



A dog sits with its 'brother' from the Dunning team.

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The event typically features pet photos with Santa Claus, a bake sale, silent auction, raffle drawing and other activities.

"People just loved coming," said Rae Zimmerling, a longtime volunteer and past president of the organization. "It's kind of a shock to our system that we can't have it this year. But what we're doing is turning out to be a lot of fun."

Organization volunteers realized in the summer they'd need to plan an alternative to the party. With the help of a sub-committee, led by volunteer Natalie Hannam, the virtual event was created. The fundraiser launched in September.

After the event, volunteers will put together a collage featuring all the submitted photos. There isn't a prize for the winning team, but instead an element of friendly competition.

"It's so nice that the community is engaged, even though it's so different and, of course it's understood, it's kind of limiting," Zimmerling said. "But still the community is engaged. And we appreciate that."

Volunteer power

The organization, formed in the late 1990s, is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping the shelter's homeless pets. The organization provides funds to

pay for external veterinary care, spay/neuter fees, medicines, cat litter, grooming, specialty-diet foods and other supplies not covered by the shelter's budget.

Additionally, the organization supports shelter animals by advertising and sponsoring adoption events, Dunning said.

"The shelter, like any other place, has had to really change how they do business," Dunning said.

If a member of the public wants to look at an animal, they must fill out an online application and make an appointment. Volunteers are also wearing masks and social distancing.

The shelter generally has more than a dozen cats and about 18 dogs up for adop-

tion, Zimmerling said. There also are two back areas for housing strays, animals in rehabilitation and others waiting to be picked up by their owners.

The organization depends on volunteers to feed and medicate the animals, walk the dogs and transport animals for veterinary services. People can sign up to volunteer solely with the shelter or with the organization, although many volunteers work with both entities.

"It's important to have volunteers who are CCA members, because those are the volunteers who are the transporters if an animal needs to be taken to a vet clinic in another city like Portland or Salem," Zimmerling said.