



FRIENDS OF RABBITS & House Rabbit Sanctuary

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Remembering Diane Stalder

By Chris O.

During the holiday season, family and friends congregate to cherish both life and legacy. All those acquainted with Diane knew that she had a measureless compassion for animals. She changed their lives, whether volunteering at the Montgomery County Humane Society (MCHS) or supporting one of FoR's many rescue and adoption projects. In remembering Diane and her long-time dedication to animal rescue, we can spring into 2016 with confidence in our mission and passion in every part of what we do.

Much of Diane's every day experience centered on her motherly relationship with a variety of animals. To get a sense, we can imagine brushing off some stray hairs at the end of a productive day at the MCHS Animal Shelter or at an adoption event in a pet supply store. Coming home, the house

bounces with dogs and rabbits, while guinea pigs and chinchillas sniff around their well-tended quarters. A few cats splay across the floor to stretch their backs, while others hide like little ninjas. Along with her family, Diane nurtured a proverbial Noah's Ark.



Diane and her rabbit, Molly. From her Facebook page

She joined the Friends of Rabbits mission in the early 2000's. Serving as a Liaison to the MCHS Animal Shelter, she helped bridge the efforts of both organizations. In staffing adoption days and organizing pet-education for potential adopters, she became an integral force in public outreach.

Diane's advocacy went beyond the local operations. She had a strong and rallying voice on social media and other global outlets, such as Facebook and Change.org. She posted news that exposed animal abuse, and she

signed petitions supported by hundreds of thousands of other advocates. The legacy that she leaves behind is her call to be proactive, a precedent she set in leading by example.

As someone fervently dedicated to animal rescue, Diane welcomed challenges. "Like many of our fosterers," said Susan Wong, operator of the FoR Headquarters, "she had a soft spot for the difficult to adopt rabbits." This meant that her rescue and rehabilitation efforts focused on the unwanted animals, including those that exhibited behavior issues or simply were born with less popular physical traits. True to the mission at FoR, Diane was there for those that had no one else.

"We were very much about the business of rescuing rabbits," said Susan, recalling how much of her free time Diane spent on working for the animals. Nevertheless, she fondly noted that once Diane had discovered her favorite mixed drink, she would bring over the ingredients on some occasions to celebrate a hard day's work. Diane had a knack for understanding the needs—and comforts—of both people and pets.

She is survived by her husband and two sons, as well as six rabbits, two guinea pigs, two chinchillas, cats and dogs. Of the six bunnies, one is a shaggy lop with chronic ear complications and another is a small, brown up-eared rabbit. Henry and Adele, respectively, are a bonded pair who have grown (mostly) comfortable with dogs and cats, thanks to Diane's home environment and their new care-provider's attentive support. Gail Newcomb, their foster-mom, said she is lucky to have them in her care.

On New Year's Eve we raised our glasses to toast to our goals for 2016. Through everything that is Friends of Rabbits, we honor all those, like Diane, who make such a difference in the lives of the unwanted.

Many BFFs (best friends forever) are looking for forever homes in 2016.



Prue & Leo

A young, active and fun pair; who needs TV?!



Paige & Phoebe



Deeply bonded sisters, curious and cuddly.



Dante & Two Socks

Won't you give us the forever home we deserve?



Piper & Buddington

So sweet together and so soft!

Floppy & Lopyy



We resemble our names; no shame in that. Let's chill.



Nora & Clementine

Gal pals through thick and thin.



Kisses & Henry

Special needs bunnies with a lot of heart and will to overcome. They will steal your heart and Kisses will amaze you with athleticism despite her head tilt.



Chloe & Maddie

Chloe is not Dr. Evil, but her daughter is definitely Mini-Me

Ongoing Adoption Events

Recurrent adoption events at several local pet supply businesses bring rabbits ready for their forever home to many potential adopters in the DC/MD/VA area. FoR has partnered with *Bark!*, Pet Supplies Plus, and Petco to bring our rescued rabbits to meet the public. Events are ongoing- check the event listings in this newsletter, as well as on the Facebook page and Twitter feed (@Friends_Rabbits) for the latest adoption event schedule.

Come see us the Third Sunday of every month at:



7007 MANCHESTER BLVD
FRANCONIA, VA 22310
703-924-7246

Read more about all the adoptable rabbits on our website www.friendsofrabbits.org/adoptablerabbits.htm



Photos: Robin S.

