**Choosing a New Owner for Your Pet -Tips**

Rehoming your pet can be a very stressful experience. Here are some helpful tips from some rescue people.

1. Put together a great **flyer** with pictures and a clear description of your pet. ALL flyers should include pet’s name, age, spay/neuter status (please DO NOT rehome unaltered pets!), and short reason of why your pet needs a new home. Don’t forget your name and contact information too (phone AND e-mail). Play to the positive attributes of your pet with phrases that describe why a new family might love to have him/her. Additionally, if there is space, try to include:
   1. Cats – declaw status, indoor/outdoor experience; other cat, dog and child friendliness.
   2. Dogs – house, crate and leash trained; other dog, cat and child experience
2. Post the flyer on your social media page and ask your friends to share it. Having all the information ON the flyer helps when posts are shared – info doesn’t get lost. Don’t be afraid of listing your pet on classified sites. While there are many bad stories about what can happen to animals who are listed on those sites, remember it is not the sites fault that the pet was given away for free (*see attachment*) or the owner didn’t properly screen potential adopters (hints below). Many great people find and adopt great pets on these sites.
3. Make up a list of questions or an **adoption application** for all potential adopter and get answers to all your questions from ALL interested people. (*Sample application attached*). If they don’t want to answer your questions be suspicious. Tell everyone who calls that you have had a couple of inquiries about adopting your pet and in order to find them the right home you need to get some information from them. Let them know you will call them back after you have reviewed their application to ask further questions if needed but that you are committed to choosing the best home possible. Don’t commit to giving your pet away during the first conversation.
4. Always ask renters for their landlord or apartment community name. Most apartments (and many landlords) require pet deposits and most now also require monthly fees PER PET. **Contact the landlord or complex** to verify their pet policy (# of pets allowed, breed restrictions, claw restrictions, deposit required, monthly fees etc.). Explain that you are considering rehoming one of your pets to one of their tenants and that you want to make sure the pet is welcome, fits their requirements and that the tenant has paid all the required fees. Don’t be surprised to find out that potential adopters have not paid fees, have already reached their pet limit etc. Don’t be afraid to ask the potential adopter to bring proof of paid deposit before adopting. If a landlord discovers a prohibited pet on the premises most owners will abandon the pet before they get evicted if they can’t afford the fees required.
5. Always ask the potential adopter for the name of their current/previous veterinarian. Veterinarians are required by law to retain five years of history on all their clients. Most vet offices are happy to answer questions about the care of current/or past client’s pets. **Call the vet office** in the early afternoon (which is generally the least busy). Explain to the person answering the phone that you are considering rehoming your pet to one of their clients and that you would like information on the care of their current/past pets. Most are very helpful because a new pet in a good client home usually means more business for them. You will want to verify the pets they have on file for the individual, their spay/neuter status, and their vaccine history (annual rabies is the law) to insure your pet is going into a home with fully vaccinated pets. One good question to ask is if there is any notation in the file about the client refusing inoculations, procedures or treatments. Your goal should be to make sure your pet is going into a home where the owner will do their best to keep them healthy and take them to the vet if they are sick.
6. **ALWAYS ASK FOR A REHOMING/ADOPTION FEE**! (See attached). Generally speaking, good potential adopters expect that there will be a fee because they understand the cost of proper pet care. Don’t let them make you think they are doing you’re a “favor” by taking your pet. Don’t advertise other things that come with your pet (scratching posts, flea treatments, dog houses, food etc.) because some people may actually want the “stuff” more than your pet. They resell it and dump your pet. We advise a minimum rehoming fee on cats (not pure bred which should be higher) of $50. For dogs do your homework! See what similar dogs are going for from rescues/breeders. “Flippers” are very common with dogs (people who purchase only to resell at a profit) and you don’t want to see your pet relisted the next day for a higher price I a newspaper or classified site. It happens – believe me!
7. Use social media to investigate potential adopters… that’s right – stalk them! Most people today have Facebook Pages (you can search by name or e-mail address) and a lot can be gleaned from their posts there. You can usually see if they are collectors, they lose a lot of their pets and are advertising for more, if they list pets they are trying to sell, etc. There are other sites where you can view their homes, neighborhoods, crime stats etc. There are also animal trade/sell sites that some people “like” and follow on social media you should be aware of. “All Animals for Sale/trade Oklahoma Area” (https://www.facebook.com/groups/Animalsforsellorfree/), and “Oklahoma Pets for sale or free, lost and found” (https://www.facebook.com/groups/276885762373005/) are two such sites.
8. Don’t invite them to your home to view your pet for your own safety. Arrange an in-home visit to their home instead. With cats, consider videos or meeting at your/their vet office. Dogs are easier – you can meet at a park, PetSmart, Petco or any pet friendly establishment. With cats always transport in a carrier new family should have one too) and dogs should always be on a leash.
9. Consider an Adoption Contract (*sample attached*) to confirm the transaction and clearly outline the responsibilities of each party towards the pet.

Remember that you are looking for the best home possible for your pet. If something just doesn’t feel right, they give you conflicting answers to questions or you can’t imagine your pet in their care STOP! There are plenty of great homes looking for wonderful “pre-owned” pets in need. Be patient – your pet is depending on you!

More tips and resources:

<http://forrescue.net/376-2/>

<http://rehomeyourpets.com/>

<http://www.catchat.org/rehome.html>

<http://www.cats.org.uk/canterbury/what-we-do/what-to-do-if-you-need-to-rehome-your-cat>