



ANIMAL FRIENDS:

PSYCHOLOGY AT WORK IN THE  
COMMUNITY

# AnimalFriends MISSION AND VISION

The mission at Animals friends is:  
To rescue, rehabilitate and rehome animals in crisis, ensure healthy pets through education, advocacy and affordable services, and inspire a community where the animal-human bond is celebrated and nurtured.

Their vision is: A humane and compassionate future for every animal friend.



# CLASSICAL CONDITIONING AND REWARD TRAINING

These are the behavior modification methods used by staff and volunteers when interacting with the animals on site.

This is to create, modify, or solidify associations and behavioral patterns displayed by the animals

\* confetti was adopted by a fellow volunteer his new name is Bugsy



Subject: Confetti (the three-month-old, rambunctious Beagle/Border Collie mix)

Reward: Frozen blueberries  
I picked this reward because he loves them, they are healthy, help his teething, and they are something he doesn't get often

Behaviors in question: Sit, down, and generally getting used to leash walking

\*\* frequent play breaks were used between training sessions

# WHY DO TRAINING?

- Gives the animal an opportunity to think
- Acts as enrichment
- Improves the Human/Animal relationship
- An opportunity for the animal to learn new and valuable skills
- Can help improve the animal's adaptability
- If nothing else, it can be fun :)





CONSISTENT POSITIVE INTERACTIONS ARE EVERYTHING FOR ANIMALS IN A SHELTER

\* EVERYONE PICTURED IS ADOPTABLE OR HAS BEEN ADOPTED

# ANIMAL BODY LANGUAGE

- Animals communicate with humans through their body language.
- Noticing and comprehending the small changes in the animal's body will produce more positive outcomes and increase safety.

- Pictured is Winona, she is still up for adoption





STARSHIP COMMUNICATING,  
SHE IS HAPPY AND RELAXED

# COGNITIVE AND PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES

## **PATIENCE! PATIENCE! PATIENCE!**

Be adaptable to what each dog needs to keep interactions positive:

- Body language
- Reward preference (treat vs. toy)
- Genetics/previous environment

For example, Confetti the three-month-old pup in the 4<sup>th</sup> picture was already light years 'smarter' (smarter defined as ability to listen and adapt quickly) than Zeppelin an adult bulldog in the 5<sup>th</sup> picture... I would describe Zeppelin as a Linebacker while confetti is an upcoming QB. Big difference. Both needed for a team.



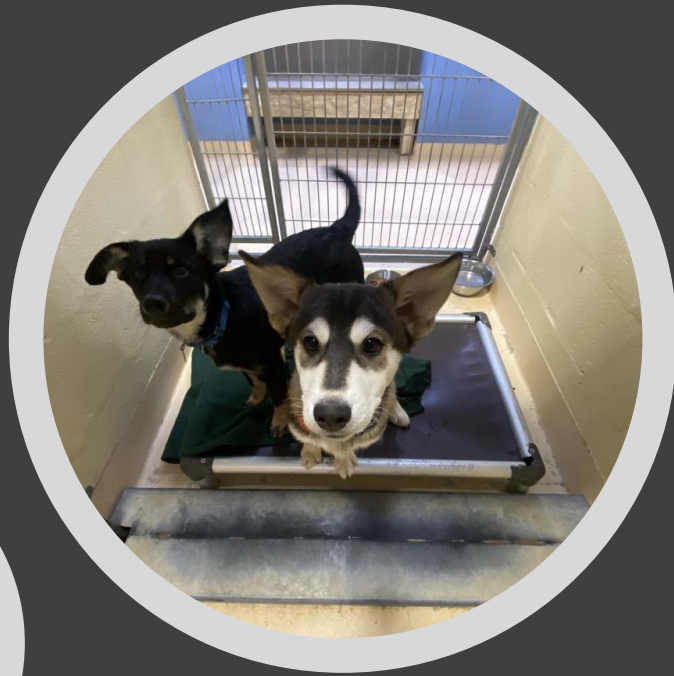




## JADE AND THE ENRICHMENT ROOM

- Jade is the sweetest animal welfare warrior. She is on the animal friends behavioral care team staff.
- Her office also doubles as the dog enrichment room. Where the dogs can go to play with the sniff mats, solve puzzles, and 'hunt' for treats.