All 9 of this Bunny Brady Bunch are ready for homes. Adopt separately or together; they get along better than Jan and Marcia!

FoR at DC Veg Fest

By Beck B.

On a rainy October Saturday, vegans and animal friends met for an epic summit in the Nation's Capital at the DC Veg Fest. This event brought over 10,000 visitors to the city street blocks near



Photo: FoR Facebook page

Nationals Park on First St. SE, and offered vegan cooking demonstrations, cruelty-free product artisans, delicious vegan food options, as well as a wealth of information about the ethical, health and environmental benefits of the vegan lifestyle.

Friends of Rabbits was at home amongst the myriad animal rights groups present. At a table in the midst of the bustling festival, volunteers Megan, Mariah, Cathy, Po, Mara, Alex and Susan handed out information and sold FoR shirts, mugs, totes and other merchandise in support of the rabbit rescue cause. Despite the weather, the event was profitable, friendly and joyous- and a huge success!

For information on next year's festival, visit the event website at <http://dcvegfest.com/>
To see more photos from this year's festival, visit the DC VegFest [Facebook](#) page.

FoR Holiday Party Spreads Hoppiness and Winter Cheer

By Beck B.

Volunteers, fosterers and community members alike joined together in the holiday spirit to celebrate the end of a successful year of rabbit rescue. Also in



All Photos: Amy S.

attendance was a litter of 8 adorable baby rabbits

and their caring mother, Heather. Partygoers mingled, sharing stories about rabbits past and present, while enjoying a huge spread of amazing vegan dishes, cookies and cupcakes.

In the spirit of giving, there were several fun ways to support the rescue rabbits throughout the

night. First, a giving tree was beautifully decorated by local Girl Scout troop #1592 with ornaments showing foster rabbits in need of sponsorship. Second, revelers picked up FoR merchandise for their holiday shopping, as well as adorable crocheted rabbit ornaments and magnets. A raffle with a grand prize of a beautiful wooden rabbit castle, and second prize of a wooden hay rack, both generously donated by Julie Kessler and custom-built by her talented husband, was just one highlight of the evening. Other prizes included handmade wooden toys, also kind gifts from Buns, Beds, and Beyond.

The stars of the party were undeniably Heather and



her babies, who were cuddled, pet and hugged by many bunny friends throughout the evening. Let's hope that 2016 marks the

year that they find loving forever homes! Thanks to Susan for hosting this enjoyable event and to all the volunteers who helped set up and break down the party.



Bunny Glamour: Raising money and looking good!

By Amy S.

Just before the holiday season began, Friends of Rabbits (FoR) Development & Fundraising Coordinator,



Photo: Amy S.

Mara H. organized a Glamour Shots Day in Columbia, MD, in the home of Susan W. The concept was simple: FoR members bring their bunnies to be groomed and photographed by volunteers in exchange for a small donation. This is exactly what happened. First, the rabbits received a complete brushing and a "mani-pedi" nail trim by the volunteer groomers. Next, they were taken to a make-shift studio for a photo shoot (with and without seasonal props) by one of the volunteer photographers. These photos were later edited and shared electronically with each bunny's family. Taking advantage of the studio set-up, the photographers also took photos of new foster bunnies to be posted online.

As FoR members began signing up for this early November event, it became clear that there were more people interested in participating than there were spaces available. As a result of this great response, a second Glamour Shots Day was scheduled and took place later the same month in Arlington, Virginia, hosted by Jennie M. in her father's (Gary's) home.

In addition to the main events, additional fundraising opportunities were set up for both the customers and volunteers. Rabbit supplies, fun items like t-shirts, and raffle tickets (for the holiday party drawing) were sold. When taking into consideration the grooming and glamour shots, purchases, and additional donations during these events, FoR raised a total of \$2,418.

Many thanks to Mara, the hosts, the rabbit groomers, the photographers, and the many other volunteers who helped keep each event running smoothly!

The Rewards of Caring for Special Needs Rabbits

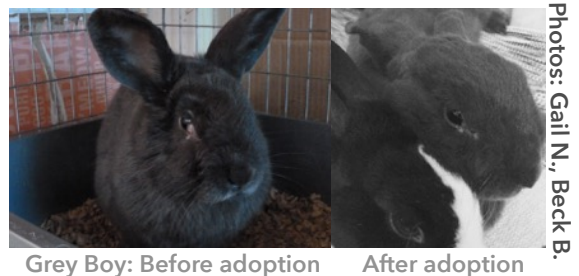
By Gail N.

