

Loving Homes Wanted

Fort Bend Animal Shelter is searching for forever families and foster homes for their four-legged friends

Written by Leigh Ann Mitchell | Photography by Marie Paugh

The Fort Bend County Animal Services (FBCAS), is home to over 150 cats and dogs that long for security and comfort. “We are Fort Bend County’s open admission shelter covering the more than 750 square miles of unincorporated Fort Bend County with an intake that averages around 4,000 animals per year,” explains Barbara Vass, adoption coordinator at Fort Bend County Animal Services. “We are overcrowded and always looking for adopters and other rescues who can help us with our shelter pets.”

FBCAS employees Rene Vasquez, Elbert Williams, Robert Gonzales, Danny Hernandez, Eric Romo, Barbara Vass, Sheldon Cortez, and Rodney Garcia



Arrivals and Adoptions

When animals arrive at the shelter, they receive vaccines and undergo a thorough health evaluation. These vaccines help prevent highly contagious diseases. Strays with no identification are held for 72 hours before they are able to be adopted or rescued. An animal with an owner or some identification has a 10-day hold. "Owner turn relinquishments are, in most cases, 24-hour holds simply because we know the owner and no one else will be looking for them," adds Vass.

FBCAS's adoption process is very simple. Potential owners can come and visit the shelter or view animals they'd like to meet on the shelter's website. Potential pet parents can also bring their own pets to meet the animals to see if they get along. Once an animal has been selected, an application is filled out and fees are paid. The adoption fee is \$100 and includes all vaccines, microchip implant, spaying or neutering, heartworm testing for dogs, and combo tests for cats.

A Caring Staff

The care that the animals receive at the FBCAS would not be possible without their 18 full-time employees and team of 20 dedicated volunteers. "We are always interested in bringing in new volunteers," explains Vass. The shelter appreciates those who would like to help with walking and bathing dogs, cleaning kennels and the animal play yards, socializing with their cats, and guiding potential adopters that visit. FBCAS also needs help with daily office work and at the shelter's off-site adoption events. New volunteer orientations are held once a month on a Saturday at the shelter.

Volunteer Vets Needed

The greatest need for the FBCAS is help with their medical cases. "We do not currently have a vet on staff at the shelter, but we are hoping to have one with the 2016 to 2017 budget," she says. "Until then, we always reach out to the community and to our 501c3 to help us with immediate medical needs of animals that come into the shelter."

As a result of the spring flooding in the area, the shelter has experienced a high influx of homeless animals and is currently seeking additional donations, temporary fosters, and loving families to help care for these displaced pets.

The shelter invites the community to sponsor some of the animals for spaying and neutering so that they can be made available for adoption more quickly. Monetary donations are always welcomed to their ASAP fund, but there are additional options for the community to help as well. "If the community is unable to adopt, rescue, or donate at this time," states Vass. "We would appreciate if they would share our posts for our shelter pets on social media so that we can reach the largest possible audience."



FBCAS intakes an average of 4,000 animals per year



There are, on average, around 225 animals available for adoption at FBCAS



FBCAS encourages the community to share their adoptable animals on social media



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The Right Fit

The community has been a huge help for the shelter. "We have been extremely fortunate in getting help from the Fort Bend community when we need it," smiles Vass. "We can always use donations for food; particularly soft food, kitten and puppy milk, bottles, soft treats, toys, newspaper, and more."

The support and generosity of the community has been overwhelming and FBCAS is forever grateful. "We cannot continue making changes to our process here at the shelter without their continued support," explains Vass. "We are working very hard to create the best atmosphere for our shelter pets' well-being while they are with us and awaiting their forever homes."

Raising awareness is key in finding forever homes for the loving animals at FBCAS. The shelter would love the opportunity to work with local businesses and create partnerships in Fort Bend County and Katy. "We hope that people will consider coming to us when they start looking to add to their family," Vass smiles. "We have such a variety of pets to choose from, I am sure they will find someone who will fit right into their family and their hearts." **KM**

LEIGH ANN MITCHELL and her family have an adopted cat named Stormy, and proudly support animal adoption.



FBCAS is always looking for food, toy, treat, and newspaper donations



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