

Going to the dogs



Make no bones about it, River City – we’re a doggone friendly town. In fact, boomers are increasingly finding ways to help Fido and friends throughout the region. Check out the many ways do-gooders can lend a hand:

— BY PAUL SPICER —

RICHMOND SPCA

The Richmond SPCA is one of only six area charities to receive a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of all things non-profit. Having saved the lives of more than 4,000 animals annually through adoption, re-homing, and behavioral assistance, the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals serves as a prime starting point for boomers looking to give back.

“We have myriad opportunities available for baby boomers or retirees, including employment,” reports Tamsen Kingry, chief operating officer. “The Richmond SPCA is a wonderful place for an encore career, where individuals with vast life experience and varied skill sets are essential members of our team.”

Kingry rattles off a number of volunteer options from helping in the retail shop and data entry to serving as a foster care provider and dog walker. As if walking a pack of pooches weren’t enough, the Richmond SPCA even has an indoor track and training center. It has just launched “Meet Your Match,” a new adoption program developed by the American SPCA. The program is powered by an interactive and fun approach to pairing prospective pet parents with appropriate four-legged companions.

Contact: Erin Van Jester, (804) 521-1329, www.richmondspca.org

Richmond SPCA's CEO Robin Robertson Starr (front) and COO Tamsen Kingry with adopted friends (back row left to right) Pilot, Flake, and Nick. (Front row) Thor, Gadget.



Photos by Michael Waine.

For the baby boomer in everyone

BoomerLife



PUPS ON PARADE:

Sponsorship of 25 decorated sculptures like these three, for auction at Fetch a Cure's June 20 "Black Collar Gala and Live Auction" at the Science Museum of Virginia, help raise funds to care for aging dogs. For more on the statues and fundraiser, visit www.fetchacure.com/sonparade.html.



"Frog Dog," - Artist- David T. Ashworth
(sponsored by Employees and Volunteers of the Science Museum of VA)



"Precious," - Artist- Karen and Tommy Gammon (Sponsored by the Richmond SPCA)



"Pampered Pooch," - Artist- Caroline Tarin
(sponsored by Andres' Day Spa & Unique Gifts)

**FETCH A CURE**

When Mike Holland's Saint Bernard, Hannah, was diagnosed with nasal osteosarcoma of the skull, he immediately explored all options for his canine companion -- holistic care, homeopathic remedies, acupuncture, and chemotherapy. Holland, co-owner of Mosaic Café and Catering, realized that Richmond needed better -- and more -- options for man's best friend.

Holland helped found Fetch a Cure, working on behalf of all pets affected by the symptoms of aging. Look at the Richmond landscape today and you may spot a series of brightly colored, oversized dog sculptures. Known as "Pups on Parade," this year-long public art installation/awareness push is the brainchild of Fetch a Cure, which is operated by Richmonders who have faced cancer and inevitable aging in their own pets.

Volunteers are invited to join the grassroots efforts by helping with increased education for senior care with an emphasis on symptoms of canine cancer, as well as with administrative duties of running a new non-profit organization.

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**PHOTOGRAPHER TO THE PETS**

The portraits on these pages were created by Michael Waive of Chesterfield County, a lifelong photographer now specializing in pets. The commercial photographer tries to make the camera see the humor, coyness and coolness that owners see in their pets. He uses squeakers, toys, props, treats, even song, all while sitting on a small crate to be eye-to-eye with the animals. "I don't treat them like objects," Waive said in an Associated Press feature story. "I try to understand their personality." For more, visit www.michaelwaive.com.