Throughout the last several months, as I have been chasing, treating and soothing two current special needs rabbits, I have reflected on how these rabbits have brought such richness to my life.

The term *special needs rabbits* includes rabbits with a wide range of conditions. They may be rabbits simply in need of extra care with grooming or those with chronic internal issues, ranging from dental problems, to neurological issues from infections like *E. cuniculi*. Others may require eye drops or special bedding and a modified litter box.

A loving lop named Zoey came into my life in April of 2009 and left quietly about 6 months later. She had become incontinent from kidney failure, lost weight and her back legs became weak. As I clumsily assist fed her, cleaned her, and tried to make her comfortable, Zoey remained gentle and loving. She taught me that rabbits could be patient teachers.

Grey Boy's life as my foster began in April 2014, with immediate hospitalization and subsequent home care with multiple medications and therapies. His benign third eyelid tumor was stabilized and today he needs observation, tear duct cleaning and eye drops. He was adopted by longtime FoR supporters and has since been renamed Theon Greyjoy due to his past hardships and search for acceptance. He offered insight into adaptation and bravery.



Grey Boy: Before adoption After adoption

Photos: Gail N., Beck B.

In January of 2015, one of our members described a rabbit with a paralyzed leg languishing in a shelter. With proper medication, bedding and care, he became friends with our cat, two rats and a guinea pig. Lapin wanted nothing more than a family. Recently, he developed an abscess in his jaw. His care involved twice-daily wound cleaning and medication. In spite of all this, he requested comfort, affection and still leaped off the bed to explore and play unless restricted. He unfortunately lost his battle with the abscess in mid-December. His gift was altruistic love and the necessity of play in dark times.



Lapin and one of his many friends. Photo: Gail N.

An 8-year-old furball named Henry, had an ear removed because it was so badly infected. The infection would not heal with conventional treatment. Henry's wound is also open and requires the same treatment as Lapin's did. Henry's pride is offended by this treatment so caring for him can be challenging. To maintain his dignity, he will turn his back to you. He then will remind me he cares by leaning into my arm for comfort. Henry's lesson is dignity in the face of aging.



Henry (left) and Adele.

Photo: Robin S.

If you have love, patience and a willingness to learn, please consider adopting a special needs bunny. Whatever the experience, you will gain back many times over whatever love and time you give in knowing that you are helping a soul with a profound need.

This article is dedicated to Dr. Claire Godwin of Laytonville Veterinary Practice. Without her knowledge, skill, compassion and open mind, these, and many other rabbits would not have had the opportunity to live the life they deserve.

Little Bunnies, Big Bills

By Alix B.

There is nothing more heartbreaking than a sick bunny. While we would all love to be able to give our buns any and everything they need, finances can be a real concern. Thankfully, there are options to help out next time we need to hop to the vet.

Pet insurance

Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) (<http://www.petinsurance.com/pet-insurance>), owned by Nationwide, is the only pet insurance company to offer small animal policies. The plan for rabbits is \$12/month per pet and covers accidents, injuries, illnesses, hospitalizations, diagnostics, surgeries and medications. You must pay your veterinarian up front, but for covered services, you will receive reimbursement after the insurance processes the claim. There is a \$50 deductible per incident, and the insurance covers 90% after that, up to the maximum benefit allowed per condition.

CareCredit

CareCredit (<http://www.carecredit.com/>) is a medical credit card that can be used to cover the costs of veterinary bills. For any purchases over \$200 it is interest free as long as you make the monthly payments on time and pay off the total amount before the end of the promotional period. Most veterinary offices offer 6 month interest-free plans. There is no sign up fee or annual fee. CareCredit works well in conjunction with pet insurance to cover the up-front cost of the bill while waiting for reimbursement.

Pet Assure

Pet Assure (<https://www.petassure.com>) is a network of veterinary clinics that offer discounts to Pet Assure members. It covers 25% of all of the approved in-hospital veterinary treatments, exams and surgeries. Pet Assure does not cover inventory items, such as prescription medications sent home. The costs are \$149/year for 2-4 pets per household and \$199/year for unlimited pets. The only catch is you have to make sure your primary care veterinarian is willing to become a provider before signing up. You can recommend them to your veterinarian through the Pet Assure website.

