

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

For those of you who feel that there is nothing you can do to help all the animals in need this holiday season, think about helping just one.

If you are home for the holidays and are planning on having quiet time with your family, consider fostering a sweet baby for the holidays.

When most volunteers, foster homes and shelters are overwhelmed, you can offer one



homeless pet a temporary home for the Holidays. Consider opening your heart and home to a lonely pet this holiday season.

Friends of the Animal Shelter of St. Bernard (FOAS) will be coordinating Home for the Holidays 2011 with the St. Bernard Animal Control Services.

Starting December 1st and running through the new year, individuals will have the opportunity to take some of our wonderful pets home and let them romp and play.

For information please contact our Foster Coordinator, Amanda Hardesty at Foser@StBernardFOAS.org.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- December 10th ~ Offsite Adoption Event Petco on the West Bank. 11:00 am—3:00pm
- December 14th ~ Wednesday ~ Local FOAS Meeting and Christmas Pot Luck. Council Chambers Conference Room ~ Govt. Complex ~ Chalmette 6:00pm ~ 8:00pm. Bring a dish and see how you can help animals in St. Bernard.
- December 17th ~ Offsite Adoption Event ~ Operation Candyland Chalmette ~ Sigur Center ~ 11:00am—6:00pm

ADOPTION SPOTLIGHT

By Erin Hall

Zoa Kile and Kristin Andrews had never met each other. Zoa had been to the New Orleans area only once before and Kristin has never visited, to this day. But an emaciated bulldog/pitbull mix dubbed "Violet," found outside a gutted church in an area of St. Bernard Parish still struggling to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina, would impact both of their lives in ways they couldn't have imagined.

Zoa made a trip to St. Bernard in May of 2010 with a group from First United Methodist Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It was the latest of two dozen trips the church had sponsored to the region to provide support after the devastation of Katrina. The group's work this trip was focused on the First Church of God in Christ in Violet. "The church had not been open since Katrina and the area badly needed a good stabling influence," Zoa said. Before embarking on her trip, Zoa had considered that she might find a dog in need of help. "One morning when we arrived for our day's work, there she was, walking up to the church as we pulled in," she said. "She was rail thin, but wagging. She had very soft eyes, despite her abuse--or at the very least, lack of proper care--so even though she was some kind of bully breed, I did not sense any aggression or even fear in her."

Zoa and other "dog lovers" in the group gathered around the emaciated dog, who happily accepted the attention and affection, even angling her way into a few laps. "We unloaded the food truck and found the first thing that she might be able to eat--a cup of applesauce--and gave it to her," Zoa said. Employees at the church speculated that the dog might be owned by a man in the neighborhood, but her condition prompted Zoa to reach out for help from the St. Bernard Parish Animal Shelter. "I was not considering taking her home at that time, but would have preferred seeing her properly cared for at a shelter--even if it meant she would eventually be euthanized--than to see her go back to her 'home'," she said.

Zoa had some experience in the animal rescue field, having fostered dogs for a rescue group in her hometown of Lancaster, so she understood that as a "pit bull type dog" or "pit bull mix," Violet would have very little chance of adoption in New Orleans and perhaps just as little in Lancaster, where shelters and rescues are also overrun with bully breeds. "I was satisfied that we had done the best we could when the shelter promptly came and picked her up," Zoa said. "But as our drywall work started for the day, different people started coming up to me and saying 'well, what if we could get her on the plane coming home with us?'" They checked things out and unfortunately that wasn't a possibility. Someone else offered the foster the dog if only she could be transported to Lancaster. With the scarcity of foster homes, it was a tempting offer. Zoa started by calling the shelter, who assured her that Violet was eating well and had a great personality and would be taken care of, but they unfortunately had few resources or leads on how to transport her to Pennsylvania. Two days later, Zoa arrived home and began calling and emailing other rescue workers and volunteers, trying desperately to find a way to get Violet on a transport. "I tried the pilot's group that flies rescued dogs to foster homes, and I tried the rescue group that originally formed when Katrina hit and help was needed to get dogs to safety," she said. "Everyone was helpful, and gave me new leads, so finally I got the name



and email of Anita Campbell, a lover of the bully breeds and someone who had contacts in the south."

"Anita put out the plea to get Violet to Lancaster, my friend from the mission trip was still willing to foster, and people began signing up via email to help get Violet up here," Zoa said. "Her transport took place over the course of two weeks, with the first part getting her from Louisiana to Tennessee. A volunteer fostered her for a week, then the following weekend she made it the rest of the way to Lancaster." Violet had put on some weight and was a healthy, happy dog. Her personality was just as wonderful as it had been in Louisiana and her foster mother loved her company, but could not commit to adopting due to work demands on her time. "We put her on our local rescue website, and since she looked enough like a bulldog mix, we added that to her breed description," Zoa said. "That was what attracted her future mom -- Violet looked a lot like her existing dog, an American bulldog."

