

Working Like Dogs @ Animal Adoption Foundation: e-newsletter 1/10/10

1 message

Eileen Udry <eileen@workinglikedogs.org>

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Hello from **Working Like Dogs** at Animal Adoption Foundation!

Warm Wishes for You in the New Year! If you are feeling like you have the "winter blahs" on account of the weather, consider coming to AAF and let a shelter dog lift your spirit. Barney is guaranteed to make you smile...unless of course, he slips through the gate as you go to visit him :)

What to Do at AAF when its Cold? All of the volunteers in the pictures above were taken this last week during our especially cold weather. The pictures are good examples of what you can do when you think its too icy or cold for you to exercise an AAF dog outside. Specifically, **do some gentle grooming (center)**, **visit with the dog...this is especially helpful for the shy dogs (right)** or **walk a dog in the Adoption Aisle (left)**. Of course, dogs still need to get outside even when its cold, so bundling up to walk dogs is greatly appreciated too!

National Dog Training Magazine Highlights programs at AAF ...The programs that Working Like Dogs has been offering at AAF (e.g., Quiet Eyes, Walk a Hound) were recently highlighted in a national magazine for dog trainers. Yippee! ...free publicity for AAF. **As satisfying as it is to have the programs at**

AAF spotlighted in a national publication, the programs themselves don't make good things happen for the AAF dogs...volunteers do! Thanks for making them successful.

To view the FREE training for AAF volunteers, check out the monthly calendar for Working Like Dogs at: www.workinglikedogs.org; click on Calendar from Home Page.

To view an electronic copy of the article that appeared in *Chronicle of the Dog* go to: AAFPets.com and look for a link on AAF's home page.

Reaching Goals and Aiming Even Higher...I Mean Lower... You may be aware that Working Like Dogs started offering a variety of volunteer-based programs in August 2009. We had the specific short-term goal of improving dogs' welfare by reducing kennel noise and stress by 65%. Pretty ambitious goal, eh? But guess what? We did it! That is, on average, the number of dogs that are barking when someone is in the Adoption Aisle has dropped from about 80% to 5%. Additionally, AAF typically has fewer dogs showing stress related behavior such as spinning and jumping. Caution!! We report our findings on noise and stress levels with caution because these can change in just a few days of inattention and we have noticed that this happens periodically. Also, with the cold weather some of the dogs are experiencing "cabin fever" and have been quite vocal about needing to get more exercise.

So how do we continue to reduce kennel noise even more and maintain the gains that have resulted from volunteers literally spending hundreds of hours working toward? Below are basic principles to keep in mind:

1. Every time you interact with a dog, you are teaching her/him something. Help teach dogs to be calm, quiet and friendly...this improves a dog's adoptability.
2. Take a moment to get a treat pouch and some treats each time you come to the kennels. This way, you'll be well equipped to reward dogs when they are calm and quiet.
3. Stand in the Adoption Aisle and do some "Thumbs Up" training for several minutes for each visit at AAF.
4. Open gates and doors in the kennel areas only after the dog have shown or regained self-control (i.e., not barking, all 4 feet on floor, etc.). Opening a gate when a dog is "out of control" means it will be much more likely that behavior will be repeated again. You'll be making your shelter time and other volunteers' experience at the shelter, better when you do this.
5. Learn more: Come to some of the training and enrichment programs offered. If your schedule doesn't work with the times of the programs, see

the contact information at the bottom of this email to see about arranging some instruction at a time not on the schedule. Quote from a AAF

Volunteer: ... "thanks for teaching me about dogs. I love them even more now that I understand them better"!

Gotta trot...Eileen

Eileen Udry, Ph.D

www.workinglikedogs.org

513.593.6557

eileen@workinglikedogs.org

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