



VERONA STREET NEWS

A Joint Publication of the Verona Street Animal Society & Rochester Animal Services

FALL 2013

Verona Street Animal Society, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that supports Rochester Animal Services.

The Play Yard at Rochester Animal Services

Two beautiful off-leash play areas for shelter dogs now reside on what was once a vacant lot adjacent to Brown Square Park thanks to a collaborative effort among Rochester Animal Services, Verona Street Animal Society and Eastman Kodak Company in a project that was spearheaded by Rochester Animal Services Director, Chris Fitzgerald and a committee of shelter volunteers.

Eastman Kodak, current owners of the property, granted RAS permission to construct the play yards on the lot. Verona Street Animal Society secured funding via a grant from national animal welfare leader, Animal Farm Foundation and with donations from the community that allowed the play yard construction project to be completed late this summer.

Building on the desire to maximize the use of the play yards, Verona Street Animal Society was also awarded a scholarship from Animal Farm Foundation to host Aimee Sadler, creator of Playing for Life!™ for a three day training session. The program incorporates using dog play groups as assessment, enrichment, training and an adoption enrichment tool.

On August 22 over 80 staff and volunteers from animal welfare agencies across the state joined us for a series of lectures and hands-on training workshops on how to implement play groups within their organizations. In the words of one long-time RAS volunteer who after attending the training said "Playing for Life!™ is going to revolutionize how we meet the needs of our dogs. We are going to save so many more lives now that we have Playing for Life!™ in our toolbox." In fact, data from private and municipal shelters across the county that have implemented the program speak to dramatically increased gains in their live release rates.

Coordinated and implemented primarily by RAS volunteers, play groups began immediately following Aimee's training. We are proud to join the ranks of the over 40+ other progressive animal welfare agencies who implement play groups into their day-to-day routine.

Playing for Life!™ has delivered on everything that it promised and so much more. We now have happier, less stressed dogs who present better in their kennels. This is a direct result of their positive experiences in play group and having their emotional and physical needs met. Our dogs are more amenable and receptive to training and behavior work which directly correlates to increased adoptions and better adoption placement matches. We now know more about each individual dog after observing them in play group, which provides us with valuable information that allows us to best support their individual needs.

The Play Yard at Rochester Animal Services has become a popular destination for potential adopters and curiosity seekers, too. Using social media as a tool to help expand the programs reach and appeal, the play group schedule is posted each week on our Facebook page where the public is invited to come out and see the dogs at play. With many people expressing hesitation about viewing animals in a shelter environment, The Play Yard at Rochester Animal Services provides us with yet another option to capture and engage potential adopters. So many of our recent adoptions have been the direct result of people visiting The Play Yard, seeing the dogs at play and envisioning what a future with them would actually look like.

We believe that The Play Yard and shelter dog play groups is fundamentally changing how the public perceives shelter pets; which in turn will allow us to save so many more lives. It truly has been a transformational experience.

If you are interested in learning more about shelter dog play groups at Rochester Animal Services, please like us on the Verona Street Animal Society Facebook page where you can see our weekly schedule, view photos and video from play group sessions and hear all about the daily success stories taking place at The Play Yard. If you are interested in providing a financial contribution to The Play Yard at Rochester Animal Services, please visit vsas.org.



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The Director's Cut

We are moving in the right direction. Live releases are increasing and euthanasia is declining. Last year was an all-time record for adoptions and, with the first quarter behind us, we are on track to achieve even greater success this year. The establishment of the play yards has definitely contributed to our adoption efforts and successes for dogs. October is recognized as Adopt A Dog Month and we offered 50% discounts on dog adoptions throughout the entire month. On October 12, we held another fee-waived adoption event to generate even more attention to adopting a shelter pet. On that one day we adopted out 46 cats and 18 dogs. We also ran our Halloween promotion offering 50% off on all cats with coats of orange, black, calico, and combinations thereof.

