



HOLIDAY 2018

PAW PRINTS

SECOND CHANCES FOR SENIORS

When dogs get old, their faces turn silver, their lips get loose, their eyes get cloudy—it's to remind us that they need our extra love and care. When dogs get old, they slow down. They get stiff, they aren't sure about the stairs anymore, and they appreciate you helping them up onto the sofa. They need you for things they once didn't, and in return, your bond strengthens. When dogs get old, they get set in

their ways. They can be stubborn, practice "selective hearing" and grumble about. It makes us laugh and teaches us patience.

But sometimes, when dogs get old, they wind up homeless and in need of a new life, a second chance and a special person to give them just that. **That's where Heather Patti and her husband Adam Ferguson come in. They believe that animal rescue is all about giving, which is why they are passionate about adopting senior dogs.**

We first met Heather when she visited BARCS in 2016. She was standing at the counter in our lobby, signing in to meet Willis, a 12-year-old senior dog with a long list of medical needs. Heather had read about Willis on BARCS' Facebook page and was eager to meet him.

Heather recalls, "We were looking to adopt, and when I saw the post about Willis. I knew I had to have him. I wasn't sure how my husband Adam would react to his age, since Willis was a senior dog. A few days later,

when my husband was also looking at Facebook, he read a description out loud about a dog with flat 'hippopotamus teeth and a bare bottom from alopecia.' It turned out he was reading Willis' same story! It was then that we knew it was meant to be, so we welcomed Willis into our home a few days later."

In a short time, Willis' appearance approved so greatly that he seemed to be aging backwards. Heather loved the way Willis perked up whenever she was baking anything in the kitchen. Willis would start bounding around the room like a puppy, knowing that Heather was going to share something yummy with him. She referred to him often as her 'angel.'

For two years, Heather and Adam took tremendous care of Willis and all his medical needs. He thanked them every day with love, devotion and his 'old man antics.' Then, this past July, Willis passed suddenly and unexpectedly. The family was heartbroken.

"We decided to visit BARCS again about a month after we lost Willis," says Heather.

(continued on page 3)

**Heather's
"angel"
Willis**

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The mission of saving senior pets is incredibly close to my heart. Last year, my family welcomed Oreo, a perfectly not-so-perfect 10-year-old pup into our lives. From the moment I met her, she had my heart, and she quickly snuggled her way into the hearts of my husband and two sons. What she lacks in youth, she makes up for in affection. And I swear, sometimes when Oreo is looking lovingly at my boys, or when she rolls into a ball to nap by my side, she's showing us she is grateful for our companionship and this second chance at life.

What she probably doesn't realize is just how thankful we are that she came into our lives.

Here at BARCS, we truly believe that love lasts forever, and that a graying face shows character, wisdom and a gentle heart. As an open admission shelter, we take in every animal that comes to our doorstep, no matter what the condition, circumstance or age. Senior animals not only require extra, expensive medical treatments and attention during their stay with us, but also need special adopters to welcome them home.

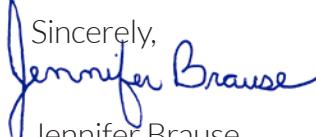
But, too often, senior animals are overlooked at shelters, making their stays longer than younger pets who are deemed more desirable. At BARCS, we're working to change that through our Love Lasts Forever Program for senior dogs and cats.

The Love Lasts Forever Program supports the care of our senior animals and waives their adoption fees in order to cut down their stay at the shelter and quickly get them loving homes. Last year, this program gave 'Happily Ever Afters' to more than 700 senior animals, like Chico in our cover story.

November is Adopt a Senior Pet Month. To celebrate, BARCS is dedicating donations now through Giving Tuesday, a national day of charity on November 27, to our Love Lasts Forever Program. The goal is to fully fund this program for the year in order to give these very deserving senior pets the wonderful homes they deserve. We hope that you will consider a gift to BARCS this holiday season to help us save lives. It's because of your friendship and financial support of our shelter that we are able to maintain essential programs to give senior animals hope.

Thank you for giving all animals, both young and old, a second chance. We couldn't do it without you.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brause

BARCS Founder and Executive Director

P.S. We've enclosed an envelope in this newsletter to send a gift supporting BARCS' Love Lasts Forever Program. If you would like to dedicate your gift in honor or memory of a special person or pet, please let us know. Thank you for your support.

LOVE LASTS FOREVER

November is Adopt a Senior Pet Month. To celebrate, BARCS is dedicating donations through Giving Tuesday to our Love Lasts Forever Program for senior animals. This program supports the care of senior animals and covers their adoption fee to help them find loving homes quickly.

\$10 Feeds a homeless senior pet for a week

\$20 Gives a medical exam and vaccinations to a homeless senior pet

\$75 Covers the adoption fee for a senior pet

\$100 Pays for a visit to a veterinary specialist to diagnose special senior medical needs

\$500 Will support the entire cost of care for a senior pet from the moment they come to our shelter to the day they are adopted



SECOND CHANCES FOR SENIORS (continued from page 1)

"That's where we met Chico, literally the saddest, most lost dog I've ever encountered. He looked at me like all he wanted was a hug. I felt a connection. But just then, while standing in front of his kennel door, a staff member arrived to take him outside to meet another family."

Heather thought that it wasn't meant to be and elected to meet other dogs. But then, fate intervened, just like it had two years

ago with Willis. "While we were outside, we saw Chico," Heather remembers. "We caught each other's eye, and he immediately perked up and wagged his tail. The couple he was meeting with remarked that he really seemed interested in me and Adam, and agreed that he was picking us."