This is where Kristin Andrews enters our story. She happened upon Violet on the petfinder.com website, unaware at first of her long journey and elaborate backstory. "I was doing a search for American Bulldogs because I already have one and love the breed," she said. "I heard her story afterwards from Zoa, who sent me pictures of what she looked like when she was found. I couldn't believe how skinny she was, but she looked like such a friendly, playful dog who would fit in great with our family."

Aside from the resemblance to her beloved American Bulldog Brody, the most eye-catching (pardon the pun) thing Kristin saw in Violet was her unique eye color. Her left eye is brown while her right is a crystal blue, almost white (Kristin often wonders if her vision is slightly impaired as she "sometimes chases things that aren't there and can walk right by a rabbit without seeing it"). After seeing her pictures and hearing her story, Kristin was excited to meet Violet. "I was a little curious to see how well she got along with other dogs and strangers considering how much she had been neglected," she said. "When Zoa brought her to the house, she ran right in and sniffed our dogs. She was not scared at all. I knew she would be a good fit."

Violet fit in with the pack from day one. "She curled right up to my dog to sleep at night and sat right next to us while we were relaxing and watching television," she said. "She loved going to the dog park and got along great with other dogs. Within the first month, we took her along to Myrtle Beach, which she loved. She went crazy splashing in the waves!" It was an instant connection for Violet and Brody as well. "There was no jealousy between the dogs whatsoever. They cry if we take just one of them outside at a time. They even protect each other when we go to the dog park if another dog gets a little rough."

While the name Violet may have been a perfect fit for part of her journey, it became clear to Kristin quickly that her new dog had quite the gift for gab (read: a serious barker!) and hence her name became Gabby. "The barking started the first day we brought her home. She would bark at the other dogs to get them to play. Then several weeks after she came to live with us she barked at everything!" Kristin said. "I think that's when she felt comfortable

enough to claim the house as hers. She barks at anyone walking by the house, walking outside the car, some dogs, and when she wants to play." And make no mistake, a day in the life of Gabby revolves around play! Kristin says she is happy from the very first moments of the morning. "Her tail wags super fast and hits anything around her. She plays with Brody as well as my parents' and sister's dogs when we get together. She loves to play catch...only she doesn't bring the ball back, she wants to be chased!" she said. "We take her to the dog park several times a week to run the energy out of her, otherwise she runs laps around the house and yard. She loves to go on walks where she can sniff stuff, especially on trails. She will play with anything that can fit in her mouth. When she is feeling lazy she will chew an entire rawhide bone."

Having purchased Brody from a breeder, this was Kristin's first experience with adoption. "I got Brody from a breeder when he was a year old. He was afraid of everything and everyone. I think that he had been locked up that entire year because he was a left over pup," she said. "Even though I got him from a breeder, I feel like I adopted him. I knew I wanted to help another dog the same way, so I started looking on petfinder.com and got lucky." Kristin felt that Gabby's young age and adaptability were key in helping her fit into her new family and routine so well. "I would totally recommend adopting to anyone looking for a dog. There are dogs of all ages who need homes and the money you pay goes back into the shelters/rescues instead of into someone's pocket. If I ever want another dog in the future, I would adopt again."

So there you have it. The story of Violet. One of the millions of street dogs found wandering hungry, weak and lonely in America every day. With the help of many kind souls and dedicated animal rescue workers, she got a happy ending. May we remember her on days when the load seems too heavy to carry and the problems of overpopulation and abuse look insurmountable. In the eyes of every shelter dog is a Violet, dreaming of a warm, loving home and a family to call their own. Together, we can make that a reality.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: CINDY PERRINO

By Erin Hall

Ten days after losing her beloved dog Sam, Cindy Perrino was headed to a salon near her uptown New Orleans home when she passed a St. Bernard Parish Animal Shelter offsite adoption event at a Petco store. She spotted a dog with a monstrous head and an even bigger smile. His name was Mike and it was love at first sight. She was told, however, that Mike was part of a package deal. He had to be adopted with his brother--a similarly blockheaded boy named Ike--as the shelter refused to separate them. "To make a long story short, we ended up adopting two pit mixes and I never did get my eyebrows waxed that day," she said. She began volunteering with the shelter after adopting her boys (her first time volunteering with an official animal rescue organization) and has been an active part of the offsite program for the three years since. "I wanted to give back to the shelter since those dogs have given my husband and I so much since we adopted them," she shared.