With the help of our Friends organization, the Verona Street Animal Society, we have been able to offer reduced cost and no-cost adoptions with greater frequency. Although we are aware of concerns by the general public and within the animal welfare community related to free pets, I believe the benefits outweigh the risks. The concern that waiving fees devalues an animal and concerns for the care provided to animals obtained at no cost have been refuted by research conducted by the ASPCA (Weiss, E. and S. Gramann. 2009. A Comparison of Attachment Levels of Adopters of Cats: Fee-Based Adoptions Versus Free Adoptions. Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, Vol. 12 Issue 4). We may have a couple of animals returned to the shelter within a few days of the fee-waived event, however the vast majority of pets adopted are remaining with those original adopters in a caring and loving environment. The returns generally get re-adopted within a few days.

Transfers are also on the rise and pose another area for helping to reduce euthanasia. Animal Services is working with dozens of local rescue organizations to get animals out of the shelter faster and increase their chances at placement into a new home. Most of those groups rely on foster homes to provide care for the animals that they receive. Once those foster homes are at their limits, the rescue group is no longer able to accept further transfers from the shelter. So, if you are interested in getting involved in saving lives, consider becoming a foster caregiver for one of the rescue organizations in our area. It is incredibly rewarding work knowing that you are saving the lives of each animal in your care while simultaneously helping the animals at the shelter that might otherwise not have a chance due to space limitations. That network of area humane and rescue organizations is critical to saving more lives. We are constantly looking to expand that network to incorporate additional organizations.

Intake numbers pose another area of concern and focus. The facility and operation were not designed to handle the roughly 6,000 cats and dogs entering our care every year. It is imperative that Animal Services only take custody of animals when no other alternatives exist. Most surrendered pets should not come to an open admission municipal shelter. There are a variety of resources available to assist pet owners with their pets' behavior, socialization, wellness, food expenses, spay and neuter surgeries, identification, and containment. If owned pets can be retained and assimilated into the home with these types of support services, then they will not occupy cage space at the animal shelter.

Feral cats are best addressed through Trap-Neuter-Return programs that include designated caretakers who monitor the colonies. Instead of dropping off feral cats at the shelter where no one will claim them, consider contacting an organization that works specifically on feral cat management. Our office can provide contact information for those organizations. The absence of the surrendered pets and feral cats translates to more room for the lost and injured ones. With fewer animals, we can devote more time and resources to each one and achieve even greater success in live releases.

We need your help. Adopt from Animal Services or from another local shelter or rescue organization. Spay and neuter your pets. Keep your pets up to date on rabies vaccinations and other immunizations. Ensure that your pet has appropriate identification so that your pet could be returned to you if lost. License your dog; it's the law and it serves as identification. Keep your cats indoors. Provide training and socialization for your dog; both will minimize the chances of your dog causing nuisances and posing a risk to public safety. Volunteer at the shelter or become a foster caregiver for Animal Services or one of our local rescue partners. Donate to Animal Services and to the Verona Street Animal Society. Please help us to save more lives and make Animal Services an example for other cities to emulate.

Happy Tails Story

I debated for many months about getting a dog. It was a big decision—one I wasn't sure I was quite ready for. And then one day I felt compelled to swing by the Rochester Animal Services Center to see who was available for adoption. They say you just know when you see the dog for you—but I was skeptical. Then I walked in and spotted Donald and something just clicked. I was still uncertain about adopting a dog so I put my name on his empty wait list (he had just arrived) and returned everyday to visit him for the next seven days. By day seven I knew I needed him in my life.

I couldn't have imagined how much joy this pup could bring to my life. Every morning I wake up eager to see him again. With his giant head, expressive eyes, and short little legs, Donald's charm is overwhelming. He has stolen the heart of not just myself, but also others, as he regularly graces my social media channels and is recognized on our daily walks. He's scrappy, feisty, intelligent, and sweet. He adores people as much as they adore him and he plays exceptionally well with all other dogs. We've only been together a couple short months but I've already forgotten what life was like without him.

