



**After having to practice** social distancing for the past few years, we are now ready to get together with you, our friends, to have fun while raising money to support our pups. **AFH** is happy to announce that we will be holding another Casino Night and Silent Auction! It will be held at the Chantilly National Golf and Country Club in Centreville, Virginia on September 30, 2023.

If you have ever attended one of these events, you know how much fun they are. Detailed information will come out in our August newsletter, but for now, be sure to mark your calendars. We hope to see you there.

In this edition of our newsletter, you will meet two of our fabulous volunteers and read about two of our wonderful dogs who need forever homes. They are both sweethearts and we hope you will fall in love with one of them.

For this edition of our newsletter we invited our volunteers to submit articles. Samantha Hill stepped up and submitted an article on something you always wanted to know but were hesitant to ask about.

Finally, we will share some information on some recent rescues, all of which were possible solely because of your financial support. **AFH** relies solely on donations to continue our lifesaving work. We do not receive any county, state, or federal funding. Thanks to you, we have not only been able to cover basic vetting for our dogs, but we have been able to save some dogs who needed substantial care. This makes our hearts happy because these dogs often do not get saved due to financial constraints. •

As always—thank you for your ongoing support—we appreciate every single one of you!

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Are you looking for a new furry family member? We have many wonderful dogs waiting for forever homes. Once you've fallen in love, the next step is to fill out an adoption application to get the ball rolling.

Go to [www.aforeverhome.org](http://www.aforeverhome.org) to see our available pets.



**THE DOGS BELOW** had little to no chance of making it out of their respective shelters due to their age, medical condition, and appearance. Because of you, they all got a second chance. It is always satisfying to save a life, but being able to help dogs like this is extra special. Each of these dogs needed some long term and expensive vet care but you were there for them.



**LUCKY** was left in their home, in a crate, when his owner died. We don't know whether there wasn't any family around to help or if they just didn't care. Shockingly, a woman bought the house, knew that Lucky was there, and just left him in his crate. He was somehow getting a little food and water but no one knows how. It appears that he was also somehow getting some time of out his crate because although it was filled with his waste, it wasn't six inches deep. The woman then hired someone to fix up the house and it appears that they started feeding him. Someone finally called in a welfare check and animal control went in, found him, and took him to a shelter. Lucky is a senior boy who is blind and mostly deaf. A wonderful husband and wife foster team stepped up to foster him and he's living his best life. Lucky is available for adoption at [www.aforeverhome.org](http://www.aforeverhome.org) but if he doesn't get adopted, his foster family is prepared to keep him for however much time he has left. •



**BABY GIRL** was surrendered to a shelter in North Carolina at 13 years old because her owners said they could no longer care for her. She was seriously neglected. The shelter told us "We are so full—we can't hold her for long". In an over-full shelter, owner surrenders are the first to be euthanized, especially if they are old and in need of medical care. An **AFH** foster immediately stepped up to save Baby Girl and ended up adopting her! •



**PETUNIA** was "final plea" at a shelter. Her time was up because the shelter was out of space and she didn't have any rescue interest. Petunia was a stray and her family never came looking for her. She was such a sweet girl that we had to save her life. A foster quickly stepped up and a volunteer driver went to pick her up. As of the writing of this newsletter, Petunia is thriving in her foster home and she has an appointment to take care of her cherry eyes.

You can put in an application for her at [www.aforeverhome.org](http://www.aforeverhome.org). She can go home once she is medically cleared. •



# Volunteer SPOTLIGHT

## VIRGINIA COLIN

I love having foster puppies! When they first arrive they are always adorable, and most of them stay adorable the whole time I have them. Watching them play is so much fun! They regularly make me laugh as they pounce on each other, chase each other, play tug-of-war with a toy, wonder how to go down four stairs into the back yard, wrestle and give playful snarls, or go splat on a slippery floor. I get to enjoy them without taking on any long term responsibilities. Cleaning up after puppies is not fun, but we have a puppy area with a tile floor, so cleaning up is not difficult. It's well worth the trouble. Snuggling a puppy is one of the world's best anti-depressants! •



## LYNETTE CATLETT

As far back as I can remember, my passion has always been animals. It saddens me to see animals that have been neglected or mistreated, and I had been praying for several years for a way to help animals in need. When I saw Patti Stinson's Facebook post looking for puppy fosters I got so excited! I love puppies!! They are one of my favorite things! I began fostering in September of 2022 and I have had 23 foster puppies and have thoroughly enjoyed making a difference in their lives and helping them get adopted into loving homes. I am so impressed with **AFH** and the many volunteers who are all passionate about saving puppies and dogs and giving them a second chance at life. This rescue is an answer to my prayers! My husband has been very supportive and helpful with my puppy fostering and I hope to do this for many years. •



