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## #AdoptaShelterPet

Wed, 2014-10-29 19:04 — Robin Olson

**Fear is the number one reason people don't adopt pets from shelters.** Some shelters aren't in the best shape, with rundown quarters for the animals in their care while others are more like cheerful playhouses for cats and dogs. But even though the environment might be pleasant, having so many adoption options can be overwhelming as the fear of "What if I feel like I have to adopt them all?" or "What if I feel like I have to adopt a pet because it looks so sad?" arises keeping people away.

**There are many complex emotions that can be stirred up visiting shelters. It's not only a terrible shame that this obstacle exists, but the result means that millions of perfectly adoptable animals are being euthanized solely due to lack of shelter space. The adopters are out there, now we just have to get them IN to the shelters to meet these amazing creatures.**



©2010 Henry Co Animal Control. Kitten Associates opened in 2010 and this litter of kittens was our first rescue. They were at high-risk of being put to sleep solely due to lack of adopters and limited space. Each one later found their forever homes.

While tremendous strides are being made to change perceptions, change ideas and move towards never killing otherwise adoptable animals, part of the change requires a leap of faith for some. **Taking those first steps into a shelter can be daunting so here are some reasons how being willing to take those steps can literally save lives.**

**1. If you think you're ready to adopt,** go on Petfinder.com and [search for shelters in your area](#). [1] You can usually visit the shelter's website and see photos of the facility ahead of time. That way you won't be afraid to walk in the door.

**2. If the place is a bit shabby,** that's okay if the animals are getting properly cared for. You'll know by talking with the staff and asking questions about what care the cats or dogs get. Some shelters don't have huge operating budgets, but focus their funds on the animals and not the color of the walls.



©2010 Henry Co Animal Control. Rocco was a senior kitty but that didn't stop us from rescuing him. His gentle and affectionate personality won us over and Rocco quickly found a loving home where he was doted on for the last years of his life. He passed away earlier this year surrounded by love.

**3. Have an idea of what you're looking for before you go.** There are loads of web sites about every breed of cat or dog that will help you focus on what you think might be the best fit for your family. Knowing ahead of time that you're looking for a friendly orange tabby or a feisty Jack Russell Terrier narrows down your search so you're not overwhelmed. You can often see these pets listed online before you meet them in person which also takes out the fear of feeling obliged to adopt all the pets you see once you arrive at the shelter.

**11/14-4825**  
**Tabby - Orange Mix: An adopted cat in McDonough, GA**

Medium • Baby • Male

✉ 📄 🐦 📘

It is kitty season once again and because no one thought to get my mom and dad sterilized, I am here at the shelter, lonely, and without a home. I am one of the many kitties here at the shelter in need of a lifetime companion that will give me the love that I so deserve. If you would like to meet me, you can visit me here at the shelter or call my friends at (770) 288-PETS. My ID# is 11/14-4825 and I hope to see you soon. Lost and stray animals are held at the Henry County Animal Care and Control Shelter for four (4) calendar days (excluding Sundays and county holidays) in order to give their owners a chance to reclaim them. After that time period, adoptable animals are held as long as space allows.

✓ Like 📘 Robin A.F. Olson, Joan Flores and 3 others like this.

*We rescued this kitty and named him MacGruber. He ended up being one of the most sweet and friendly cats we've ever met. He lives in a loving home with another kitty we rescued and a third kitty the family found as a stray. Can you imagine what would have happened if we hadn't intervened? It's very likely he would have been euthanized.*

**4. Understand that seeing cats and dogs in cages is not ideal,** but that it's also not forever for that animal. A shelter should be just that—a place to house animals safely for a time period until that animal finds their new family. Unfortunately some animals are caged far too long, but from experience I can say that I have a cat who was in a cage for 2 years and she's a very happy cat today. She was **MORE** friendly and sought out affection because of her confinement and I do believe she is also more grateful to have what she has with us. Though that may not be true of all animals confined for along period of time, don't feel you can't also consider them to be part of your family. Just be prepared that their adjustment to their new life may take more time and they may need some guidance or behavior training.

**5. It's not your obligation to adopt every pet you see. It's your obligation to be responsible and only take on what you can easily provide for from today until the last day of that animal's life. Don't be selfish or impulsive. Adopting is for YEARS, not for now. Do your homework, prepare yourself, then ENJOY the experience of knowing you're going to find your soulmate. Be prepared that it might not be the first time you go to the shelter. It might take a few trips over months, but in the end not only did you literally help save that animal's life, you just made room so that another animal can be saved, too.**



©2013 Robin AF Olson. This post is in honor of Mabel-Baby, who survived being in two kill-shelters, one of them for almost two years. She's my kitty now and she'll never see the inside of a cage again.

Take a deep breath. It just takes a bit of bravery, some planning and a willingness to open your heart to a cat or dog who may be a bit rough around the edges, but over time, in a loving home, you'll be amazed at their transformation. It's a great gift that one might not even realize is part of adopting a shelter pet, but indeed it is the most precious aspect of it.

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## Comments

Thu, 2014-10-30 14:42 — jmuwj (not verified)

### RE: ADOPTING FROM SHELTERS [3]

As ever, THANK YOU, ROBIN for this post. As someone who advocates for cats on social media and shares those listings from a similar site to Petfinder of cats needing loving forever home 365 days a year, I can't tell you how much your suggestions are appreciated. I do the work I do every day because, if it saves one treasured life, it is valuable. Everything each of us can do to help more cats find their loving permanent homes is extremely important -- in fact, I can't think of anything more important than helping to save lives, can you?

Mabel-Baby is gorgeous, btw! So glad she found such a wonderful home and family!

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