Heather Saffer



KEEP YOUR DOG SAFE & LICENSED

City residents can apply for a dog license at the City Clerk's Office
30 Church St. Room 100A

QUESTIONS? Call 311
www.cityofrochester.com
Outside the City call
(585) 428-5990



Art: John Hawk

TO APPLY FOR A DOG LICENSE, CITY RESIDENTS CAN

- (1) Mail the following information to the address below:
 - A copy of the rabies certificate
 - Proof that dog was spayed or neutered
 - Check or money order for \$8.50 (spayed or neutered) or \$20.50 (not spayed or neutered)
 - Provide us with your name, address and telephone number

Or

- (2) Visit the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 30 Church Street, Room 100A with the information listed above



Thomas S. Richards, Mayor
City of Rochester, NY

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Have you adopted an animal from Rochester Animal Services? Tell us your story. You can submit your adoption story at [facebook.com/VeronaStAnimalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/VeronaStAnimalSociety) or email to AnimalServices@cityofrochester.gov.

Are you interested in helping us save lives?

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Questions? Call 311
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National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) launched National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week in 1996 in order to celebrate the work of small, local shelters that save the lives of thousands of animals each day.

During this week, the HSUS is asking everyone to take a closer look at the importance of their local shelter to their community and to the animals in it, the news source reports. From rescuing injured animals to controlling strays and feral cats, animal rescue organizations across the country enhance the lives of animals and people alike - especially when they can match a pet with its forever home.

According to the HSUS, there are about 3,500 animal shelters across the nation that care for the population of nearly 8 million homeless animals. In honor of this week, the organization is urging animal lovers to donate money or supplies to their local shelter or donate their time by way of volunteering. In addition, everyone can promote adoption to help more animals find the loving homes they deserve.

Rochester Animal Services takes in more than 5,800 animals per year with a goal of adopting out as many as possible. The shelter is supported by 26 full and part time staff and approximately 200 active volunteers. The team covers everything from veterinary care to cleaning to enrichment activities. Recently, The Play Yard at Rochester Animal Services was opened as a safe place for shelter dogs to interact off leash and learn proper social behaviors. This new play yard also provides a place for potential adopters to see their personalities in a more natural environment. These types of activities take the dedication of many people to make successful and save more lives.

For one week out of that year community members, animal lovers come together to celebrate their local shelter. National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week, November 3 -9, is the perfect time to recognize the organization in your community dedicated to animals. Here are ten ways to show shelters you care this week and throughout the year:

1. Adopt from a shelter
2. Spay and neuter your pets
3. Spread the word - like us on Facebook and share posts
4. Donate - monetary donations or from the wishlist
5. Share your success "Happy Tails" story
6. Volunteer
7. Foster a pet that is looking for a furever home
8. Participate in Fundraiser Events in your community
9. Be an animal advocate in your community
10. Say thank you - Had a good experience? Send a letter, card or e-mail to your local shelter and let them know you care.



National Adopt a Senior Pet Month

Puppies and kittens are cute but there are reasons to adopt older pets too. November is National Adopt a Senior Pet month, a good time to recognize the benefits of senior pets instead of passing over them because of their age.

Here are the top ten reasons for adopting a senior pet:

1. You know what you are getting - Senior pets won't be growing any more so you know exactly what size they will be. Their personalities are already formed so you know if they will be a good fit for your family.
2. They are easy to train - You CAN teach an old dog (and cat) new tricks. They have a better attention span and impulse control than younger animals that makes them easier to train.
3. Pets help keep you healthy - It has been proven that pets have psychological and physical health benefits for their owners.
4. They don't require as much time - They don't require constant monitoring like young cats and dogs.
5. They settle in well - They should already be house trained and litter box trained.
6. Well behaved - Older pets may already know basic household etiquette and won't scratch furniture or chew on shoes.
7. They like to relax - They are content to hang out and nap. They don't get bored if they don't play all the time.
8. Lots of love to give - When senior pets are adopted they seem to know they have been rescued and are all the more thankful.
9. You will save a life - Older pets are often the last to be adopted. When you adopt a senior pet you not only save them but open up a spot at the shelter for another animal.
10. They are cute too - One look from those big eyes and you know what we are talking about.