**THE RICHMOND ANIMAL LEAGUE**

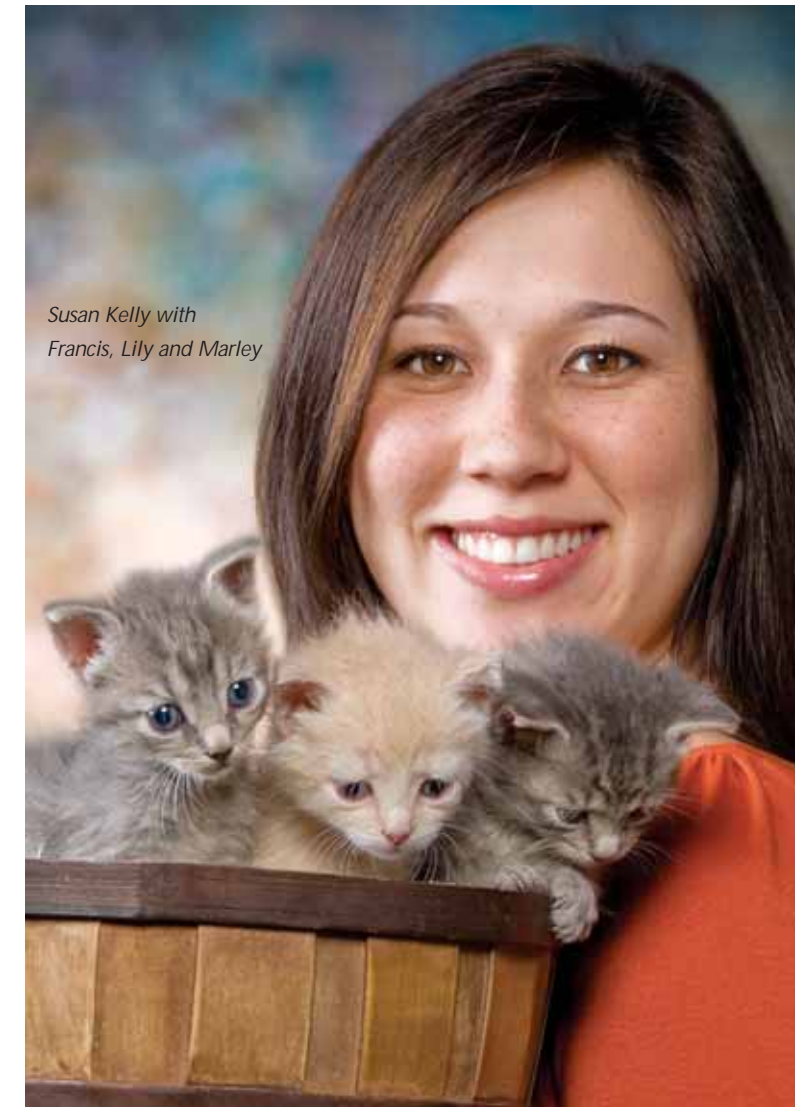
As Richmond's oldest non-profit, no-kill humane society, the Richmond Animal League (RAL) secures homes for homeless dogs and cats in River City. Dogs often arrive injured and emotionally scarred. The volunteers that propel the organization provide temporary shelter and care until permanent homes are located.

"A good portion of our volunteers, upwards to 50 percent, are baby boomers," explains Susan Kelly, Director of Development. "As a nonprofit organization, we really aim to give as much money as possible back to the shelter, and the way we do that is to have a strong volunteer force."

With cat and dog crews volunteering seven days a week, RAL provides plenty of opportunities for interaction with the animals at its kennel, located near Chesterfield Towne Center, as well as foster care in private homes. Along with temporary shelter and complete medical care, RAL recently unveiled its first annual Woofstock, a lively festival brimming with dog walking, music, and good eats.

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Paul Spicer is an award-winning Richmond author and freelance writer. Paul's most recent book, [British Virgin Islands: The Hometown Lowdown Guide to Travel & Taste](#), was published this spring.



Susan Kelly with Francis, Lily and Marley

Other Animal-Friendly Volunteer Opportunities

- Animal Adoption & Rescue Foundation (AARF): (804) 254-0800, www.aarf.org
- Chesterfield Humane Society: (804) 717-6236, www.chesterfieldhumane.org
- Friends United with the Richmond Shelter (FURS): (804) 364-1944, www.fursdogs.com
- Hanover Humane Society: (804) 798-0806, www.hanoverhumanesociety.org
- Henrico Humane Society: (804) 262-6634, www.henricohumane.org
- Save Our Shelters (SOS): (804) 358-7499, www.saveourshelters.com
- For others, visit: www.petfinder.com/shelters.html.