## BEHAVIOR LEVEL CODING:



Green: "bullet proof"



Yellow: Displays some unwanted behaviors but manageable



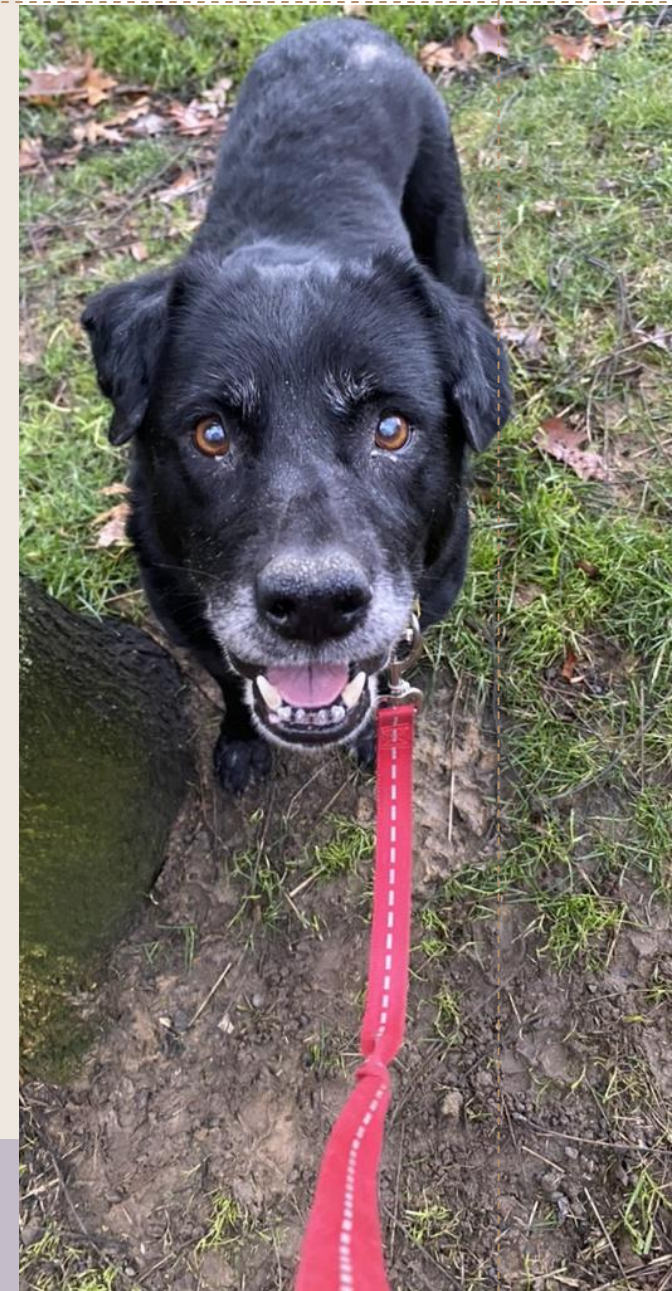
Blue: Can display moderate to severe timidness, jumping, biting, guarding, pulling, aggression, swatting etc...

\*All pictured are adoptable and green or yellow level

# SENIOR PUPS



- Meet Astrid a Senior pup ready for adoption. →  
She is 14 years young and full of energy
- Seniors most often come in as owner surrenders or just dropped on the property.
- Bella Bear was a senior dog at AF for a while. Everyone who met her fell in love. She became our unofficial mascot. She was for sure a staff favorite. Unfortunately, She had to be humanely euthanized due to her deteriorating medical condition.



# For the Love of Cats

Cats in general tend to come into AF very timid. Some cats will open up eventually, but some will have persistent timidity, aggression, and even shutdown.

ALL the cats get enrichment training on THEIR level. Even if it just a few seconds of interaction.

The ability to adapt to what each animal needs is crucial, and this ability comes from being able to read the slightest changes in body language.

Cats are extremely subtle, and it takes patience, time and practice to successfully work with the toughest cases that come into Animal Friends.





## My Experience

- Any experience is what YOU make of it. There is high potential for anyone to have an amazing experience at Animal Friends.

# My Experience Continued

- For me, through this experience I found a place that I will continue to volunteer at for as long as I am in Pittsburgh (and that could be the rest of my life).
- While there were some very sad days on site, there is always good to be found. The emotions of deeply caring are never something to shy away from.
- I fell in love with every animal. I adore all the staff and other volunteers that work tirelessly to make the vision at Animal Friends a reality.

♡♡♡