Pet Food Safety

Most people know that chocolate is toxic to dogs - but did you know that grapes are also very dangerous? Actually, there are quite a few surprising sweet and savory snacks that your pets should not eat. While the parents of big dogs like Labs and Leonbergers may not have to worry as much, it is wise to be cautious for dogs and cats of all sizes when it comes to toxic foods; with how much we love our pets, the risk is not worth the reward.

Here is a list of foods to keep your precious pets away from, with the ones noted **in red** being more dangerous than others:

- **chocolate** (darker chocolate = more toxic)
- **grapes and raisins** (highly dangerous, can cause renal failure)
- **onions, garlic, chives** (raw, cooked or powder)
- **macadamia nuts**
- **yeast dough** (expands in the stomach and can cause alcohol poisoning)
- **caffeine** (no cup-o-Joe for Fido)
- **persimmon, peach and plum pits** (contain cyanide)
- alcohol
- avocados
- gum & candy, especially with Xylitol
- salt (especially as found in homemade play dough)
- fat trimmings and cooked bones (raw bones are soft enough, won't splinter)
- raw meat and fish
- milk and dairy products
- sugary foods or too many treats (can cause obesity and diabetes)

While many of these foods are not deadly, they can certainly make your pet miserable. If you think your pet may have eaten something toxic and he or she is acting weird or showing symptoms such as weakness, lack of coordination, vomiting, diarrhea, bloat, etc., call your vet right away. Time may be of the essence to help your furry family member.

As we know, dogs - and sometimes cats - are not sensible enough to refrain from eating what is offered (and give you THAT FACE to try to get any morsel of whatever it is you are eating), so it is up to us humans to protect our pets' health. You may think that showering them in treats shows them how much you love them, but it may be doing more harm than good. Your pet will be just as happy - and let's face it, probably happier - with a scratch behind the ears and some loving words (ok, and one treat).

We know you love your pets dearly, so be sure to give them the longest, healthiest life possible.



Pedaling for Paws Spin Fundraiser

Calling all spinners!