Cindy's day job differs drastically from the world of animal rescue, which is maybe why she is so drawn to it. "I work in a high stress environment for a Fortune 500 company with 135 employees here in New Orleans," she said. "Honestly, I feel that volunteering for the shelter benefits me more than it does the animals. Selfishly, it is the best feeling in the world helping in some small way to bring a poor, homeless animal together with a loving family



and perhaps even saving it's life in the process. The dogs ask so little, really, just a kind word, food, shelter and maybe some fierce belly-rubbing, but they give unparalleled loyalty, trust and so much more in return."

Having participated in so many adoption events, Cindy has scores of memories to share and "so many of the past dogs stand out -- for better or worse." "There's Corbin, the pit/lab mix that just couldn't find the right fit in a forever home...Shockey, the enormous Mastiff mix that knocked me into his crate while I was cleaning it and almost had his way with me...Countless adorable puppies...yappy "purse" dogs...dopey hounds...the senior citizen dogs...I could go on and on but each one has touched me in some way," she said.

Even with her hectic work schedule, Cindy spends multiple weekends a month at offsite adoption events. When asked if she would encourage others to volunteer, her response was "absolutely." "For giving up a small amount of time, the benefits that you can reap are limitless - from the peace of mind you feel knowing that you have made a difference in a creature's life, to making friends with similar interests to the satisfaction of helping to educate people about animal issues," she said. In the future, Cindy would love to see the educational aspect of animal welfare become a greater focus for the shelter, both in targeted efforts for school-aged children and broader programs for all parish residents. "While shelters are havens that address the animals'

SPOTLIGHT ON ST. BERNARD SHELTER

The late Joan Elizabeth Manzella who spent most of her life in Chalmette left her entire estate – more than \$400,000 to the St. Bernard Parish Animal Services Department. St. Bernard Parish President Craig P. Taffaro and Animal Services Director Beth Brewster met with attorney Al Perry and Manzella's cousin Josephine Carderera to sign the papers and accept the donation.

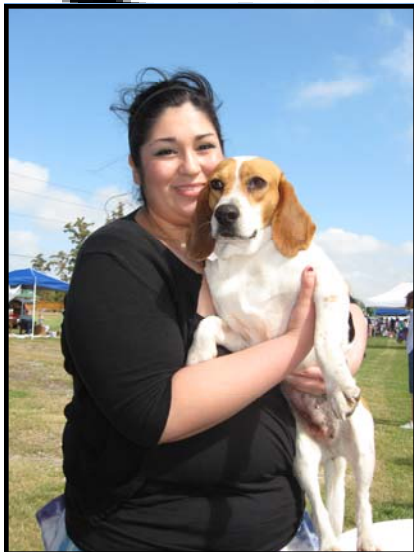
"Her dedication and love of animals and the Animal Shelter has resulted in a donation of over \$400,000 to the animal shelter which will go a long way to helping with some capital improvements," Taffaro said. "We are so grateful to Ms. Manzella for her generosity and for her love of animals."

"That was her wish, for all of it to go to the Animal Shelter," Carderera said. "She loved poodles all her life."

"Ms. Manzella's overwhelming generosity will literally save lives," said Beth Brewster. "As a true advocate for animals, Ms. Manzella's legacy will be remembered in each pet we place in a new home. Not only will it benefit hundreds of unwanted, homeless, and abandoned animals in our parish, Ms. Manzella's generous gift will enable the St. Bernard Parish Animal Shelter to build a play area for our cats. If our animals could speak, you would hear a chorus of thank you's. Ms. Manzella is truly an advocate for the voiceless, and this gift will benefit the hundreds of animals we care for annually."



PAWS IN THE PARK 2011 ~ THE EVENT ~ OUR ADOPTIONS



A FOAS THANK YOU!

As FOAS comes to the end of 2011, the goal of bringing FOAS back to St. Bernard will become a reality January 1, 2012. Our new Board of Directors is beginning the transition into their new positions. As an organization we want to thank some of our members that played an important role in helping FOAS survive post Katrina.

Sonja Hric Grabel: What can we say, but Thank You. After 15 years of service to FOAS, with these last years leading our organization from 1,500 miles away, you have brought us to one of the best positions we have ever been in. We wish you luck as you embark on new adventures.

Allyson Lapari: How many pets have found Forever Homes because of you? How many people found the perfect pet because of you? How many people made the right decision, even if that decision was accepting the fact that adoption was not the correct option? Too many to count. We are looking forward to your leadership this year.

