

# FRIENDS OF SITKA ANIMAL SHELTER



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YEAR

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DEDICATIONS

THANK YOU'S





# HAPPY PAW-LIDAYS

*from Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter*



From all of the people and pets at Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter, we'd like to wish you a very merry holiday season! Whether you've been with us since day one, or you're just now joining, we thank you so much for being here.

Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter (FOSAS) formed with the goal of providing support to the city-run shelter and increasing their capacity to be able to offer more services and education to the community. In just two short years, our organization has grown and evolved into so much more than we ever anticipated. In the absence of an Animal Control Officer from July 2022 to June 2023, FOSAS stepped in to keep the shelter running. We coordinated volunteers, facilitated intakes and adoptions, transported animals to appointments and ensured that the animals at the shelter received the highest quality care during their stay, however short or long that might be.

While we had to put some of our organizational goals on hold during this time, we still managed to accomplish quite a bit! We hope you enjoy our Paw Print Newsletter and reading about the many successes we've had throughout the year - successes that wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of many individuals, businesses and organizations, near and far.

If you're receiving this newsletter, you're one of those people that has supported us and believed in us, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We look forward to continuing to grow as an organization and be able to offer even more services and support to the people and pets of Sitka for many years to come.



Woof! Meow!

FOSAS Board of Directors  
Kristina Tirman  
Rhea Ehresmann  
Dusty Kidd  
Susan Jones  
Evanne Kegley  
Claire Turner

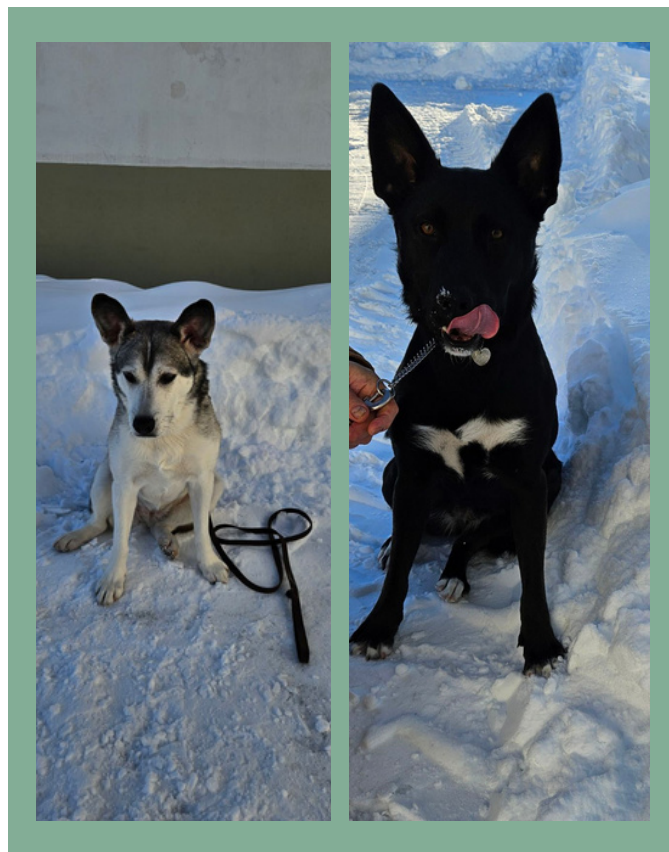


## Highlights from the Year

### *Giving Shelter Dogs a Second Chance*

A great support for FOSAS and the animals in our charge is the Shelter Pet Obedience Program (SPOT) at the Spring Creek Correctional Facility in Seward, which accepts selected problem dogs from shelters to rehabilitate and train, with the objective of making them suitable for adoption by families in Alaska's communities. Fortunately for FOSAS (and the animals), SPOT generously accepted three shelter dogs whose future might otherwise have led to euthanasia.