Pet Trusts

By Angela R.

Although people hate to think about it, proper estate planning is essential to ensure the proper handling of one's final affairs—including providing for one's animals. Moreover, providing for one's animals after death is part of being a responsible animal caregiver. Pet trusts were established to make this legally possible, as one cannot leave assets to an animal outright.

Before the creation of pet trusts, the law did not necessarily or fully recognize a person's desire to provide for their animals. Of course, even today not everyone appreciates such intentions. So the preparation and implementation of a pet trust should involve individuals who take these intentions seriously.

Not all states have pet trusts, but fortunately the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland all do.

What is a trust?

A “trust” is a legal instrument used to manage property, established by one person (the “grantor”) for the benefit of another (the “beneficiary”). The trust is managed by a “trustee.” Trusts are commonly part of overall estate plans and are becoming more popular.

What is a pet trust?

A “pet trust” is a trust established specifically for the care of one or more animals. The animals are the beneficiaries, and the trustee is legally obligated to use trust funds for the animals’ benefit as instructed. The pet trust is established according to state law to ensure that it is valid and enforceable.

What terms should be included in a pet trust?

Identify Beneficiaries. The animal beneficiaries must be living or in vitro at the time of the grantor’s death. As one may have multiple animals throughout the course of life, and different animals at death than when a trust is created, the animals should not be designated by name or description. Instead, a phrase such as “any animals owned by [grantor] at the time of death” should be used. Microchips are one effective method to identify which animals were owned by the decedent without imposters expanding the class of beneficiaries.

Select a Trustee. A trustee and one or more alternates should be designated in the pet trust. A separate “caretaker” also can be named, but is usually the trustee unless the trustee is an organization or someone not capable of living with or caring for the animals. Sometimes an “enforcer” is designated to ensure the trustee follows the terms of the trust. In any case, these parties should be trustworthy, responsible and willing to see to the well-being of the animals.

Identify Remaindermen. A “remainderman” is one entitled to the remains of a trust. Often an organization dedicated to helping animals is designated as the remainderman of a pet trust.

Fund the Trust. Any money or other assets designated to a pet trust must be reasonable based on the class of animal beneficiaries. If the funding is challenged by, e.g., a relative, the court will order that any funding considered excessive pass to the remainderman, or to the successors in interest in the grantor’s probate estate.

It is impossible to predict with certainty the number, ages and needs of one’s future animal beneficiaries. But guidelines exist to help calculate reasonable provisions for the trust including veterinary expenses, caretaker stipends, trustee insurance, etc. Also, including a house or farm in the pet trust will be considered reasonable only if for the benefit of a large class of animals, such as those belonging to an animal rescuer. If only one or two animals are involved, it will be difficult to justify the use of an entire house. The house may be bequeathed directly to the caregiver instead.

Understand the Timing. A trust should remain in effect until the last animal beneficiary dies. Any funds left in the trust at that time pass to the remaindermen. One of the benefits of a trust is that it can be prepared to go into effect immediately, versus having to wait until probate is completed.

Consider Other Trust Provisions. There are more provisions that can be included in a pet trust than can be discussed here. A qualified attorney can help someone establish a trust appropriate for his or her circumstances and desires—and avoid drafting pitfalls.

What if I do not have a pet trust?

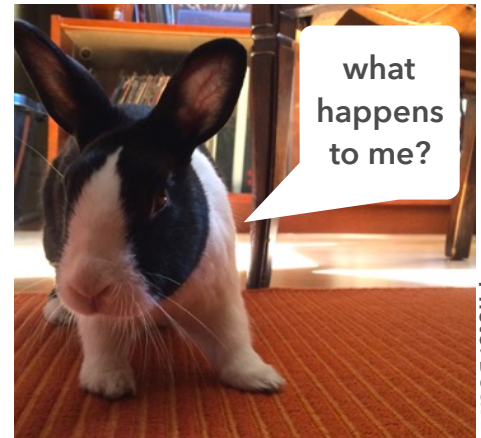


Photo: Beck B.

Without a pet trust, animals are treated like any other estate property. An animal can be bequeathed to a particular person, or pass with the residual (*i.e.*, property that remains in an estate after all specific gifts are made).

