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issue



Quote

I love cats because I enjoy my home; and little by little, they become its visible soul. (Jean Cocteau)

New Raffle – watch for details!!!

Think about purchasing a chance to be cozy under one of the crafted quilts that Home Again is raffling off!! Keep an eye on social media to see how you can purchase tickets!



Email: info@homeagainbancroft.ca Website: www.homeagainbancroft.ca
Telephone: 613 334-8471

Hunter's Corner



At this time of year, we always notice that Hunter is scratching a little bit and seems to be a little bit uncomfortable. His eyes and nose can often run a bit, and his eyes may have a bit of discharge in them. Sometimes we even notice inflamed skin, typically on his belly. Hunter is one of those dogs who is very susceptible to seasonal allergies, mostly in the spring and autumn.

For Hunter, the allergens are almost exclusively pollens. Pollen can be inhaled (with that nose going all the time we're not surprised!).

Hunter's allergies are thankfully easy to treat.

- During high allergy months, we try to avoid walking him in the early morning or late evening as those are times when pollen levels typically soar.
- We try to brush any pollen out of his fur as soon as we get back from a walk.
- We've tried to give Hunter a dietary supplement such as fish oil or a fatty acid to try to reduce his itchiness. However, Hunter was on so much medication during the heart worm year that he is exceptionally suspicious of anything that remotely looks like a pill. So sometimes we slip a little coconut oil into his food to decrease allergic reactions.
- At really bad times, we give Hunter a drug prescribed by our vet to decrease symptoms.

We're lucky that although he's a bit uncomfortable during allergy season, it's short-lived! Soon it will be summer, and he can go swimming and smelling like wet dog!

*Is fostering a dog
or cat right for
me?*

At right,
Dannielle
Switzer and Cleo



We are introducing a new feature in the Home Again newsletter, showcasing our foster parents. Fostering is a way to help dogs and cats in need to find a forever home. It may involve teaching a puppy how to grow up to be a well-trained doggo, but may also involve teaching cats and dogs that not all humans are horrible and that there is much love to be found.

In this newsletter we are showcasing Dannielle Switzer, a long-time foster parent. Dannielle's contributions to Home Again are huge; she is now also a Board member of Home Again.

1. How long have you been a foster for Home Again? How many dogs do you think you've fostered over the years? *Seven years this August, just after my son Kurtis was a couple of months old. We have fostered close to a hundred dogs over the years.*
2. Why did you decide to become a foster? *I originally thought I might like to foster horses but my husband not happy about that. I started working at Saturday at Pet Valu in part to meet people as I was new to the community, and thought I had the space to foster dogs at my home.*
3. How do you integrate new foster dogs into your home environment? *We do a walk with one dog at a time with the new dog to introduce slowly. We then bring the new dog into the home environment once he's met the home dogs.*
4. Do you have a story about a dog who blossomed under your care? *We had a dog come through who was terrified of everything and everyone. He was even afraid of the radio! As soon as he was familiar with the home he began to relax. We had him off leash within three days, and he was adopted by someone who saw his picture, and fell in love. He's happy with them, and living his best life as a confident, happy-go-lucky pup!*
5. How do you find the strength to give them up to a new family? *After fostering a number of dogs you develop an intuition about whether the family is the right fit. Letting one dog go means that we can help another. I read somewhere that "your heart breaks so theirs doesn't have to again" and I believe that. Each dog I foster keeps a little bit of my heart.*
6. Have you ever had a foster fail? *I have always wanted a German Shepherd and Cleo came to us as a puppy. I had every intention to put her up for adoption, but fell in love with her personality and decided that she was already home.*



The truth about declawing a cat



Cats with claws can absolutely be a problem! They can claw carpets and furniture and drapes and even sometimes their humans! But is declawing a cat ever an option? Let us send a resounding “no!!!”.

Scratching is normal behaviour for cats. It marks territory, hones the claws and provides a stretch for the shoulders and back. A cat needs their front claws (particularly outdoors cats) to keep an adversary at a distance and to potentially climb away from a threat.

Declawing is a surgical procedure. It is the amputation or partial amputation of the last joint in a cats’ toes to remove the claw. In short, declawing is a non-therapeutic procedure done to address a behavioural issue.

Declawing may result in long term acute and chronic pain. Declawed cats may have permanent or intermittent lameness, and are more likely to suffer chronic back pain which is likely related to shifting their weight to avoid putting pressure on the tips of the toes. Behavioural changes may include increased biting, litter box mistakes and general aggression.

Like anything worth doing, spending some time with your cat to correct behaviours that you might think would be easily addressed by declawing.

- While training your cat, you can buy vinyl nail tips. Provide your cat with suitable surfaces for scratching.
- Watch a bad behaviour and turn it into a good one; if your cat is scratching the carpet, provide it with a carpeted scratching post. If they are scratching a table leg, maybe a wooden post would be best.
- Reward good behaviour rather than punishing bad. Positive reinforcement such as praise, attention and treats will always be better than squirt guns and loud noises.

As always, be patient with your new pet. They are learning the appropriate behaviours and rules in their new home just as you are learning their wants and needs. But don’t opt for the easy declawing option – it’s never the correct thing to do! And just as an aside, very few vets will do declawing on cats anymore, recognizing that it is a non-therapeutic, harsh, surgical procedure that is an inappropriate response to a behavioural issue.



Are you looking for a new friend to add to your family? These cats and kittens, dogs and puppies are some of those available!! See the website at www.homeagainbancroft.ca for more information on any of these beasties!!



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