Our most recent placement was Xoodzi, a lovely young Husky mix with some nipping history and dog reactivity, making her difficult to place with a Sitka family. While shelter volunteers cared for and walked her, FOSAS also sponsored her veterinary care, and then underwrote her trip to Anchorage. We are happy to report Xoodzi is doing well, paired with an inmate who provides her with a place to sleep, food, water, exercise, one-on-one training, and, most importantly, the love shared between them. Xoodzi also has made a best friend, Echo, another former Sitka Animal Shelter dog that is also going through the program. In no time we expect to hear that both Xoodzi and Echo have been adopted, joining the other Sitka Animal Shelter dog who has successfully graduated from the SPOT program!



### *Strumming for the Shelter*

Members of the Sitka Ukulele group, known as Pointy and the Birds, were out this past summer "busking", while tourists flooded Lincoln Street. Did you happen to hear them? If you are not familiar with the term "busking" it is defined as: The activity of playing music in the street or another public place for voluntary donations. The Ukes brought lots of joy and fun to travelers and residents alike!

FOSAS was the sole recipient of the donations they collected this summer, which totaled just over \$6,000! This is the largest single donation FOSAS has received and we are so incredibly grateful. Thanks to all the talented uke players that made this happen. If you are interested in joining the Sitka Ukes, please reach out to the group on Facebook - Sitka Ukulele 100. The Ukes also give free lessons throughout the year for those of you who are interested in learning something new while supporting Sitkans and their animals.





# Highlights from the Year

## *New Sign, New Chapter - Thank you Sitka Rotary Club!*

“It takes a village” seems appropriate when we review a year-long effort to produce and unveil a brand-new sign for the Sitka Animal Shelter. It began with board president Kristina Tirman speaking to a Rotary International meeting in Sitka last December, which led to Rotary’s support for FOSAS with a \$1,500 grant, to Becky Martello with Martello Design Co. designing a new sign, to Tyler Eddy at White’s Printing producing the sign, to Jim Penny encasing the sign in a sturdy welded-aluminum frame, to Kristina and fellow board member Dusty Kidd raising and bolting the new sign in place (with the help of a fellow driving by in a truck who said “someone just gave me a hand so I thought I’d help you”) ... to the sign unveiling with the Rotary Club, FOSAS Board and volunteers, the Sitka Police Department and community members attending a Coffee with Cats on a brilliant Saturday morning in December. Whew! Turns out that “village” is Sitka, and half the town had a hand in it!



## *Pets, People and Portraits*

There's a famous old Hollywood saying, "never work with children and animals". But the Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter will gladly do both to raise funds for our shelter critters! After much success last year, we were excited to repeat our pet portrait photoshoot fundraiser - not only working with children and animals, but actually getting them to sit still, laugh and smile, all with the goal of capturing some magical memories with a beautiful Sitka backdrop. We were fortunate to have the support from a few incredibly talented local photographers, who generously donated their time and skills for some fun, challenging mini shoots. Cute kids, darling dogs, hairless cats and even feisty ferrets were some of the stars of this year's shoots!

We'd like to say a special thank you to our wonderful photographers; Bobbi Jordan, Gerri Guthrie, Vincent Balansag and Eric Jordan, who caught some great behind-the-scenes snaps of the event. All proceeds from the shoots and photo purchases go right back to supporting the Sitka Animal Shelter.





# Highlights from the Year

## Teacher's Pets Grant

This last year has been one of renewal for the Sitka Animal Shelter on the wings of a generous grant from the Alaska Community Foundation and the combined work of volunteers, artists and students. The renovation began with the stripping bare of our Adult Cat Room, which at times has been home to as many as 15 cats. Once the room was temporarily vacated of cats, volunteer teams from Outer Coast College led by FOSAS volunteers Jim and Laura Rogers, worked in relays to remove all the cat fixtures and assorted toys, food and litter containers, and then deep clean, prime and paint the walls, while Jim and Laura prepared new moldings for doors and windows, and imagined, constructed and finished a new counter and sink with room below for new stainless litter boxes, which allows the full separation of litter from food servings.

