

Shelter

continued from front page

and Perryland Foods in Wedowee, and at Gerson's Garden, Piggly Wiggly and Tractor Supply in Roanoke.

This year the donations of food, treats and bedding are slim, April said. Trees at Piggly Wiggly and Small Town Bank are doing well.

Particular items they want are canned puppy food, kitten chow, and bedding, new or used. Old sheets, pillow cases, towels, T-shirts, blankets, etc. can be stained or have holes. The doggies do not care as long as they help them stay warm, April said. They have accepted beds from people who no longer have a pet.

Elisabeth said in October they had 130 adoptions--the most ever in one month.

"This is the best year for adoptions, a little over 1,000 cats and dogs," Elisabeth said. A lot of them were out of state rescues where they have a lot of spays and neuters and fewer animals. The pictures we post do bring people in. Today, a lady from Orlando is driving in to pick up a dog," she said.

April said last year a family drove in to get two of the shelter's puppies for Christmas.

They work to get dogs and cats adopted and do not euthanize them unless they are aggressive or sick.

Last Thursday at 104 Animal Shelter Road in Wedowee they had about 80 adorable dogs and 22 cats, Elisabeth said. A lot of people think they stay out in the cold but if it is cold they bring all the animals inside to the kennels. That is where the bedding comes in so the pets lie on that instead of the concrete floor. Everybody has a home inside. April said they also have a dog house outside if they want to get out of the wind.

RCAS is on Facebook and has 5,000 friends. She cautioned to use RCAS because if you put in Randolph County Animal Shelter you get one in North Carolina.

Elisabeth said all the rescue groups are also 501c3 organizations and most operate under game wardens. Some of the animals who leave the shelter go into foster homes unless they are already adopted. Anyone adopting them has to pass a house check, a background check and have veterinarian references.

"We love what we do. It's heart-breaking to see the neglect and abuse," Elisabeth said.

It is harder to adopt a big dog because a lot of people think they have bad habits while they think they can train up a puppy. A lot of rescues take big dogs.

Much of their funding comes from various sources, such as tobacco taxes, which helps a lot, and they get a portion of fees from Roanoke and Wedowee. Mainly donations and fundraisers keep them going, Elisabeth said. It costs about \$6.25 per dog, per day and \$5 for cats per day.

Volunteers help a great deal. Two ladies recently came in to volunteer, as well as a few high school students who volunteer on Saturday. They always need volunteers, Elisabeth said.

April said they want the volunteers to decide what to do, from playing with cats to walking dogs.

The recent Barktoberfest pulled in \$1,500 to \$2,000 after expenses were paid. They are planning another one this year, expanding it and making it a big fun-filled day for the dogs and their owners.

Bark Park is a big run where the dogs are allowed to run in a fenced enclosure to exercise. It is compliments of Ellen Sims and Friends. Ellen raised all the money for Bark Park and she named it. Enjoying the run that day was Ladybug, a pit mix who has been at the shelter for close



Ladybug, a pit mix, enjoys attention from Elisabeth Sanford in the Bark Park where animals get to run thanks to Ellen Sims and friends who raised the money for it. Ladybug has been at the shelter about nine months and gets along well with other dogs.

to a year. Affectionate, she enjoys the attention. The enclosed area is also a meet and greet area where potential adopters can meet a dog and get to play with it and check out the chemistry between them.

She points out one gentle dog that someone left chained to their fence. They found it when they came to work.

Another dog found on the side of the road is sleeping in the kennel covered with a blanket, clinging to life, and being fed Pedialite.

Behind the main building is a new building built with a \$4,000 donation. It was built to safely store equipment.

"We are blessed with so many supporters and all they do to keep us going," Elisabeth said.

"Roanoke's ordinance officer is great--Michael Cofield. If he can help in any way he does. If we get a call from Roanoke we call him and he'll pick up the dog in the Roanoke city limits," April said.

Around the shelter is the Outside



Long-time shelter volunteer Sheila Fincher holds Miss Priss, her favorite cat in the cat room, which she and Ann Boozer cleaned on Wednesdays. Days before she succumbed to cancer she came in to see Miss Priss, a friendly, loving cat.

Elisabeth said they can take used crates, kennels, dog houses, food bowls and anything else someone wants to donate.

Elisabeth said most of the dogs are mixed breeds but more than you would think are full blooded. They keep a waiting list for someone who is interested in a certain breed.

She said they do tours of the shelter with an employee. There are five paid employees. The shelter number is 256-357-0101.

A three-legged dog, Tuck, hops with them as they walk around. It was hit by a truck in Clay County and was taken in by a woman who eventually got cancer and could no longer keep it. Tuck is now the shelter's mascot.

Hangout, the Puppy Palace, the Bank of Wedowee's pen, and Glenda's Place, named after board member and animal lover Glenda Hale who gave money to build it. A&E Metal of Wedowee donated supplies for the build.

"Anybody who gives a chunk of money we try to name after them," April said.

Elisabeth said when someone surrenders an animal they request a \$25 fee but some people do not have it and they accept them anyway if they have room. If not, the animal will be put on a list and they try to work it in as quickly as possible.

The shelter is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is closed to the public Sunday and Monday.

The volunteers are so important whether washing or walking a dog because it is important to keep them socialized so they are adoptable, April said.