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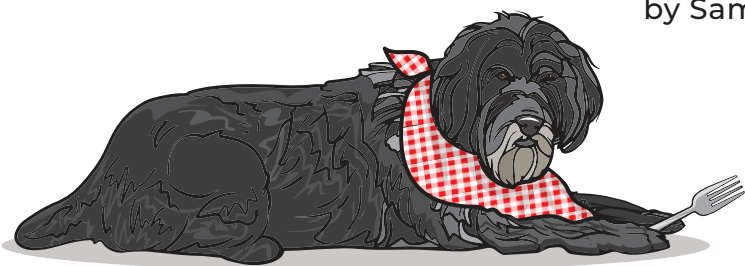
If you would like to join the **AFH** team as a foster parent,  
please email [volunteer@aforeverhome.org](mailto:volunteer@aforeverhome.org)

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# THE PRACTICE OF COPROPHAGY (*aka When Dogs Eat Their Poop*)

by Samantha Hill



**If you've ever had a dog that practices** coprophagy, you know the frustrating feeling and lack of control. Coprophagy is the unpleasant habit of eating feces, and while the action can be harmful, research has noted it is more than likely a simple predisposition for some dogs. This predisposition is mostly seen in younger dogs and lasts just under a year due to the exploratory nature of growing up; however, for some dogs, it becomes a lifetime habit and one that is embedded in their ancestral DNA of wolves.

In a study done in 2018 in coordination with the Center for Companion Animal Health University of California, researchers Benjamin and Lynette Hart, Abigail Thigpen, Alisha Tran, and Melissa Bain set forth to determine the prevalence of this habit and the potential reasons. The data obtained from the online survey of over 1,500 dog owners noted that roughly 16% of the dogs were caught eating their stool. Further delineations for gender, house-trained dogs, and compulsive-like behaviors resulted in no differences between those dogs who ate their stools and those who did not. Dogs who were considered "greedy eaters" were about 50% more likely to practice coprophagy, and while no percentage was offered, dogs of multiple dog households were more likely to engage in the habit as well.

In addition, the research surveyed dog owners to determine which, if any, supplements and solutions worked to curb or cease the behavior. Unfortunately, the survey concluded that the supplements were inconsistently effective, and that behavior modification required longer than normal practice. Despite this, there are things you can do as an owner to assist in stopping coprophagy. The easiest option would be to only allow your dog relief during walks so that your yard isn't littered with temptation. Learning and practicing the term "leave it", having the dog carry something in their mouth during walks, feeding them food that discourages the taste of feces, and feeding dogs a diet that is fulfilling (always check with your vet!) are possible solutions.

Firsthand for me, none of these have worked well, and I can't commit to multiple walks a day. The tried and true "pick up the waste" as soon as it hits the ground has been the solution that has worked for us. There are days when we let our dog in the backyard, look away for a minute, and catch the dog in the act.

We attempt the recall sound, but if it doesn't work, we either walk out and clean up the poop or wait for the snacking to end. When you do catch the dog practicing the undesirable behavior, feed them a dental stick afterward, brush their teeth (no human toothpaste!), or offer them a different food option and water; this will help clean their teeth and freshen their breath. The most important thing is to never scold your dog or feel your dog is "broken"; do your best to be part of the behavior modification and be resolute that it won't be perfect. We all have our bad habits!

Now that we know it happens, why does it happen for some dogs? It could be a behavior the dog learned from their mother since it is a predestined instinct of wolves, the lineage of dogs, to clean up after themselves for fear of predators smelling the stool of young cubs. Other reasons for coprophagy are a source of nutritional value the dog believes it can achieve, hunger, boredom, or stress, or they truly do have a medical condition. Talk to your vet about the behavior and note when it happens and how often. When a true medical condition can be ruled out, just remember that coprophagy is a natural instinct of dogs and while we humans can't fathom the idea, our dogs are acting more instinctively.

So, if you are one of the lucky 16% that have a coprophagic dog as I do, have no fear! Check with your vet and make sure they are aware of the dog's tendencies and that no underlying problems do exist. Do what you can to ensure poop is cleared out of the yard daily. Be sure to praise your dog's behavior when they "leave it" and avoid scolding when they do eat their poop since it is a survival instinct driven by thousands of years. Yours in solidarity! ●

#### Article Resources:

Escamilla, Bianca. "Why Do Dogs Eat Poop?". Encyclopedia Britannica, 9 Sep. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/story/why-do-dogs-eat-poop>. Accessed 05 April 2023.