Despite his long list of medical issues, Heather and Adam brought Chico home and vowed to give him everything needed. Heather says, "We knew we weren't replacing Willis,

but we had this love and companionship to give, and Chico seemed like he needed it. We saw how happy Willis had been, and hoped we could bring this happiness to Chico too."

Not long after adoption, Chico was diagnosed with cancer. But that doesn't deter Heather's big heart from her mission to save senior pets. "Adopting senior animals is about meeting them where they most need you. Just like Willis, we will take care of Chico for as many days as we are blessed to have him,"

When Heather met Chico, there was an instant connection.



Chico relaxing on the lawn at BARCS

says Heather. "He's a happy boy," she says, "totally unaware of his diagnosis. We are lucky to have found him in enough time to share our love with him."

And Heather and Adam say that they will do it again someday. "Senior dogs are the best!" says Heather. "They're already housebroken, know the basic commands, and are incredibly loyal. They're so amazingly grateful for a second chance, and have a lot to give."

Because, when dogs get old...they make the *best* friends.

This Holiday season, help BARCS continue to be a positive resource in our community by giving generously using the enclosed envelope. Your gift will give the gift of life to Baltimore's homeless and needy pets. Happy Holidays, and thank you for your kindness.

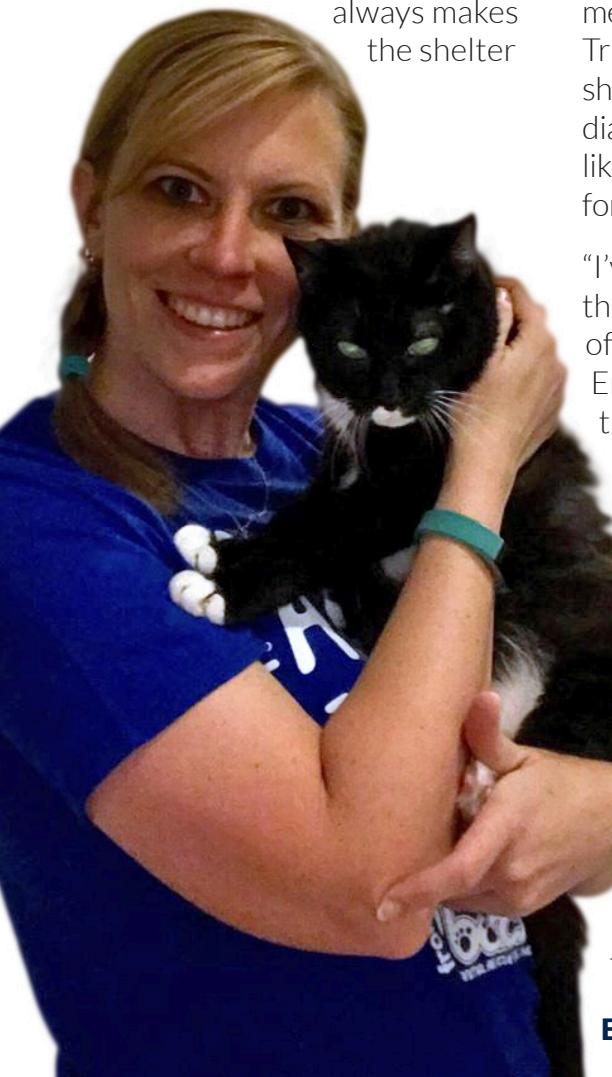


ERIN TO THE RESCUE!

Shelter life can be difficult on cats. Many cats struggle with new surroundings and meeting strangers. This can be especially true for senior cats, who have only ever known their once-homes. That's when BARCS foster volunteers like Erin Saul comes to their rescue! Erin specializes in the "hard-to-place" cases – those cats who are older, or who have medical, physical or behavioral challenges. A shelter is no place for cats like these to spend months or even a year waiting for the right adopter. So, Erin opens her home and heart to them with offerings of peace and quiet, and loving attention.

Erin began fostering for BARCS in 2012. It was May, and "kitten season" had just begun which

always makes
the shelter



overcrowded. "**We were inundated with cats all summer long,**" Erin said. "**And I couldn't stand to see these older cats being continually passed over.**" That was when she decided to become a foster volunteer for BARCS.

"I'm a sucker for the older ones that have special needs," Erin said. Some, like her current senior foster, 14-year-old Trinity, have medical issues. "People often shy away from these cats at first," Erin said. "I foster them so the busy shelter team has one less cat to medicate and monitor daily." Senior Trinity has renal disease, and now she's on a special diet. Despite her diagnosis, Erin says that Trinity acts like a normal, happy cat and is ready for adoption.

"I've had about 47 fosters over the last 6 years." The average stay of the special needs cats that Erin chooses is between two and three months in her home. "One of my fosters took two months to come out from under the bed! I ended up fostering him for seven months, and I spent a lot of time working with him before he was adopted," Erin said. "If he'd had to spend those months cowering in corner of a cage in the shelter, nobody would have ever taken notice of him."

Instead, he was able to live in the quiet comfort of one of the

Erin and Trinity



Trinity lounging in his favorite spot

two rooms Erin has dedicated for her feline lodgers.

Although Erin's current foster, Trinity, is still searching for her forever family, Erin remains positive that she has a special person out there, too. And that's what drives Erin to help, the mission at BARCS to make sure every cat gets a chance and is treated individually for their unique set of needs, no matter what their age or circumstance.

"It's so fulfilling," Erin said. "It's time well-spent. It's been the best decision I ever made."

If you are interested in giving a home to Trinity, please email foster.barcs@gmail.com to set up an appointment with Erin. Trinity's adoption fee has been waived thanks to the Love Lasts Forever Program for senior pets (read more about this program on page 2).