The renovation was completed with a new cat-themed mural along three walls, and new climbing and hammock features that the cats occupied immediately! The Outer Coast team also renovated the outdoor dog kennel with donated weather-proof dog houses and easy-on-the-paws gravel. A second set of teams also stripped, primed and painted two other shelter spaces, one of which will soon be a visitation room for cats and potential adopters. Our regular volunteers were deeply involved in the whole program, which makes the spaces much more inviting for animals and visitors alike.



Avis, king of the adult cat room for about a year, was finally adopted in November 2023!





# Success Stories

Orion



On August 8th, Orion was trapped at a residence in Sitka and believed to be a feral kitten. The Sitka Animal Shelter picked up this little guy in the Orion's Sporting Goods parking lot, and was named on the spot. Orion was in rough shape on arrival at the shelter after living outside in unknown conditions. He had very goopy eyes and was underweight and quite scared. Our awesome volunteers made sure he had a warm, cozy place to sleep and once he settled in, Orion was certainly not a feral kitten. He welcomed human interaction with lots of purring and affection, showing his sweet side! After a couple weeks of one-on-one care and a vet visit to ensure he was gaining weight and staying healthy, Orion made a speedy recovery and won the hearts of many volunteers. He was one of those special kitties that you couldn't help but love. Not to mention, he had the sweetest and most unique features, including polydactyl paws, a short tail and crossed eyes. He was officially adopted on August 15th, one of the fastest turnarounds we've ever seen! Orion now lives in Gustavus, Alaska where he gets loved and spoiled by his family.

Maggie

Maggie was surrendered to the shelter because she wasn't getting along with the other cat in her home, despite the owners trying everything they could to make it work. She spent some time in and out of a few foster homes before finding the right fit. Her new owners moved to Sitka for the summer and started volunteering at the shelter with no intention of fostering or adopting. With Sitka's smaller population, they quickly realized it was quite difficult to find homes for the over 20 cats residing at the shelter. They decided to foster and wanted to take in whichever cat needed it the most, which was Maggie. Upon discovering that Maggie had experienced multiple homes, Maggie's new owners decided to make her a permanent part of their lives. Despite the initial challenge of earning her trust, their patience paid off, and Maggie has now become a part of their family. Her journey from shelter life to her new home has not only brought joy to her new owners but has also given her the stability and love she deserves. Maggie now lives happily with her new family in Texas.





# Success Stories

## Murphy

Murphy is a Rotweiler/blue heeler/husky mix who was born in the small community of Kake, Alaska. At 10 weeks old, Murphy was hit by a car and while lucky that he survived, he ended up with fractures in two legs. Murphy was flown to Sitka where he was cared for and treated by local veterinarians. After surgery, he was taken in by the most amazing foster parents who helped nurse him back to health. It was a long road to recovery for Murphy, he was in a cast for three weeks and had to learn how to walk again. Murphy was fortunate that his foster parents had two dogs of their own that he could play with and learn from.

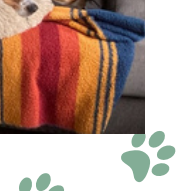
Murphy has since been adopted by a wonderful local family who love him very much. Murphy is full of energy and loves to run! While he doesn't have any fellow-canine brothers in his house, he does have two human brothers that he gets to play with.

We are grateful to our local veterinarians and the foster family who made sure Murphy got the care and socialization he needed to become the sweet and healthy pup he is today!