Staff, AKC. "Why Does My Dog Eat Poop?" American Kennel Club, American Kennel Club, 29 June 2022, <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/why-dogs-eat-poop/>.

"Why Does My Dog Eat Poop?" The Kennel Club, <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/health-and-care/a-z-of-health-and-care-issues/why-does-my-dog-eat-poop/>.



LOOKING  
FOR OUR  
FOREVER  
HOMES

**Editor's Note:**

Walker is a sweetheart and we can't understand why he is still with us. Just look at that handsome face! Maybe you are his forever family?

**WALKER**

**Date of Birth:** 10/27/2019

**Breed:**

Treeing Walker Coonhound Mix

**Gender:** Male (altered)

Walker is a big, loveable boy that enjoys playing. He really likes to hang out with people and other dogs. He has the softest ears, and you could not ask for a better dog! •



**RANGO**

**Date of Birth:** 05/31/2022

**Breed:** Hound Mix

**Gender:** Male (altered)

Rango is a cute little Hound mix with a tragic story. He was found in rural Mississippi with a painful steel leghold trap around one of his feet. A sheriff was driving down a country road and saw Rango dragging himself toward the road with the trap on his leg and a piece of wood caught up in the chain. He was crying when the sheriff stopped. There is no telling how long this poor boy suffered. He would have died a slow, painful death if he didn't drag himself toward the road because his foot was already badly infected. Rango's leg had to be amputated, but it didn't slow him down one bit! He's an active boy and gets around just fine. His will to live really shone through. Now he just needs a forever family. •

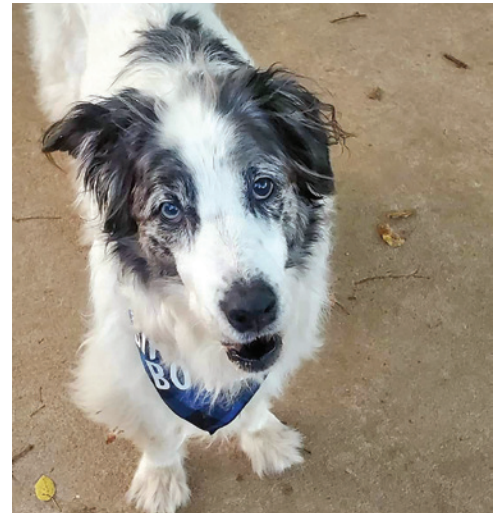


## IN MEMORY

### BLITZ

Carrie Wolinetz

Our Denver dog, who we adopted from **AFH** as a puppy 15 years ago, passed away peacefully in his sleep. He loved being with his family, running through the woods, hiking up mountains, and romping at the beach. He kept his little sister Tanzi in line, made sure his boys never went to bed alone, and never met a belly run he didn't like. We purchased a dog-friendly B&B and Denver was pretty convinced we'd given him the best retirement present ever. We will miss him enormously, but we are so grateful to have had so many joyful years with him and that he was happy right up until the very end. Thank you for letting Denver be a part of our lives. He was very much loved and adored. ●



### ROVER

Ernest Lilley and Esther McClure

Rover was the name he came with and we never found a reason to change it. We adopted him from **AFH** in March 2013 when he was three years old. Our first adventure together was a walk around the Tidal Basin to see the cherry blossoms. Rover made us a family, united in our love and care for him, and turned our house into a forever home. Despite a heart murmur, he made many trips to Maine with us to hike in the autumn woods; closer to home, he was the neighborhood “dog ambassador,” tail wagging cheerfully as he welcomed new families to our Del Ray neighborhood. When he grew too sick and frail to take joy in his life we sadly let him go, but he will always be with us in our hearts. ●

### BENNY

Mike and Mary Niedringhaus

It was a magical night in 2008 when we brought home our sweet Benny. He walked our kids to the bus stop in the mornings and greeted them when they came home. He was there for their games (baseball, football, and lacrosse). He was part of prom pictures, high school and college graduation photos, and beach vacations. The kids went off to college and would send texts to “send Benny pictures” because they missed him. We bought a retirement home near the beach where Benny loved his walks. He recently passed during the week our oldest son bought an engagement ring for his girlfriend—it was nice that Benny made it to that milestone in our son's life. We loved him so much and he brought so much love and joy to our family. We are thankful to **AFH** for rescuing him and bringing him into our lives. ●



