



Many Thanks!

We would like to thank everyone who donated to our November food drive!



OUR HOURS:

MON	7:30am-7:30pm
TUES	7:30am-6pm
WED	7:30am-7:30pm
THURS	7:30am-6pm
FRI	7:30am-6pm
SAT	8am-1pm
SUN	5pm-5:30pm**

**boarding pick ups and drop offs only

A warm heart and home: A Christmas rescue story

This is the kind of Christmas story I wish I could write for every stray, abandoned and abused animal shivering in the winter's cold. It is the kind of story that is too rare these days, which makes it all the more precious.

In mid-October, a small, shaggy dog found his way onto the farm of a woman named Helen. The little dog was disheveled and obviously frightened. Was he a lost dog? Did his family dump him out in the country to fend for himself? Had he been abused and run away? His past is unknown.

But Helen could see something beyond the fear in the little dog. A longing. A spark of hope.

"It's sad that this would happen to such a little guy," Helen said. "There's Bobcats around here. We saw one in the yard about

a year and a half ago." Helen put food out for the little dog, who appeared to be a Poodle mix. He would only eat if she kept her distance. So she did. None of the neighbors knew anything about him. She put food out and stepped away. Then, gradually, she stayed a little closer and talked softly to him.

"He was so frightened, I didn't know what else to do but to encourage him to eat," she said. "It took about three weeks before he would let me near and I could touch him."

Each day, the little dog, now named "Curly," learned to trust a little bit more. He began to follow Helen around and even stayed on the farm when Helen went to visit one of her daughters for three days. Then there was the inci-

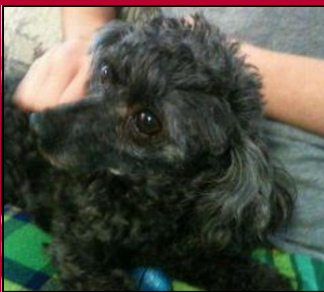
dent with Cocoa, the resident barn cat. Cocoa herself was a stray that found sanctuary with Helen.

"She knows how to take care of herself, she's very watchful," Helen said. It turned out Cocoa wasn't any too happy about meeting Curly face to face on a walk to the mailbox. She hissed and spit at him, then smacked him across the nose, which sent Curly running as fast as he could down the road.

Helen called for him, but he didn't look back. She waited and worried as it is a county highway. Hours later Curly returned that evening to Helen's relief. It would seem that Curly had decided he had a place to stay. There was a box on the porch with a blanket for him and he was settling in. By the end of October, Helen decided it was time for Curly to have a bath. Her oldest daughter



“From a shaggy stray to a house dog. A story with a happy ending for Christmas.”



Mary helped and Curly seemed to appreciate the extra attention--running around and "dancing" after his bath. He even let Mary rub his belly.

Curly tried to enter the house at every opportunity, but Helen had been brought up with outside animals. She would let him in for a bit, but he spent most of the days outside and slept in the bed on the porch at night. He began "talking" to Helen with little yips and yelps to get her attention.

By mid-November, the bed on the porch had moved to the basement with the anticipation of cold weather to come. "He knows when he has to go out and lets me know." The evening ritual included Curly jumping up on his side of "their chair" to get some snuggle time.

At Thanksgiving, Curly seemed comfortable with the family descending on the house, except for the big dog that accompanied a niece's boyfriend. Curly had met

several of them individually, so they were not all strangers for him. Though that evening, he yipped through the night from his bed in the basement.

A shopping trip for a new bowl and a dog crate the end of November gave Curly a place to sleep upstairs. Curly went right in when the crate door was opened, indicating he knew just what it was for and was comfortable with it. The crate stays in the laundry room, though Helen noted that he isn't always happy to go in at night.

"Curly is now my house dog," commented Helen.

"I've never had a pet in the house before."

An early December visit by two great grandchildren had Curly giving them kisses and relishing the attention, enduring being carried around in a blanket with a smile. He has accepted Helen's family as his own, a far cry from his early weeks, when he would move to a safe dis-

tance when someone strange to him would visit.

"He tickles me because he is wherever I am. He just looks at me with those big ol' eyes, now that he's been to the groomer and I can see them," she said. Helen's son Stan noted that Curly wags his tail harder when he's near Helen than with anyone else.

Helen grew up around animals. It's part of growing up on a farm. Dogs know the nature of a person. There's no doubt that this frightened little dog sensed he had finally found sanctuary back in October. Thanks to Helen's patience, he is able to trust humans again and is thriving once again as a beloved pet. Luck brought Curly to Helen's home. Compassion brought him shelter. Love anchors him and, the way Helen talks about him, warms both their hearts. And what better present is there at Christmas than love? A very Merry Christmas to Helen and Curly.

