- Go Live at your events!
- Partner with local Petco to have cats/kittens in cat condos (make sure if you do this that your adoption process is still efficient)

- Other useful types of events:
 - Fundraising events (and foster recruitment) outside of Target or Tractor Supply etc.
 - Community fairs/festivals
 - Pumpkin patches, street parades, partner with local breweries, etc.
 - Post the event list on your social media ahead of event, and add their attendance to their bio for Petfinder etc.
 - Highlight animals not in attendance/still in foster via some sort of signage, book, slide show on a tablet, laptop open to your website, etc.
 - Get your foster parents to come with their foster pet to the event, especially if they don't have an audience to help network on their own. No one is a bigger advocate than the foster parent.
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In summary...

Low-barrier, equitable foster recruitment + practices

+

A healthy amount of trust in and guidance of those foster parents

+

Low-barrier, equitable and efficient adoption practices

+

Even some basic, mediocre marketing efforts

=

RESULTS!