### ROXY

Elizabeth (Betty) Axson

I adopted Roxy in 2006 while living in Middleburg and of course took her with me when I moved back home to Chesapeake, Virginia. I gave her the best life I could and she gave many, many times more to me. In May Roxy was diagnosed with Lymphoma, and she did well until July. The Lap of Love Foundation came to my house and helped transition Roxy to the other side. She went very peacefully. It will take a long time for me to get used to not having her presence in my life, but she is and will always be in my heart. I have so many great memories of Roxy and I will always support and be ever grateful to **AFH** for giving me the gift of adopting her. ●





## ABBY

Rita Brown

Twelve and a half years ago, we adopted a Great Pyrenees/Boxer pup named Abby. From the beginning, her personality shined. She was a strong but gentle dog who loved her daily walks. She was smart and learned the ways of our home quickly. She even taught us a few tricks, like bringing us a toy meant she wanted a treat. We fell for it every time. Throughout the years, she was by our side to witness and participate in many celebrations while also comforting us in our time of need. We laid our dear Abby to rest on Monday, March 6 next to her original friend Penny on our farm in West Virginia. We will miss her pleasant demeanor and her unwavering loyal companionship but take comfort in the memories we made with her. We hope you're once again running at full speed "Wooby!" You'll always be in our hearts. ●



## READING IS FUNDAMENTAL!

**Editor's Note:** The Winter family sent us the most adorable picture—we just had to share it!

In 2012 our family consisted of me, my husband, our four-year-old son, and a baby on the way. We had recently said a heartbreaking goodbye to our first **AFH** rescue and we made the family decision to rescue again. While looking through the **AFH** website our son chose a picture of a black super mutt with very short legs. When we met her, we fell in love with her enthusiasm and spirit. We were told she had been rescued from a kill shelter as a puppy, adopted, and then returned by her first family because they were expecting a baby. That day our family rescued Fiona/Keisha/Fiona. We renamed her Annie because little orphan Annie was finally with her forever home. Now in 2023, Annie is 11 years old and the best friend to four boys. She has supported us through the birth of our second child and the birth of our twins. She is patient, sweet, tolerant of chaos, and completely devoted. One night, our three youngest children were arguing over who got to read to me. I went to get my husband and when I returned, one of our 7-year-olds was sitting next to Annie. He whispered in her ear "I love you too," and proceeded to read his book to her. She stayed with him the entire time. People say you never know what you will get if you rescue. We are proof you can rescue a best friend. ●

## MOE THE THERAPY DOG *Mary Kurtenbach*

I adopted Moe in August of 2012. He is now 11 years old and is such a good and happy dog. I was told he was a Terrier mix, but I had my suspicions that if there was any terrier it was a very small piece. Since I have had him, everyone wants to know what his makeup is. Most people see Lab. I decided to have his DNA done and surprise, surprise—he is almost 1/2 Golden Retriever! He is also golden in his heart. Because he is so calm and loves people, Moe is certified through Fairfax County Department on Aging as a therapy dog. We volunteer through Pets On Wheels and have visited assisted living communities for the last eight years (excluding the Covid years unfortunately). His favorite activity is to cuddle for hours. I just wanted to give you an update on such a wonderful dog who **AFH** rescued and I adopted. •



### JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP!

**AFH** has a Facebook group for our volunteers, adopters, and friends!

There's no spam, no politics, no debates—just pictures and stories about our dogs! We love seeing our dogs in your homes, with you on vacation, and living their best lives.

[www.facebook.com/groups/aforeverhome](http://www.facebook.com/groups/aforeverhome)

## HELP THE ENVIRONMENT AND SAVE A DOG!

We at Virginia Renewables rescued our solar pup Luna from **A Forever Home**. It was such a gift to be able to rescue Luna. She is a huge part of our company and we owe it all to everyone over at **AFH**. That is why we want to dedicate our efforts to helping other dogs in need!

**AFH** is partnering with us at Virginia Renewables to raise money for all of the dogs in need. We want to give back to the community as well as help people save money and the environment. For every homeowner who goes solar we will donate **\$500** to **AFH**! We pride ourselves on being education-forward and we put our customers' needs first. We want to make sure that you qualify for solar and that it will benefit you and your family.

The average homeowner in Virginia can cut their electric bill in half and make \$1,500 a year just by getting solar! See if your home qualifies, and when you go solar you'll be helping **AFH** save more dogs. We also work in Maryland and the District of Columbia with our sister company **City Renewables**, so if you live anywhere in the DMV we are able to help! We'll be running this fundraiser from May 1st through the end of August, giving everyone plenty of time to look into their options for going solar! Book an intro to solar call with us through our website [www.virginiarenewables.com](http://www.virginiarenewables.com) and let us know that you want to partake in the AFH fundraiser! We'll make sure to treat you like family, as we are all putting our efforts together to help more dogs in need! •

