

Pet adoption is a priceless gift

Eugene residents can find Valentine's Day love with a purr-fect pet from the Greenhill Humane Society

Allison Lind
Freelance Reporter

Looking for love in all the wrong places? Still haven't found Mr. or Ms. Right? Well, the perfect companion may not be human.

The Greenhill Humane Society, located at 88530 Greenhill Rd, has more than 30 dogs and 100 cats looking for someone to love them.

"Animals are a lot less trouble and a lot less expensive than a boyfriend or girlfriend," front office attendant Beverly Heitz said. "They're warm, they're loyal and they love you no matter what."

For Valentine's Day, forego those boxes of chocolates and consider Tootsie Pop — a black and white female cat that loves to cuddle. Or if you prefer strawberry blondes, Zoe is a 3-month-old Chow mix hoping to capture someone's heart.

"I wanted to adopt because there are so many good dogs here without homes," University alumnus Rhett Brewster said. "Plus, they're good companions. They're loyal, and they don't complain."

Eugene resident Joe Britton found his companion — a 3-month-old Border Collie — at Greenhill six months ago, but he still visits occasionally to see what new dogs have come in.

"I'm really glad I came here to adopt because there are a lot of great dogs in the shelters," he said.

Like in all relationships, one needs to decide how much of a commitment he or she is ready for.

"Cats are like roommates; dogs are like babies," 21-year-old Springfield resident Sabrina Goff said. Goff

said she prefers cats because they require less maintenance than dogs.

Heitz said getting a pet is definitely more of a commitment than a Valentine's Day date.

"Make sure you have enough time in your schedule and realize the commitment you're making," Heitz said. "It's not just feeding an animal. It's loving and caring for a living thing."

If you're not looking for a long-term relationship, the organization also has a foster care program, where qualified applicants can temporarily care for a cat or dog. The purpose of the program is to get animals socialized or nursed back to health. Heitz recommends this program for college students who will eventually be moving and are unable to take their pets with them.

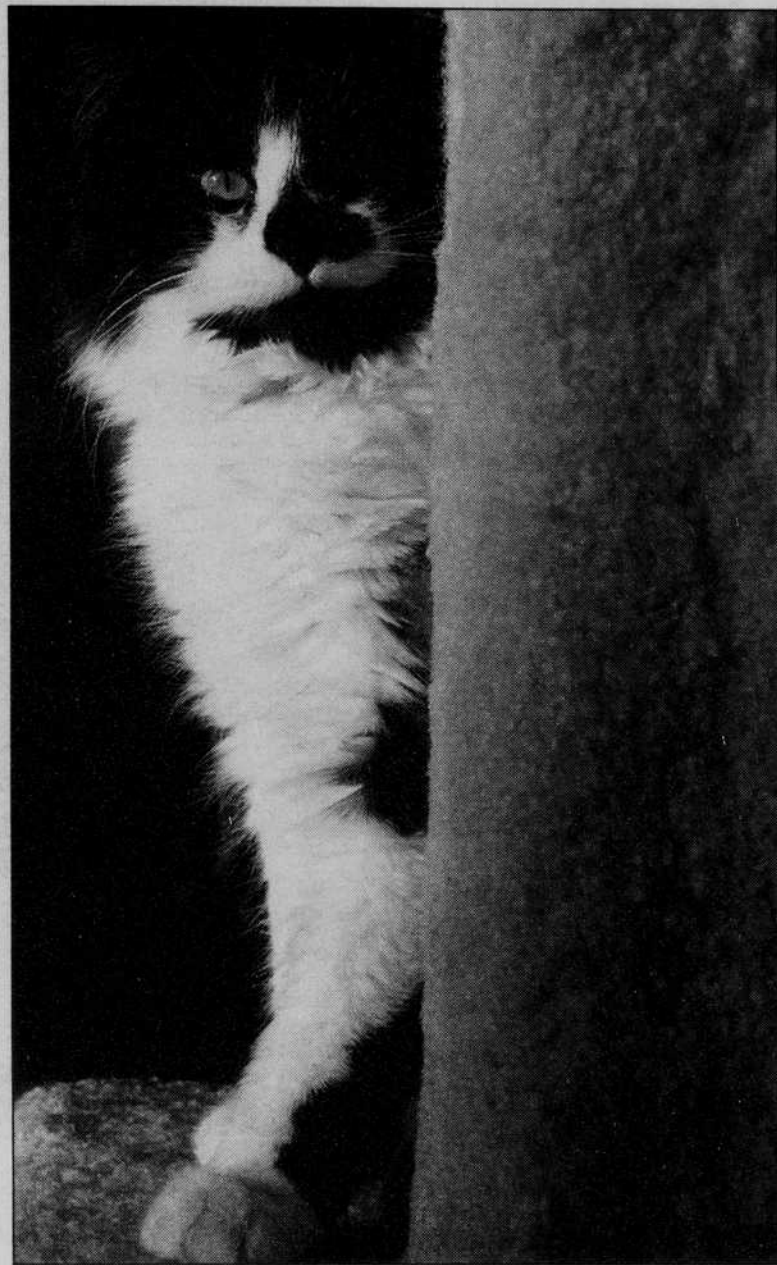
On average, Greenhill receives about 136 cats and 80 dogs a month, but only 39 cats and 15 dogs were not adopted, according to 2002 statistics. Greenhill is a "low-kill" Humane Society, which means it only puts animals to sleep when there is a severe health or behavioral problem, so the facility is often overcrowded.

The adoption fee is \$125 for dogs and \$85 to \$125 for cats, which covers a veterinary exam, certain vaccinations, a free microchip, a spay or neuter deposit and a collar and tag. For a limited time, the adoption fee for any cat that is more than six months old and is spayed or neutered is only \$30.

Finding love can be a relentless, hopeless search, but Cupid's arrow may just strike you at Greenhill.

"What do you get out of a box of Valentine's candies? Calories and cavities," said Heitz. "With pets, you get companionship and love."

Allison Lind is a freelance writer for the Emerald.



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Tootsie Pop is just one of many cats to be found at Greenhill Humane Society. Dogs, rabbits and other smaller creatures also reside there.

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