

From Potomac Almanac, Dec. 2, 2009

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Saving Terry

Animal welfare cause draws caring crowd.

By Sharon Allen Gilder

The Almanac

The sound of making a difference for Montgomery County's animal population resounded from the walls of the Benjamin Franklin room at The Bolger Center in Potomac on Nov. 20 as 120 women and men gathered for Friends of Montgomery County Animals' (FMCA) annual fall luncheon with CAbi fashion show, boutiques and silent auction.

CAbi consultant, Charlie Wilson, returning to present the latest fashions said, "I was thrilled to be able to give a nice check to FMCA last year and hope to double it this year. It's great to be around animal lovers. They're the best." George Esherick, whose late wife, Dee, was a longtime FMCA board member, said he stays involved in FMCA's work because "it's a way of keeping my wife's memory alive. Nearly 100 percent of receipts go to the benefit of animals and, it's a follow-up to my many years on the board of the Washington Humane Society."



Katie Fechko, Lori Veirs, Ann Richardson, Arianne Tavakolian, Charlie Wilson, Susan Cameron, Penny Durham, Holly Hand, Melanie Williams, Laura Salisbury and Ellie Brown at the Friends of Montgomery County Animals' annual fall luncheon.

Potomac resident Posey Fox was escorted to the event by Terry, a two-year-old Fox Terrier and Chihuahua mix. Lucky for Terry, Fox was sitting in the veterinary office when he was brought in after being hit by a car. When she heard his owner, who gave up her ownership, would not pay for his surgery, Fox said she would see to it that he received the care he needed through FMCA..

Terry has recovered and currently is in Fox's foster care. When asked why she got involved, Fox said,

“That’s what I do because I love animals and have great sympathy for them. I couldn’t resist helping another animal.” She described Terry’s many attributes. “He’s neutered, house trained, non-alpha, very passive, loves cats and other dogs. He doesn’t jump and is not a barker. He’s very easy to manage, would be good with small children, and loves to cuddle on a lap or in his little dog bed.” Fox added, “If you are interested in giving Terry a good forever home call me: 301-977-6033.” Terry warmed hearts as he strutted along the fashion show’s “catwalk” with canine pride.

Former State Sen. Jean Roesser has been an FMCA supporter for years. She said, “It’s a lot of fun and it’s for such a worthy cause. Friends is so important to the community. The combination of the people and the showmanship for a tremendous cause is a dynamic duo.”

BOUTIQUE VENDORS displayed their wares and their love of animals. Cem Ozkok of Old World Jewelers has nurtured numerous feral cats over a period of 30 years. Currently, he has four ferals. He said, “They find me and I find them. Once they come into your home I find they are very domesticatable. Where the average street life for a feral is four years, I’ve had mine for 17 to 20 years. Contrary to what you hear, they love belly rubs. I have first hand experience.”

Potomac’s Cissy Grant assisted with The Surrey’s boutique loaded with animal related and other gift items from the store’s spin-off, The Surrey Two. She said, “Fun is what it is.”

FMCA board member, Marion Webster tackles the yeoman’s task of securing the vendors for the luncheon every year. “This organization is dedicated to improving the lives of the animals who desperately need our help. We wouldn’t be doing this if we didn’t believe. It’s a lot of effort but for a cause in which we all believe. Without a fundraiser like this we would not be able to accomplish the work we need to do,” she said.



Posey Fox and Terry.

FMCA, ESTABLISHED in 1974, is composed entirely of volunteers. Yearly membership is \$30 which includes three newsletters and invitations to fund-raising events. FMCA president, Claire Proffitt expressed her concern regarding what she termed “the silent victims of the foreclosure crisis.” Animals

left behind by their owners as they abandon their homes are a real concern for animal rights groups. She shared information about Gatsby, a six-year-old brown tabby. "eviction kitty" who has been abandoned twice. He was first rescued as a kitten from a Virginia dump only to be recently abandoned by his adoptees. Proffitt has provided him refuge at her home as he awaits a "forever home." Proffitt added, "It can be weeks or months before a bank or mortgage company visits an empty house to make an assessment or a neighbor notices pets are trapped in a house. Even if water or food were initially left, this is way too long for pets to survive. Though only 50 percent of pets turned into shelters are adopted, this is a far more humane choice than abandonment."

Proffitt notes everyone can help: "Canvas your home and work neighborhoods for foreclosed homes and check them for abandoned animals. Animal welfare experts agree, abandonment is never the answer."