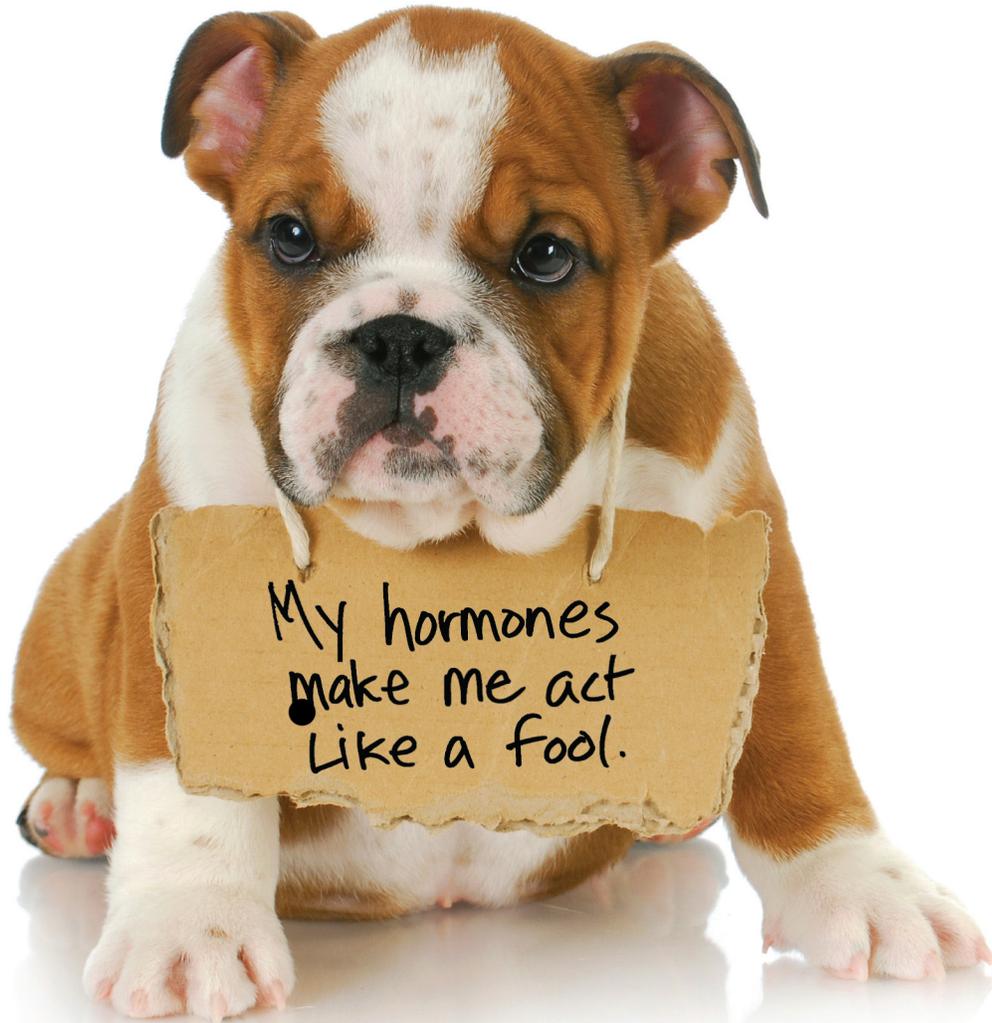
Verona Street Animal Society & Rochester Animal Services will be hosting the Pedaling for Paws Fundraiser on Sunday, December 8th beginning at 9:00 AM. This charity spin will be held at Studio Move at 16 Mendon Ionia Road in Mendon. Marti Casper of Fickle 93.3 will be leading classes of 10 through one hour of spinning. Our goal is to break the record of five hours of charity spinning this year!

The cost is \$20 per person per hour and 100% of that money is donated to VSAS. To sign up for your one hour slot, visit our Events page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VeronaStreetAnimalSociety and email diedrakirk@live.com

We will have some of our cute adoptable RAS animals, merchandise for sale and a wish list drop off as well. You can find our wishlist online at <http://bit.ly/RASdonate>

A big THANK YOU to Marti Casper for donating her time and to Chris Brush at Studio Move for donating the facility and bikes for this event.

Sign up to spin or just stop by to drop off a donation. All are welcome.



My hormones
make me act
like a fool.



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Call 428-SPAY

www.rochesteranimalservices.com

Outside the city call 428-5990



Thomas S. Richards, Mayor
City of Rochester, NY

Shelter Asilomar Stats

Start Date: 7/1/2013
 End Date: 9/30/2013

Annual Live Release Rate: 52.09%

The Annual Live Release Rate does not include 34 owner/guardian requested euthanasia which were unhealthy & untreatable and 23 dogs and cats that died or were lost in the shelter/care.

	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>Cats</u>	<u>Total</u>
A BEGINNING SHELTER COUNT 7/1/2013	73	83	156
INTAKE (Live Dogs & Cats Only)			
B From the Public	813	982	1795
C Incoming Transfers from Organizations within Community/Coalition	0	0	0
D Incoming Transfers from Organizations outside Community/Coalition	0	0	0
E From Owners/Guardians Requesting Euthanasia	46	21	67
F <i>Total Intake [B + C + D + E]</i>	859	1003	1862
G Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia (Unhealthy & Untreatable Only)	25	10	35
H <i>ADJUSTED TOTAL INTAKE [F minus G]</i>	834	993	1827
<hr/>			
I ADOPTIONS	247	292	539
J OUTGOING TRANSFERS to Organizations within Community/Coalition	48	124	172
K OUTGOING TRANSFERS to Organizations outside Community/Coalition	29	78	107
L RETURN TO OWNER/GUARDIAN	110	6	116
DOGS & CATS EUTHANIZED			
M Healthy (Includes Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia)	194	220	414
N Treatable - Rehabilitatable (Includes Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia)	106	214	320
O Treatable - Manageable (Includes Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia)	3	1	4
P Unhealthy & Untreatable (Includes Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia)	111	44	155
Q <i>Total Euthanasia [M + N + O + P]</i>	414	479	893
R Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia (Unhealthy & Untreatable Only)	24	10	34
S <i>ADJUSTED TOTAL EUTHANASIA [Q minus R]</i>	390	469	859
T <i>SUBTOTAL OUTCOMES [I + J + K + L + S]</i> <i>Excludes Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia (Unhealthy & Untreatable Only)</i>	824	969	1793
U DIED OR LOST IN SHELTER/CARE	7	16	23
V <i>TOTAL OUTCOMES [T + U]</i> <i>Excludes Owner/Guardian Requested Euthanasia (Unhealthy & Untreatable Only)</i>	831	985	1816
W ENDING SHELTER COUNT 9/30/2013 11:59:00 PM	76	91	167

