**Stray Animal Guide**

We are limited on kennel space, and are sadly unable to take in every dog or cat in need. However, we have compiled a list of resources that may prove helpful for you and the animal in need.

What to do when you find a stray dog or cat:

* Actively seek owners for at least a week before sending it out of the area to rescues or shelters. Always require owners to provide proof of ownership (photos, vet records, identifying traits, etc.)
* Post online to Facebook pages like Polk County Humane Society Bolivar Mo, Leigh’s Lost and Found, and your local swap pages to find the animal’s owner. Be sure to include contact information, general location found, and a photo that doesn’t give away too many details that may be used as proof of ownership (collar color, sex, etc.)
* Ask at the local pound, animal control, rescue, or shelter to see if the owner contacted them looking for their animal. City pounds and shelters may also be a good resource to keep the animal safe while searching for the owner, especially if you are unable to house the animal.

What to do when no owner can be found:

* Go to Petfinder.com. Almost all rescues and shelters utilize Petfinder and it is an excellent resource if you are looking to re-home or surrender an animal.
* Search area shelters or rescues using your zip code, then contact them and provide multiple photos and as much information as possible. Information to include for the best response includes:
  + Good with kids? Cats? Dogs? Livestock?
  + Breed if known. Size and description if breed unknown.
  + Age
  + Sex
  + Spayed? Neutered? Unaltered?
  + Vaccination history if known
  + House trained? Crate trained?
  + Positive attributes (Plays fetch? Good off leash? Stays off furniture? Nondestructive? Etc.)
  + Negative attributes (Destructive? Dog aggressive? Escape artist? Hard to potty train? Scared of thunderstorms? Etc.)
* Do not be deterred from contacting rescues/shelters because of distance. Many rescues/shelters have volunteer transporters and/or the resources to assist in moving animals. It is always best to start with local shelters first, but others are also an option after waiting the appropriate amount of time.

We appreciate your willingness to help the animals in need. We apologize for the frustration and inconvenience caused by the shelter being unable to take in every animal. We do our best to help as many animals as possible, and hope to expand in the future to be able to help even more animals.