

REHOMING YOUR PET

Rehoming your pet should be a last option, after trying every recourse possible to keep it. Pets are members of your family and it is very unsettling to the pet to feel abandoned by those it has come to know and love. Your intention may not be to abandon your animal, but it may have that feeling anyway.

No one wants to find a new home for their pet, but there are times when a person finds themselves with limited options. What should you do if you find yourself in this position? If you are moving and cannot take your pet, many people make the mistake of taking care of every detail of the move, but leaving what to do with the pet until the last minute, only to discover that it is difficult to place a pet quickly. A person called me at 8 pm on a Friday night and wanted me to re-home their Pitbull. When asked when they were leaving I was told 10 am Saturday morning. I then asked "How long have you known that you were planning to move?" The answer was "For three months." I was not in a position to take the dog, myself. How on earth could I possibly place a Pitbull in less than 24 hours?

You don't want to give your pet to the first person who comes along with no assurance that they will properly care for your wonderful pet. You need to prepare some questions that you want to ask a possible adopter. If they have other pets, they should be spayed/neutered, up to date on shots and have a veterinarian. If they have no veterinarian for their current pet(s), they won't have one for your pet either.

If they rent you want to make sure they have their landlord's permission. You do not want your pet to be readopted to someone else within a week of the first adoption. The more the pet gets moved around, the higher the probability it's behavior will decline. With each decline it becomes a poorer and poorer pet, which could lead to someone euthanizing your pet. I have seen this happen and it is devastating to everyone.

Perhaps the first thing to do when rehoming your pet is to ask all friends, neighbors, relatives, fellow employees and anyone else in your circle if they would like your pet. If no one would, ask them to help you get the word out. A poster with all pertinent information is a useful tool to have in these situations. The broader your reach is the higher the probability of getting your pet into a loving home quickly.

To re-home you can make a poster with a great picture and a nice story about your pet. Circulate this to public bulletin boards, rescues and shelters will do courtesy listings on facebook and websites. I once got a dog adopted simply because the adopter saw his picture on 12 different websites and felt compelled to find out more. Buddy lived with that family until he died at 15 years old. You always need to remember that there is a lot of competition out there, trying to find homes for pets, so your marketing materials need to look good and convey to the reader who your pet is and why they oughta' wanna' adopt this pet.

You can call KNCO Swap Shop and advertise your pet. Placing an ad in the Union and an ad on Craig's list can be helpful. You need to screen those carefully who come forward to adopt your pet. It is a good idea to charge a reasonable fee for the adoption. Studies have shown that when people pay nothing they see less value in what they have. Don't gamble with your pet's future or its life.

You can contact your local shelter to see if they have anyone on a list requesting a certain kind of pet that would be a match for the pet you are trying to re-home. One time a lady called me and asked if we had a Shi-tzu. I said "No we see very few of those. In ten years I've seen three." I did take her name and within an hour someone called and wanted to re-home their Shi-tzu. Wow! Good fortune all the way around; the lady who called got a new dog within an hour of her request, the dog didn't have to spend one minute in the shelter and the owner found a home and could stop worrying about the future of her dog.

Shelters will sometimes take your pet, depending on available space and the pet's adoptability. At times a person wants to get "rid of their dog" because it has wreaked havoc in the neighborhood, by killing the neighbor's cat or dog or bunny and biting a child on the way to school and lunges at strangers. In this case the owner would be advised to find a behaviorist to work with them and their pet, secure the pet in their yard so it cannot cause trouble, and sad as it is euthanasia might be the only solution. Most veterinarians will only euthanize a pet if it has sufficiently bad behavior that it is a danger to the neighborhood. They won't euthanize because you are moving and can't take the pet with you.

For further ideas on rehoming or keeping your pet there is information on our website www.sammiesfriends.org, look under the section called "Other Pet Resources". Be creative and ask others for ideas and help. If you have a problem dog that you need some help with call Sammie's Friends Behaviorist, Beverley Ward at 530-575-6571. I (Cheryl Wicks) am always available to answer questions or help make your marketing campaign more effective. I can be reached at 530-913-4810.

Cheryl Wicks is the Co-Founder and President of Sammie's Friends