Asilomar data enable all organizations that shelter animals to utilize uniform statistical recordkeeping and facilitate accurate comparisons. For more details, visit www.asilomaraccords.org. These statistics include numbers for dogs and cats only.

Rochester Animal Services temporarily houses approximately 6,000 animals annually. We are committed to reuniting owners with missing pets and to placing animals in new homes; however it is impossible to find homes for all of them. Some animals are euthanized due to illness or injury. Others may display vicious or aggressive behaviors. Sadly, many animals are euthanized because there are more stray and unwanted animals in our community than our space and resources will accommodate. We must all take responsibility to spay and neuter our pets and to encourage others to do the same. If the number of animal intakes declines, then we can devote more time and energy to those animals we do shelter, we can increase adoptions and redemptions, and reduce or eliminate unnecessary euthanasia.

President's Message

As we enter late fall, those of us looking at goals for the New Year have turned to year-end financial matters. As a non profit, VSAS can only accomplish as much as our funding allows and even though we are thrilled with the accomplishments so far, there is always more that can be done. With that in mind, we are looking for new ways for VSAS to expand its reach and fundraising potential.

On that to-do list is our first ever annual appeal that we are hoping shelter supporters embrace and as a qualifying charitable organization, that monetary donation is deductible when you itemize your tax return. Either a bank record or a written letter or receipt from VSAS is all you will need for your tax records.

Gift opportunities mentioned in this newsletter are another potential way to support the shelter and with the holidays fast approaching, it's an easy way to shop for gifts and feel good while doing it. But did you know that charitable giving can also be a very smart part of Estate Planning?



In addition to the altruistic and goodwill benefits of any charitable contribution, there are generally tax advantages for the donor. When deciding your estate-planning strategies, consider a charitable contribution option, which can help the charity of your choice while providing you with a steady stream of income and potential tax benefits. There are numerous options for setting up a charitable contribution in your estate plan. The easiest is a simple bequest through your will.

Trusts are also another common option and can be set up by a financial planner. One of the most common trusts is called a Charitable Remainder Trust or CRT.

A CRT is an irrevocable, tax-exempt trust in which you place assets to provide income for yourself during a specific period of time (i.e., your lifetime or a period not to exceed 20 years). After that, the remaining assets will be turned over to the charity of your choice. The trust can be funded with a wide assortment of assets, including bonds, mutual funds, stocks, and real estate. It offers flexibility, a lifetime income stream for you, and significant tax benefits to you and your heirs. Ultimately it may be even more beneficial for you than a simple bequest.

For instance, if you have an appreciated asset like real estate, and you sell the property yourself, you will likely pay a great deal in capital gains taxes. But if you transfer the property to a charity through a CRT, the trustee may be able to sell the property with no gift, estate, or capital gains taxes for the donor. The trustee can then set up an investment that will provide an income stream for you, which will be subject to ordinary income taxes and capital gains. At the death of the last beneficiary or the end of the trust period, the trust ends. The amount remaining in the trust is distributed to the named charity.