Christiane Biagi: Without your dedication, abilities and resources so many pets would have never found their way home. Thank you for all of your hard work. We are so happy to have you remaining as our Lost and Found Coordinator, Grant Writer and plain out Miracle Worker!

Susan Bongiorno: Thank you for being our scale of reason. Thank you for your time, talents and ability to see both sides of the problem and always have the solution. We are thankful that you are with us for another year serving as our Treasurer.

Tracey Cannon: For so long you bore all the weight of everything that needed to happen locally. All of our successful events were because of you. Thank you for your dedication to the animals of St. Bernard.

Our Volunteers: There are so many of you that we could not list all by name. But you know who you are. The ones that show up at off-sites time and time again to help get our animals adopted. The ones that set-up tables and tents. The ones that load and unload animals from the van. The ones that happily pick up the poop. The ones that always have time for one more dog walk, one more tummy rub, one more pat on the head... we thank you, the animals thank you.

THANK YOU DONOVAN!

By Beth Brewster

BIG HEART, BIG SMILE, GREAT YOUNG MAN!



Donovan Thomas

*"So shines a good deed
in a weary world"
Willy Wonka*

This amazing 8 year old, Donovan Thomas, recently donated dog food, cat food dog treats and several other much needed items to the St. Bernard Parish Animal Services.

Donovan and his family found a stray over a year ago and could not keep him., so they had to bring him to the animal shelter. Donovan felt very sorry for all the animals he saw in cages and in-need of good homes.

Ever since, Donovan had an empty feeling in his heart for the animals at the shelter that deserve so much more. His love and determination would not allow this feeling to go away.

So Donovan told all his family and friends, that in addition to his birthday presents, he also wanted food and other animal care items that he could donate to the St. Bernard Parish Animal Shelter.

His wish was granted and on Monday, September 19th, this well mannered, happy, caring young man walked through the doors with all that was donated.



2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS	2012 COORDINATORS
Allyson Lipari, President Email: President@StBernardFOAS.org	Chris Munoz, Membership Coordinator Email: Membership@StBernardFOAS.org
David Ryan, Vice President Email: VP@StBernardFOAS.org	Charlotte Luna, Offsite Adoption Coordinator Email: Adoption@StBernardFOAS.org
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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please choose level of membership.

- 10.00 Includes bimonthly
- 25.00 Includes bimonthly newsletter, car magnet, membership card, and reusable shopping bag
- 45.00 Includes bimonthly newsletter, 2 car magnets, 2 membership cards, and 2 reusable shopping bags

Business/Corporate:

- 100.00 Includes a certificate, link to your webpage from ours, and mention in our bimonthly newsletter

Optional:

Separate and apart from the membership dues listed above, I would like to donate additional funds to help Friends of the Animal Shelter and St. Bernard Parish Animal Control in their vital work for all the abused, homeless, and unwanted pets in the Parish by my further contribution of \$_____. I understand that any donation will be used exclusively to benefit abused, homeless, and unwanted pets in St. Bernard Parish:

- SNIP/CatsNIP Second Chance (medical fund) ARF (Senior Adoptions)
 Shelter Needs and Projects Education General Fund

As a 501(c)(3) public charity, donations to Friends' programs are tax deductible.

(To pay by credit card or to become a monthly Kennel Club donor, please sign-up online at www.StBernardFOAS.org)

- Check Cash Check here if a receipt is needed.

\$
Total

Name

Address

Phone(s)

E-mail address - This helps us go Green!

Check here if we can contact you for help with volunteer or fundraising activities. Please indicate the areas that interest you.

- Photographing Adoptable Animals Spay/Neuter Programs Adoption Events
 Fundraising/Event Planning Newsletter Education
 Feral Cat Programs Fostering Clerical/paperwork

PO Box 933
Chalmette, LA 70044
Make checks payable to: FOAS

E-mail:
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Happy Holidays

Appointments with Patrick
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NEW MEMBERS

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Linda Stowell Lopez

FOAS
Post Office Box 933
Chalmette, Louisiana 70044

Email:
Membership@StBernardFOAS.org

Founded in 1998 as an auxiliary to the St. Bernard Parish Shelter, Friends of the Animal Shelter of St. Bernard (FOAS) is dedicated to improving conditions at the Shelter, improving the quality of life of sheltered animals, and reducing euthanasia of animals in the Parish by increasing spay and neuter, educating the public, providing basic health care for sick or injured shelter animals, increasing adoptions, and reuniting lost animals with their families. FOAS is an all volunteer organization and 100% of donations are used to support our efforts.



**From all of us
to all of you
Happy Holidays**

SPECIAL THANKS



"From Discovery Through Trial"

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***Do not pity a shelter
dog... Adopt One!***