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STAR Treatment

Adoptions and hope are up at the Spokane Humane Society

By: Ed Condran | Spokesman Review

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Now that the dog days of summer are over, Spokane Humane Society's Executive Director, Edward Boks, is looking back at a phenomenal season.

"Adoptions are booming," Boks said.

The Shelter, PetSmart at Northpointe and [Bark, a Rescue Pub](#), which opened in mid-August, have eclipsed expectations, particularly the latter.

Bark, which set a goal for one cat and one dog to be adopted each day, eclipsed that goal by a considerable margin since 100 pets were taken home during its inaugural month.

"It's such a great partnership," Boks said.

Boks and others had to make up for lost time since the Spokane Humane Society could not reopen until July 15 due to the novel coronavirus.

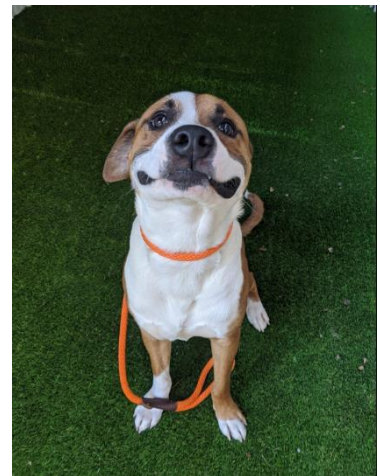
"But we never stopped helping animals in need," said Boks, who became SHS director on June 1. "We often will try to save the lives of animals that other shelters would euthanize."

Betty White, an 8-year-old obese boxer mix, is an example of a dog who probably would have been put down due to her many medical maladies. Betty arrived in June at SHS with an unregulated thyroid and a platelet disorder.

"It didn't look good for Betty when she came in," Boks said. "She had trouble breathing. She came in way overfed. It was going to be a challenge, but our staff was up for it, and now Betty is well on her way to getting healthy."

Betty, who entered the shelter at 77 pounds, has lost 17 pounds since June. Folks should take note about pet weight gain.

"Dogs should be fed no more than twice a day," Boks said. "Food should be out for 20 minutes. Don't feed your dog all day long. It's similar to kids. Your children shouldn't have access to food all day. It's not difficult to understand how a child can become obese. It's the same for our pets."



Boks believes Betty will be eligible for adoption soon. A humane society veterinarian will check her out Monday and determine if Betty, who is in a foster care, is eligible to leave.

Betty isn't the only feel-good story from the summer. Chico, a 3-year-old Chihuahua who escaped from his home just before the Fourth of July, recently found a new owner after being discarded.

When the brown charmer returned to his old home, shortly after Independence Day, his behavior was aberrant. His former owner learned that Chico tried to bite a child, and he surrendered his pet to the humane society. The medical team ran tests and discovered that Chico likely consumed rat poison, which altered his disposition and caused illness.

Chico received the necessary treatment and is fine. Boks believes there is a lesson to be learned.

"Rat poison is unnecessary with so many cats available for adoption," Boks said. "Instead of buying rat poison, which jeopardizes the welfare of our pets and wildlife, adopt a cat, and then a cat has a home. It's not difficult to find a good barnyard cat."

Cats emit an odor, which emanates from their paws and deters rodents.

"It's a good reason to give cats a much-needed job," Boks said.

Chico's story also shines a light on how difficult early July and New Year's Eve is for dogs, who possess sensitive ears. A common belief is that dogs are frightened of fireworks, but that's a misnomer.

"Fourth of July is the most dangerous week for dogs since the sound from fireworks hurts their ears," Boks said. "That noise is very painful for dogs. A lot of dogs run away from the sound of fireworks, and that's what happened to Chico. He just took off and apparently ate rat poison."

Mathilda, a pretty 4-month-old domestic shorthair cat, was discovered abandoned in an alley in July. Both of her eyes were horribly infected. The staff veterinarians had no choice but to remove one eye due to a rupture. Humane society doctors saved her left eye, and she was recently adopted.

"Mathilda was one of our STAR animals," Boks said. "STAR stands for Special Treatment and Recovery. The program is donation-driven. We've been fortunate enough to have so many people contribute to the cause, but we can always use more help. Regarding Mathilda, we didn't know if we were going to be able to save her other eye, but thankfully we were able to save it."

Boks has another lesson. If you find a litter of kittens, don't disrupt the group.

"Their mother is probably out foraging and would be in distress if she found that one of her kittens was missing," Boks said. "But if you find a kitten struggling by itself, then you bring that kitten in like Mathilda was brought in here."

"We do all that we can to help animals. We have so many pets that would make nice fits for those in the Spokane community. Come in and look for your pet. If you don't find that pet one day, come back another day since we have so many different varieties of cats and dogs that are in need of a good home."

ABOUT SPOKANE HUMANE SOCIETY

The Spokane Humane Society is the oldest animal shelter in Spokane. They are a 501c3 private, non-profit serving the public since 1897 by providing care, shelter, and placement into loving homes for homeless, neglected, and unwanted animals in the greater Spokane area through adoptions.

To view adoptable animals or provide life-changing support to furry friends, please visit the SHS website at www.spokanehumanesociety.org. Stay updated by following the SHS Facebook page [here](#).

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