

FEATURE STORY

PHOENIX ANIMAL RESCUE

Phoenix Animal Rescue
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March 19, 2014
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Young Humanitarian Advocates For Dogs in Need

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – Cynthia Anderson was 12 years old the first time she visited an animal shelter. She was heartbroken to learn that not all animals have homes and decided she wanted to help in any way that she could.

First, she set up a lemonade stand in her driveway and used the profits to buy food for dogs at the local shelter, the Alachua County Humane Society. Then she started a fundraiser called “Dollars for Dogs,” where she went around collecting monetary donations throughout the community.

In January of 2012, she encountered Phoenix Animal Rescue. Anderson was shopping at the Gainesville PetSmart when she saw a crate of irresistible bulldog puppies. She spoke with Michelle Dunlap, the director of PAR, and found out about the foster program. It wasn’t long before she was fostering animals herself.

Dunlap said, “I have never met anyone, let alone a young child, who was so passionate about making a difference for these animals in need.”

Anderson is now 15 years old and a freshman at Gainesville High School. In recalling her charitable efforts she said, “I honestly did not think that what I was doing would make that big of a difference, but I wanted to help.”

Since Anderson's first lemonade stand, she has raised more than \$8,000 for various organizations, including Phoenix Animal Rescue, and has helped care for more than a dozen dogs.

Her most recent charity efforts include a fundraiser she calls "Keep Your Paws Clean," which has generated more than \$2,000 since its launch in August of 2013. "Keep Your Paws Clean" is a fundraiser that generates revenue mainly through the sale of hand sanitizer.

Anderson is also a current lecturer, who speaks to local organizations about the benefits of spaying and neutering. Aside from her role as a humanitarian, she is also your average teenage who is a cheerleader and soccer player. She also loves art and is especially talented in clay pottery.

Anderson says that she hopes to one day have a profession that will feed her passion for animals. Until then, she plans to keep pursuing fundraising opportunities and sheltering animals through Phoenix Animal Rescue.

"I just love helping animals in need," Anderson said. "Being a foster parent for dogs at Phoenix is the most rewarding experience of my life."

"Being a foster parent is the most rewarding way for me to help animals and ultimately guide them down their path to finding a forever family," she said.

Dunlap said Anderson is one of PAR's most valuable and reliable foster parents. "Phoenix is honored to have someone like Anderson caring for our pets; She is a true inspiration to the youth in this community," she said.

Anderson is currently seeking opportunities to reach out to more people who want to help pets. She said she wants to be an advocate for fostering dogs and educating people about the importance of adopting rather than buying a pet from a pet store.

“If you love animals and want to help dogs in need, but cannot make the life-long commitment of adoption, fostering is the ideal program for you,” Anderson said.

To inquire about fostering a dog, or to see a complete list of the dogs available for adoption at Phoenix Animal Rescue, please visit www.phoenixanimalrescue.org for more information. In addition, visit PetSmart on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., to meet current dogs seeking their forever family, or to speak with someone from Phoenix Animal Rescue.

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