Pay attention to what your cats eats this holiday season

The holidays are approaching, which means you're probably busy with decorations and gifts. However, presents mean wrapping paper and ribbon which, if ingested, can cause your pet a world of hurt! If you suspect that your pet has consumed something abnormal, call us immediately at 540-552-6800.



Pets as Gifts: Good Intentions, Bad Idea

A puppy under the Christmas tree. A cute little bunny at Easter. Or maybe you just want to give an animal friend to someone you think needs one. People who give animals as gifts mean well, but their good intentions often misfire. Giving a pet as a gift is usually an ill-advised decision that can end tragically.

While it is true, pets bring us untold joy and wonderful companionship, they are a huge responsibility. People who receive a pet as a gift don't pay, but the gift is hardly free. It means a long-term commitment of time, money and energy that may exceed their abilities. Among the costs:

- Food
- Bedding and toys
- Veterinary care
- Grooming expenses
- Time to exercise, play with and train the animal
- Boarding or pet sitting costs

Some people don't want a pet at all, or perhaps don't want one now. For those who are ready, it is crucial he or she picks a pet out for herself to make sure it's a good fit. A poor fit can mean the animal is sent to a shelter or another home which is hard on the pet and on the person who received the animal as a gift. Some pets suffer loneliness and neglect when their novelty has worn off. This is often the case for [rabbits at Easter](#).

A successful adoption requires time and thought. Like a lot of gifts, animals can be impulse purchases. Pet adoption is more successful when you meet a few animals before finding the right match. Ideally adopters should research to learn what traits they want before visiting a shelter and making an important decision of choosing a pet.

A better gift

If you want to help a loved one get a pet, buy that person a gift certificate to use at a shelter when the time is right.

Pair the certificate with a gift basket filled with all the things a new pet will need: toys, collar, leash, treats, food and bedding, to name a few. You can also include books on training, breeds or living with a companion animal. Check out a pet supply store for endless ideas.



Angel Tree

This month we will have an Angel Tree up for the local shelter so that you can pick a dog to donate toys or treats to. Or even just buy food/supplies for them all to have!

Cinnamon Bun Bites (dog biscuits)

2 cups (500 mL) whole wheat flour
1 tsp. (5 mL) baking powder
1/4 tsp. (2 mL) salt
1/2 cup (125 mL) water or milk
1/4 cup (60 mL) canola oil
1 large egg
2 Tbsp. (30 mL) honey
1 tsp. (5 mL) cinnamon
1/4 cup (60 mL) finely chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)
Cream cheese drizzle (optional):
1/4 cup (60 mL) light cream cheese
1-2 Tbsp. (15-30 mL) milk or water



Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. In a small bowl stir together water, oil and egg. Add to the dry ingredients and stir just until you have a soft dough.

On a lightly floured surface, roll or pat the dough into a rectangle that measures roughly 8×14-inch. Drizzle with honey and sprinkle with cinnamon and nuts, if using. Starting from a long edge, roll up jelly-roll style and pinch the edge to seal. Using a sharp serrated knife or (even better) dental floss, slice half an inch thick and place slices cut side down on a cookie sheet that has been sprayed with nonstick spray. Bake for about 15 minutes, until springy to the touch. Wait until they have cooled completely before you spread them with cream cheese.

Makes about 2 dozen biscuits. Store extra in a tightly covered container or freeze. If they are frosted, store the container in the fridge.

Saturday Survey

We want your opinion! In an effort to decrease wait times on Saturdays we are brainstorming new ways to see our clients. What would you prefer?

- Schedule appointments and do not see walk-ins
- Continue seeing walk-ins only
- Schedule appointments and see walk-ins

Petly

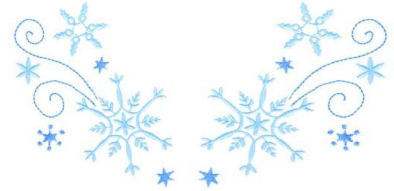
Some of you may have received an invite for our new Petly page. Petly is a personalized page for your pets that can only be seen by you. This page is a great source of information for you and your pet. You now have the ability to request appointments and prescriptions on your computer at your own convenience. You can also access your pet's vaccine due dates and print them out at home! Interested? All we need from you is an email address to get started! We have also started sending out email and text confirmations for appointments. Ask a receptionist if you have any questions!

Holiday Hours

Dec 24—CLOSE EARLY at 2pm

Dec 25—CLOSED all day

Jan 1—CLOSED all day



EMERGENCIES

If your pet has an emergency after hours, a vet is on call here until 10pm to answer your questions and help you decide if you need emergency care. If your pet needs to see a doctor you can go to the Vet School at VA Tech (540-231-4621, Town and Country (540-382-5042 or Emergency Veterinary Services of Roanoke (540-563-8575).