Is there any reason one would *not* want a pet trust?

A pet trust may not be worth the effort if one has a small estate. Also, a trust must be enforced over the life of the animal beneficiaries to be effective. It might be better to identify in a will someone who would genuinely care for the animals. The risk exists, however, that this person prematurely meets with their own demise or some other circumstance that prevents her from caring for the animal.

How much does it cost to establish a pet trust?

The estate planning needs of each person are different. Preparation cost is determined by the time it takes to review personal and financial information and prepare the will and trust.

For more information, visit sites such as:

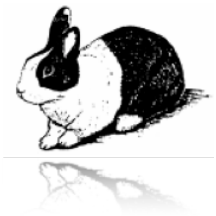
D.C. Bar - Animal Law Committee, www.dcbbar.org.

Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), www.hsus.org.

The Doris Day Animal League, www.ddal.org/pettrusts.

American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), www.actec.org.

Estateplanningforpets.org,
www.estateplanningforpets.org.



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Volunteer Activity Spotlight

The Joy and Importance of Fostering

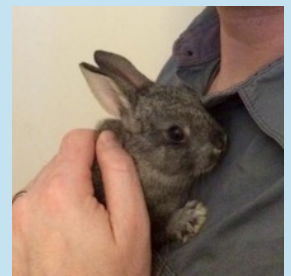
By Maxine K.

According to a 2012 [study in the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science](#), rabbits are the third most surrendered animal to animal shelters in the United States after cats and dogs. Friends of Rabbits (FoR) mainly takes in rabbits that are in immediate danger of euthanasia from shelters or rabbits reported as strays. FoR also provides temporary foster care to abandoned and neglected rabbits, provides for the spay/neuter and arranges adoptions into loving, indoor, forever homes. FoR volunteers serve as fosters providing love, support, and stability for homeless rabbits awaiting adoption. Fostering "buys" each rabbit time while it is waiting to find a permanent home. It allows a rabbit to be socialized, get accustomed to a home environment, and, if it has been abused, to gradually learn to trust humans again.

FoR currently has thirty baby bunnies in need of foster homes!

If you would like to become a fosterer, please email info@friendsofrabbits.org or call 703-627-7892

An existing FoR fosterer will contact you to set up an interview time. If you decide that fostering is for you, a home visit will be arranged to determine if your space can be set up to safely foster rabbits. Once you are approved as a fosterer of FoR, you will be added to the fostering Google Group for facilitating communication and updates.



FoR provides education on rabbit care and behavior to its fosterers, as well as one-on-one guidance to ensure that the family is familiar with common rabbit behaviors, such as their chewing and litter box habits. The individual must know how to properly handle a rabbit, including the correct method for picking up and holding a rabbit. The foster parent should be able to recognize behavioral changes that may indicate that the

rabbit is ill or injured and may require veterinary care. FoR can administer medical care for rabbits in need. Foster parents should contact FoR officers to receive pre-approval for this care, except in cases of emergency.

Fostering requires a certain time commitment for daily care of the rabbit. Rabbits are typically in foster care for six to nine months, but sometimes stay for as long as one year if adoptions lag due to a variety of reasons. The fosterer must provide a regularly cleaned indoor living space for the bunny, such as a large cage, exercise pen or bunny-proofed room (preferably min. 8 square feet) in a space separate from his/her own rabbits. If the rabbit is housed in a cage, he/she must be given regular opportunities to stretch and exercise. FoR provides exercise pens or large cages to house the rabbit. Fosterers provide a regular diet of unlimited timothy hay or some other grass hay, such as brome or orchard, measured amounts of pellets, fresh water, and salad. FoR operates several supply locations and offers these consumables at cost to fosterers.

Socialization is an important part of fostering. The fosterer must be willing to work with shy bunnies to help them become more socialized, and thus, make them more adoptable. In addition, the fosterer must be available to drive the rabbit to adoption events and veterinary appointments as necessary. If the foster family has other pets in the home, they must not be aggressive or pose a danger to the rabbit.