There are two types of CRTs: Annuity Trusts and Unitrusts. Annuity Trusts provide flexibility in payment options, a fixed income payout but do have some inflation risk meaning the fixed payout may not keep up with inflation rate. Unitrusts still offer flexibility in payment options, a variable income payout, but instead have market risk meaning variable payout can rise or fall with changing value of underlying assets.

Though a CRT may sound like the ideal choice for your charitable bequests and estate planning needs, you might also consider a Charitable Lead Trust. Unlike a CRT, a charitable lead trust allows you to place in trust assets that will be left to your heirs; however, you specify a set number of years during which a guaranteed amount or a fixed percentage of the value of the assets in the trust will be paid to a charity. You pay a discounted gift tax when transferring assets to the trust and the trust's beneficiaries ultimately receive any remaining trust assets free of estate taxes.

Then there are foundations. You can set up a foundation allowing systematic gifts to an area of special importance to you, the founder. Today, much of the transfer of wealth to charities includes contributions to existing private foundations.

Some Points to Remember:

- Charitable giving may help maximize your estate-planning strategies and are generally 100% deductible from estate taxes.
- A CRT offers flexibility, can provide income during your lifetime and significant tax benefits to you and your heirs.
- In a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT), you place assets in the trust and the trustee can sell the assets then set up an investment from which you receive income for a designated period of time. At the end of the period of time, the remaining assets go to your chosen charity.
- A CRT must be either an annuity trust or a unitrust.
- Income from an annuity trust is a fixed percentage of the initial fair market value of the assets.
- Income from a unitrust is a fixed percentage of the fair market value of the trust assets determined annually.
- Because CRTs are irrevocable, once established, you forego rights to any assets placed in the trust.
- Other charitable options include a charitable lead trust and private foundations.
- Talk to your financial planner or legal counsel to determine which options may be right for you.

We hoped this has demystified a potential way for you to make a tremendous impact without ever reaching into your wallet. As we gear up to move into 2014, we hope that you have a fulfilling holiday season and continue to support the causes that are closest to your hearts!

Jennifer Brown



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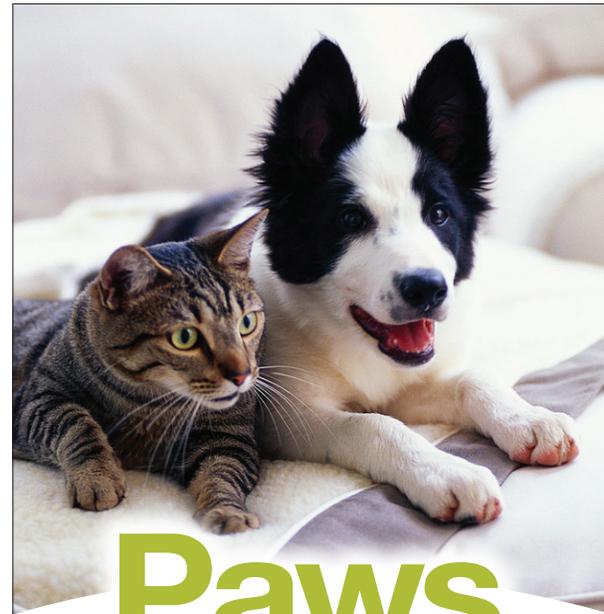


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Paws and think...

...about how you can help
 Rochester's furry friends:
 Adopt ■ Foster ■ Volunteer ■ Donate

The Verona Street Animal Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization that was established to raise funds and promote awareness for Rochester Animal Services. We can't succeed in this crucial mission without your support. Visit:

www.facebook.com/VeronaStAnimalSociety
www.VSAS.org



Questions? Call 311
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Rochester Animal Services (RAS) is owned and operated by the City of Rochester. The Verona Street Animal Society is a not-for-profit organization that provides resources necessary to enable RAS to more effectively serve the public's animal care and control, pet sterilization, and pet adoption interests and, in cooperation with the City of Rochester, supports the mission of RAS.

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