## Beau and Oliver

Beau and Oliver are brothers that both had a difficult time finding the right homes. As puppies, they were taken in by different families that unfortunately did not work out. Beau was the first to arrive to the shelter in May 2022. Beau was a sweet pup, but like most Coonhounds, Beau had a very loud voice and loved to pull, making him a little bit more difficult to adopt. Thankfully, the right family came along who was willing to take a chance on him and lucky for Beau it was the perfect fit! A year later, Beau's brother, Oliver, was surrendered to the shelter in April 2023 with similar behaviors to Beau - loud voice, pulling on a leash and overall fairly energetic. When Beau's family discovered that Oliver was available for adoption, they couldn't resist giving him a chance and re-uniting the brothers. Beau and Oliver now live happily with their humans and canine sister, Daisy, who keeps them on their best behavior! They love to play and take up as much space on the couch as possible.





# Volunteer Spotlights

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Sitka Animal Shelter! They donate generous amounts of time and compassion to make sure the animals are well loved, cared for, and successfully adopted. We have over 30 volunteers that do everything from walking dogs and socializing cats to cleaning kennels and folding laundry. We'd like to introduce you to a few of these very special and dedicated people!



## Jane Althar

"I lived in Sitka for a while in the late 1980's and came back last October. I am retired and still want to be helpful and useful. I have a 13-1/2-year-old Chiweenie named Buddy. In Arizona, I had a small dog sitting business in my home and also took care of a neighbor's cat when she was away. I love animals and felt the Sitka Animal Shelter would be the best place for me to volunteer – a place where I could be useful and enjoy the animals. It is fun to interact with the animals, discover their personalities and watch kittens grow!"

## Hannah Blanke

"I moved to Sitka for a job at the Raptor Center as a bird caretaker, and unsurprisingly animals are a big part of my non-work life. Being able to volunteer at the animal shelter is a wonderful (and easy) way for me to help support these pets until they find their forever home. Whether it's reading to shy cats or cleaning up a big mess I'm glad I can contribute to make the lives of these animals better. In my free time I enjoy leather work, embroidery, wood carving, cooking, and taking care of my own horde (3 dogs, 3 cats, 4 chickens, and 1 snake)."



## Craig Powers

"I'm a retired CG Rescue Swimmer with a wonderful wife and three awesome kids. We have a full house of pets, including 2 adopted shelter dogs and 2 adopted shelter cats. My wife Sheri, who also volunteers, helped me recognize the desire to care for shelter animals in my free time. The most satisfying aspect of volunteering at the shelter is coming in weekly to see how well the animals are consistently cared for by the volunteers, until they are in their new homes."



There are many ways to get involved with the shelter, big and small! If you are interested in volunteering, please visit our website to download an application and email a completed copy to [sitkaanimalfriends@gmail.com](mailto:sitkaanimalfriends@gmail.com).







## Tribute Gifts

In honor of **Cecilia Clarke**, from *Janet Clarke and Dan Gray*

In memory of **Jean Watt**, from *Kristina Tirman*

In memory of **Gracie**, from *Karen Parker*

*A donation in memory or honor of a person or pet is a wonderful way to show you care while making a difference in the lives of Sitka's animals. Type in a memo when making a donation online or send us an email at [sitkaanimalfriends@gmail.com](mailto:sitkaanimalfriends@gmail.com). Your contribution will be noted in the next issue of our Paw Print Newsletter.*

## MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

Where would you like your donation to go? We have two separate funds you can choose from.

- **FOSAS General Fund:** Donations to the General Fund cover a wide range of activities and services, all benefiting the lives of the animals at the shelter. Here are a few of the ways these funds are used:
  - Covering the cost of medical care for shelter pets that goes above and beyond the basic vaccinations and spay/neuter covered by the City of Sitka. This includes diagnostic testing such as x-rays and blood tests, care and treatment for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, and surgeries.
  - Renovating and improving shelter spaces to make them more enriching, vibrant and suitable for shelter animals while they await their forever home.
  - Sponsoring travel for shelter dogs to attend the Shelter Pet Obedience Training Program in Seward, Alaska where they are matched with an inmate and rehabilitated until they are adoptable. These are dogs that would otherwise be euthanized due to behavioral problems (read more on page 3).
- **Compassionate Care Fund, in honor of Burgess Bauder:** The Compassionate Care Fund was created just over a year ago by two Sitkan's, Tim and Julie Doggett, as a way to help low income families cover the cost of vet care. It can cover everything from vaccinations and spays/neuters to euthanasia or helping offset the cost of emergency visits. The Fund was named in honor of Burgess Bauder, one of Sitka's local veterinarians who has provided low-cost services to families for many years. Pet owners can apply by emailing [sitkaanimalfriends@gmail.com](mailto:sitkaanimalfriends@gmail.com).

**Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. All donations are tax-deductible and directly benefit the community of Sitka and the animals that reside at the shelter. To make a donation, visit our [website](#) or send a check to PO Box 972, Sitka, AK 99835.**

**You can also donate supplies by visiting our [Amazon Wishlist](#)!**

Miso  
Adopted!



Java  
Adopted!





# Thank you!

*We owe so much to so many, we are hoping we don't leave anyone out! Thank you to:*

Dr. Wolf and the Sitka Animal Hospital team, Dr. Caraway and the Pet's Choice team, and Burgess for providing the shelter animals with quality medical care.

Tim and Julie Doggett for creating and donating to the Compassionate Care Fund, allowing low income families to have access to financial support for vet care.

Ukulele group, "Pointy and the Birds" for choosing FOSAS as the recipient of your busking efforts, donating just over \$6,000!

Karen Royce for sharing your knowledge and expertise with FOSAS and for doing behavioral assessments on dogs as they come into the shelter to make sure they get the proper care they need while keeping our volunteers safe.

The SPOT program for giving three dogs from Sitka a second chance by accepting them into their training program and working with them until they are adoptable.

The Sitka Rotary Club for providing funds for FOSAS to design, construct and mount a new shelter sign.

Highliner Coffee Co. for donating coffee each month for our Coffee with Cats events.

Harry Race Printing and Tyler Eddy for helping us stand out and become visible as an organization with your incredible banners.

Petra Lechner with My Zen Creations for creating specialized cat and dog necklaces to be used as auction items during fundraising events.

The Sitka Elks Lodge for hosting a fundraising event dinner and live auction benefiting FOSAS.

Sitka Food Co-op for selecting FOSAS as the recipient of the "round up at the register" program.

The City of Sitka, Sitka Police Department and former ACO, Sam Pointer, for being supportive partners.

Girl Scout Troop 4123 for making and delivering cookies for our volunteers to enjoy during their shifts.

Kanga Bay Pet Supplies and New Start Pets for donating food and supplies to the shelter.

Pet Portrait Photographers Bobbi Jordan, Vincent Balansag, Gerri Guthrie and Eric Jordan for your willingness to work with children, animals (and their collective parents) to make this fundraiser HUGELY successful.

Lisa Teas with Flying Ravens for donating a portion of profits made from your holiday calendar sales to FOSAS.

Sitka Legacy Foundation for awarding a \$4,000 grant for the PAWS Program (Promoting Adoptions Within Sitka), which provided adoption kits to 100 adopters in 2023 and supported the Coffee with Cats events.

Alaska Community Foundation for awarding a \$5,000 grant to Revamp Our Adult cat Room (ROAR) in partnership with youth in the Sitka School District and Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

Alaska Commercial Company for hosting a BBQ fundraiser and donating over \$1,500 to FOSAS.

Sitka AmeriCorps Program and Outer Coast College for donating time and service hours to take on special projects.

Our wonderful group of over 30 volunteers who provide quality care to the animals that reside at the shelter. Thank you SO much for your dedication and time.

Our sister shelter, the Newport Beach Animal Shelter, for supporting us and sharing ideas and best practices.

Special thank you to Jean Watt who gave us the tools and confidence to start Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter. Your passion and dedication for fighting for what you believed in will continue to inspire us all!