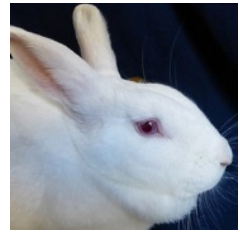
There is also a public relations aspect to fostering. Fosterers should have access to a camera to take pictures of the bunny or be able to take the bunny to the Media Coordinator for pictures to be taken. Fosterers are essential in educating the public about the many rewards and challenges involved in life with a house rabbit. Foster parents interview potential adopters and provide information about the individual rabbit's personality and any behavioral or medical issues it may have. The foster's knowledge of the rabbit's personality plays an essential part in finding the right forever home.

Fostering does require a certain degree of selflessness. The ultimate goal of fostering is to find an adoptive home that is better than the foster home. When the time comes, the fosterer should be prepared to give up their little charge to his or her forever home, where he or she will get the one-on-one attention they deserve. Of course, if you become attached, you always have the option of adopting your foster bunny. When this happens it is jokingly referred to as a "failed fosterer."

The rewards of fostering are numerous. Opening your heart and home to a rabbit in need is a special way to show your love for these gentle, intelligent, and sensitive creatures. Fostering can save a shelter bunny from euthanasia or a rescued stray bunny from injury or starvation. It is also a wonderful way to get to know rabbits better and watch them blossom under your care. Witnessing your foster rabbit's transition from a shelter or "life on the streets" to a loving home of its own is rewarding. Best of all, fostering saves lives. And the more foster homes FoR has, the more rabbits they can save.

Bunny Personals

By Gunnar J.



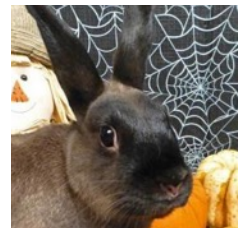
BETTY WHITE

Almost more bunny than you can snuggle, but not quite.



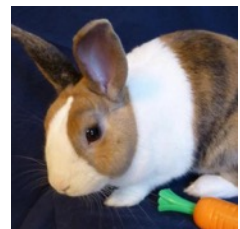
PRINCESS PUFF

Always gets what she wants. Always.



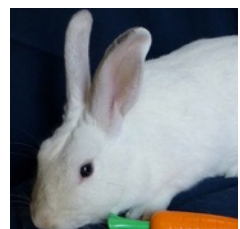
NITA

Once completed a bunny speed date in under 12 parsecs.



CARTER

Well adapted to house life: friendly, relaxed, soft. Also, very hard to see when standing in front of your calico cat.



SNOWBERRY

So gorgeous, even in disguise.

A Typical day at Maryland 'Bunny Central'

By Maxine K.

Although Friends of Rabbits (FoR) has volunteers who foster rabbits in private homes, the two largest foster homes in the FoR system are located in Columbia, Maryland and Arlington, Virginia. Susan Wong's solar-powered house in MD provides temporary housing and care for 25-40 foster rabbits at any given time. Of that total, 7 are sanctuary rabbits. They have taken in other small animals from shelters in need when necessary; there are currently several guinea pigs available for adoption as well. Incoming rabbits from shelters are placed in a temporary quarantine room until they are cleared by a vet for placement in the foster system. Once they are: 1) spayed/neutered, and 2) either given a clean bill of health or any health conditions are managed/stabilized, they can be transferred to a foster home or moved to the main rabbit housing area in the basement.

Managing so many rabbits could have a huge environmental impact, but Susan's house operates in an eco-friendly manner. A typical day at Susan's house begins with morning feedings and making the rounds to ensure that all of the rabbits are well-fed, happy, and healthy. Organic greens are obtained from local markets and farmers, and litter waste is composted. After all rabbits are fed and checked, the next step is to administer medications to the sick rabbits and assist feed them if needed. Susan also checks in on the bonding rabbits to make sure the rabbits are getting along, looking for any signs of aggression. Another regular event is transporting the rabbits to veterinary appointments - usually for spaying/neutering. This is often done in plug-in hybrid/electric vehicle to minimize fuel consumption. Throughout the day, FoR volunteers also visit the house to help with cleaning, changing litter boxes, and to spend time with the rabbits so they get used to human contact.

The house is bustling in the evening between appointments for rabbit issues, visitors, phone calls, and emails to return. These messages may involve anything from potential adoptions to questions about sick rabbits to how to handle rabbit behavioral problems. Then it's time for evening feedings and medications, as well as the occasional emergency to stabilize a sick or injured rabbit.

