

Fur babies, up for adoption

SONOMA COUNTY »

Some have been waiting over 200 days in shelters

By **KATHLEEN COATES**
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

A rambunctious 9-year-old pit bull mix named Adela arrived at the Humane Society of Sonoma County about five months ago.

Despite her adoption fees being sponsored, she still hasn't found a home.

Adela isn't the only animal who has remained at this shelter for an extended period of



Tigger waits for a home Thursday in the Humane Society of Sonoma County in Healdsburg.

time.

So far this year, the two Humane Society shelters in Santa Rosa and Healdsburg have taken in 472 strays and 213 animals

dropped off by their owners for a variety of reasons.

The Sonoma County Animal Services shelter takes in about 2,500 animals a year, which is a 60%/40% split between strays and surrenders. While most animals are cared for by the shelter for about 16-28 days, others take longer to be adopted, especially if they are ill or have behavior issues, according to operations manager Brian Whipple.

Currently the Animal Services shelter has seven animals that have been there for a long

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PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER CHUNG / THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Adela, a 9-year-old pit bull mix, ready for adoption, snuggles up to animal care technician Jennifer Lynch at the Humane Society of Sonoma County facility in Healdsburg on Thursday.

ADOPTION

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period of time, from 100 to almost 200 days.

Sonoma County Animal Services does not euthanize animals for space, unless there is a public safety issue or an extreme medical case, Whipple said.

The Humane Society shelters have an intake department that looks around for other animals, even as far as Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"We're looking for animals that might have had a hard time being placed. We save them when they are about to be euthanized," said Kelly Olsen, marketing and communications manager for the Humane Society of Sonoma County.

It's not always a good idea to give a puppy or another animal for Christmas or any other holiday.

The best advice: Make absolutely sure they are wanted and "everyone in the house agrees" before you give someone a pet as a present. That's ideal for everyone involved, according to Olsen.

"It's best to not surprise people, even children. We try to discourage that. When I was a little kid, my parents gave me a dog and they ended up having to feed it," Olsen said. "You also have to take into consideration whether you'll be traveling or having guests in your home. That's not always the best environment for an adopted animal."

That said, under the right conditions, a pet can be a great addition to the family during the holidays.

When prospective pet parents go into a shelter to adopt a pet, adoption counselors will tell them all about the animals and find out if they would be a good fit. Then they arrange for an interview. Potential adopters must wear a mask. Here are some of the animals waiting for a new forever home.

Humane Society Shelter of Sonoma County

Adela at Healdsburg location: Adela, 9, doesn't act like the senior she is. She has puppy energy. She is a white and tan mixed



Adela



Tigger



Sterling



Lupo



Bobby

breed pit bull who is very cute and "a total sweetie pie," Olsen said. She has been at the shelter for 170 days, and was transferred from a shelter in Los Angeles County. "She loves people, she loves playing and she's going to be a great pet for somebody," said Olsen. Her adoption fees are being sponsored by volunteers who want her to get a good home.

Go to bit.ly/3IVUCJ1 and search for Adela for more information and pictures.

Tigger at Healdsburg location: A brown and white tabby, Tigger is "very cute" and a sweet cat, Olsen said. She has been at the shelter for 146 days — the longest of any cat. She loves affection and lights up when someone comes into her habitat. Tigger, 8, has feline immunodeficiency virus, which weakens her immune system, and has kidney disease. She was found as a stray in Solano County and transferred to the Santa Rosa shelter.

While she has a good life ahead, it's a matter of finding someone who is OK with adopting a cat that needs medication, Olsen said. Volunteers loved her so much that they are sponsoring (paying) her adoption fees.

Go to bit.ly/3Fbulyz and search for Tigger for more information and pictures.

Octavia and Peggy at Santa Rosa location: Octavia, 7, and Peggy, 5, are terrier mixes who are a bonded pair. They were part of a group of 12 rescued from a hoarding situation. They have been at the shelter for 200 days and are the last of that group. They came in terrified and shut down, but "when you're their person, they



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF SONOMA COUNTY

Peggy and Octavia are terrier mixes who are a bonded pair at the Humane Society's Santa Rosa location. They were rescued from a hoarding situation and are the last ones of that group left, having been at the shelter for more than 200 days.

jump all over you," Olsen said. "Once they get comfortable, they are hilarious and full of confidence," Olsen said. "They play together and are an adorable duo."

Go to bit.ly/3qcvuoW and search for Octavia and Peggy for more information and photos.

Sterling: Gray tabby Sterling, who is 9 years and 5 months old, was a stray from Stockton. "He is very affectionate, cuddly and a complete lap cat," Olsen said. He's been at the shelter for 157 days. Sterling's trouble is that he has chronic rhinitis, so he sneezes a lot, Olsen said. "He seems sick but he's actually very OK." He also is FIV positive, but he can still live a good life for many years. He was initially thought to be a girl, and was named Starla. Voilà, once he was neutered, his name was changed.

Anyone who is interested in adopting may call the

adoptions desk at 707-542-0882 in Santa Rosa or 707-431-3386 in Healdsburg.

Sonoma County Animal Services

The Santa Rosa-based shelter takes in about 2,500 animals a year. They care of a 60-40% mix of strays versus surrenders, according to Whipple, the operations manager.

He reminded animal lovers to keep poisonous poinsettias away from animals this time of the year. He also emphasized the need to make sure you are ready to make a lifelong commitment to your adopted pet, whether it be holiday time or any other time of the year.

Whipple also said be careful when baking that your dog doesn't snatch a baked goodie off the counter.

Animals were whisked away on a regular basis during the pandemic, but now there is a definite need for more adopters, he said.

"The kennels are filling up again," Whipple said.

The shelter is in need of blankets, bully sticks, all kinds of toys. Whipple favors enrichment toys for both dogs and cats that challenges the animals, such as something with treats inside that they have to push around. "Anything that is somewhat indestructible and can take some hard work" on the part of the animals.

"We take in just about anything folks give us and find a way to use it," he said.

Lupo: Lupo, a lost dog picked up on the streets, is a white and gray Siberian husky who has been at the shelter since June 1. He's about a year-and-a-half old. He is no longer as shy as he once was since the staff "lovingly, carefully and adorably worked with him to earn his trust," according to his biography. Lupo now practices zoomies (an explosion of energy) in the

ANIMAL SHELTERS BY THE NUMBERS

Humane Society of Sonoma County

■ In 2021, Santa Rosa and Healdsburg shelters have taken in 472 strays and 213 animal surrenders. They take in an average of 1,465 per year (average over three years) — 455 strays and 241 surrenders.

The Santa Rosa shelter takes in animals from Sebastopol and Sonoma County Animal Services takes in animals from Santa Rosa.

Sonoma County Animal Services

■ Takes in an average of 2,500 animals per year, with a 60%-40% split between strays and surrenders.

afternoon sun. He loves other dogs and is in need of someone who works magic with shy dogs.

Visit his webpage at bit.ly/3IUvJSO.

Bobby: Bobby has been in at the shelter since early September — more than 100 days. This handsome black domestic short-hair cat is 8 years old and was adopted from the shelter as a kitten. Since being back in the shelter's care, Animal Services employees and volunteers have found Bobby to be a nice, quiet and mellow guy. He loves getting his chin scratched while he purrs away. He can be a little shy when first meeting but once he gets to know you, he's an absolute sweetheart, they say. Bobby is on a special diet for his kidneys.

You can find Bobby at: bit.ly/3E6dZvg

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