In addition to the daily care of the rabbits, the house is a central point for coordination of volunteers for various FoR events. People from the rabbit community stop by to purchase local hay bales, bags of specialty hay, timothy pellets, litter, and toys for their rabbits. Others drop off their bunnies for boarding and grooming while they are away on vacation. Bunny sitting is a popular service amongst the FoR community, providing peace of mind during vacations, business trips, and other travel. Another service carried out by Susan and the rest of the Rabbit Central crew is bunny speed dating for those who want to find a friend for their bunny, as well as the subsequent bonding of successfully matched rabbits. These "bunnymoons" typically take 1-2 weeks and require close scrutiny- either by volunteers or by security cameras when the humans are at work.

While a "forever home" is the ideal outcome for rescued rabbits, sometimes serious health or behavioral issues prevent this from happening. The rabbit sanctuary provides a safe haven for these special needs bunnies so they can live out their lives comfortably and peacefully. The majority of the sanctuary rabbits are housed at Pam Hurley's home in Northern VA. She currently has 3 foster rabbits and 14 sanctuary bunnies in her care. Sanctuary rabbits are adoptable, but they have special needs and require additional support. If a sanctuary

**GET YOUR RABBIT SUPPLIES
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**Columbia, MD
Arlington, VA**

Limited pickup:
Bethesda, MD

and-NEW in 2016

**our 4th location- Rockville, MD
ask about our volunteer discounts!**

rabbit is to be considered for adoption, it is key that the person adopting is experienced with rabbits so they can properly care for the rabbit's medical needs. Special training can help adopters recognize unusual behaviors for that particular rabbit, and to seek immediate veterinary assistance, if necessary.

2015 marked a number of successes for FoR and these two central foster homes were critical for that success. With over 150 rabbits coming into the FoR system and 6 litters of baby bunnies being rescued, most of the intake, triage, and emergency boarding occurred through the two central FoR residences. In addition, 2015's numerous fundraising and adoption events utilized Bunny Central as a base for planning and organization.

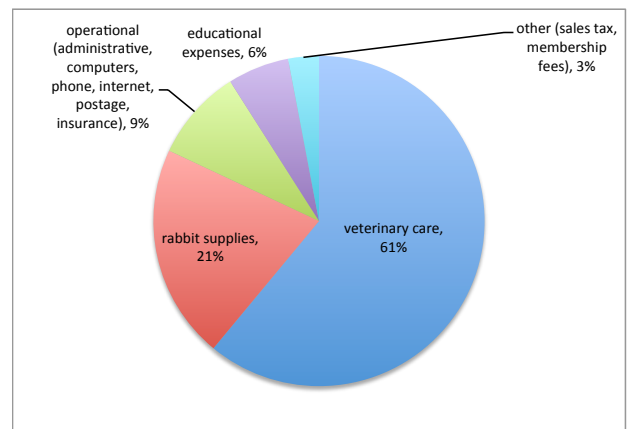
When asked what she hopes to accomplish in the New Year, Susan simply responded, "Save more rabbits!" With the continued help of volunteers for the smooth operation of Bunny Central, this dream can be realized.

How your donations helped 2015 be a year of triumph for many rabbits

By Steph M.

Did you know that Friends of Rabbits is an entirely volunteer-run nonprofit that rescues, rehabilitates and adopts out more than 100 rabbits annually? This year, 150 rabbits were rescued and more than 100 were adopted out, the most for any one year in Friends of Rabbits history.

You can imagine that caring for this number of rabbits is not an easy or inexpensive feat - yet one that we make happen year after year. So, how is this possible? The long and short of it is the generous support of volunteers with their time, and donors with monetary donations!



Our network of volunteers accomplishes so much, from fostering adoptable rabbits, to caring for sanctuary rabbits, to administrative functions such as running events and working with partner organizations to coordinate the rescue of rabbits in need. But this would not be possible without donations - **in 2015, the majority of raised funds (82%) went directly to the rabbits, either through veterinary care: spays/neuters, acute medical care to help rescued rabbits become healthier (and therefore more adoptable), and supplies for caring for rabbits.** Our annual fundraising matching funds campaign and several fundraising events brought in the majority of funds for the year. At the end of the year, we were delighted to hear that we were awarded a Petco Foundation Grant for \$2500, and also were the recipients of over \$2000 from the Petco Holiday Giving Tree.

In 2016, Friends of Rabbits will be launching two new fundraising initiatives: Foster Sponsorships (contribute to help adoptable rabbits in the care of fosters until they find their forever homes) and Virtual Adoptions (help support the ongoing care of a rescued sanctuary bunny) - so stay tuned for more info about those.

In the meantime, remember that there are lots of ways to show your support:

- Make a donation online: Go to our website and click "Donate Now" on the left hand side
- Support Friends of Rabbits Events: Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @Friends_Rabbits to keep up to date on the latest events
- Volunteer: Consider coordinating a fundraising event or helping with our website/other digital media channels (E-mail volunteer@friendsofrabbits.org for more information about volunteer opportunities)



The humans and rabbits of Friends of Rabbits sincerely thank you, our supporters, volunteers, and friends from the bottom of our hearts. Because of your generous donations- we met our \$10,000 matching funds campaign goal and are in a great place to make 2016 the best yet!

Ari Gato, Mr. Ari Gato!

By Steph M.

Bongo Berman was rescued off the streets of Alexandria, VA in 2011. While he was a stray, he became a skinny and skittish little thing, and some kind of predator even chomped off a good portion of his left ear! Luckily, he ended up in the extraordinary care of Friends of Rabbits.

Bongo now goes by Mr. Ari Gato (well, his name was Aurus Maximus initially, "the Great Ear" in Latin - but Mr. Ari Gato rolls off the tongue better). He's a full-time free-range rabbit that has his human wrapped around his little paws. His favorite pastimes include taking naps in a cardboard house, positioning himself throughout the house in places where he can see everything that's going on, [running in circles around his human's feet](#) (this "herding" behavior is a display of affection), snuggling on the couch, and begging for hay and fresh greens. What a life!



Photo: Steph M.

Things are great now for him, and credit is largely due to the Friends of Rabbits network of volunteers. From rescuing him from an Alexandria municipal shelter, to educating his human about the rewards and unique challenges of having a pet rabbit, to providing support when he was very sick not long ago - Friends of Rabbits has played an important role throughout his life.

Today, Ari is still a fighter and a survivor - like he was the day he was picked up off the streets, but infinitely more sweet and trusting. He has chronic kidney disease due to a mass growing on one of his kidneys, but still manages to demonstrate that every day that life is precious and joyful. He binkies with wild abandon, chins and licks like there is no tomorrow, and you can still see him smiling with his eyes even though he's got quite a medical regimen that includes injectable fluids!

"Ari Gato" means "Thank You" in Japanese, and is a fitting name for him, as his presence is a gentle reminder for all of us that there is so much in life to be thankful for!



Upcoming Events

Sunday 1/10 12-3 PM Adoption Event at Bark! [5805 Clarksville Square Drive, Clarksville, MD](#)

Saturday 1/23 12-3 PM Adoption Event at Petco [9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA](#)

Sunday 2/7 12-3 PM Adoption Event at Bark! [16822 Georgia Avenue, Olney, MD](#)

Saturday 2/20 12-3 PM Adoption Event at Petco [9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA](#)

Saturday 2/27 Volunteer Orientation in Rockville, MD, details forthcoming

Saturday, 3/19 12-3 PM Adoption Event at Petco [9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA](#)

Sunday 3/20- Three events!

1. Adoption event- Bark! Clarksville, MD [5805 Clarksville Square Drive, Clarksville, MD](#)
2.  **Great Sage Benefits day for FoR**
[5809 Clarksville Square Dr, Clarksville, MD](#)
10% of proceeds go to FoR!
3. Spring Egg-stravaganza for Tots at Robinson Nature Center

Search for eggs and discover which animals laid them! This is a stroller-friendly jaunt through the Robinson Nature Center's indoor exhibits and along paved portions of the trail. Afterward, learn about rabbits meet some adoptable rabbits. Pre-registration required.

info at www.howardcountymd.gov/robinsonnaturecenter.htm

Saturday 4/16 -12-3 PM Adoption event at Petco [9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA](#)

Sunday 4/17- Adopt an Amazing Animal Day at Robinson Nature Center.

After a puppet show of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, meet adoptable rescue turtles and rabbits! Collaboration with Mid-Atlantic Turtle and Tortoise Society (MATTS).

Every 3rd Sunday 12-3 PM Adoption events at Pet Supplies Plus [7007 Manchester Blvd. Franconia, VA](#)