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## Dogs and cats find new homes



County Commissioner Matt Brooks and County Commissioner Lilly Rooks hold two of the five youngest puppies that were fixed and ready for adoption Saturday (Aug. 19). Only one puppy was adopted. They are standing in front of a recently added covered area for the dogs to be outdoors and in the shade.

### Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 19, 2017 at 8:17 p.m.

**LEVY COUNTY** -- Levy County Animal Services was able to find homes for two cats, three dogs (with one being a puppy) Saturday (Aug. 19) during an adoption event, LCAS Administrative Assistant Bridgett Domenico said.

Levy County Animal Services, however in that same time, added another six dogs to the kennel population.

**In this short video, the five puppies are seen during the event on Saturday.**



**Cute puppies want to be adopted.**

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**A puppy uses the fence as dental floss.**



**Mackenzie Allison, 8, of Bronson visits with puppies during the event.**

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In the past decade, Levy County Animal Services essentially has reduced its count of dogs to equal those of shelters that are labeled as "no kill" shelters, and the adoptable cat population this year also would qualify LCAS as "no kill" for adoptable cats.

The feral cat population, though, has caused a euthanasia rate that is tough on people who must perform that duty. The feral cat numbers skew the numbers enough to take LCAS out of the "no kill" title overall.

Levy County Animal Services Director David Weatherford is in his 29th year at the service. He has seen progress year after year. One of the newest improvements is a metal canopy area with a chain-link fence and gate, where dogs can enjoy being in the open air.

The county's animal service assists municipalities where it can. There must be a deputy or municipal police officer present when the county performs actions in the cities, Weatherford said, because the county has not authority in regard to animals within cities' and towns' limits.

That improvement is the result of a donation by Levy Animal Friends (LeAF).

Two very significant improvements were the adding of a veterinarian -- Dr. Dee Esler, and the addition of The Cat Room, which was bought for the county by Bob Echols of Ocala, the founder and president of For Our Friends The Animals.

The two cats adopted from Levy County Animal Services on Saturday were named Heath and Hank by the LCAS, although their new owners -- Ursula Williams and Sylvia Robbins named them Fred and George.

The three dogs were named Tonka, Angel and a puppy named Debbie by LCAS, although the owners may have renamed them.



**Kelsey Elkins and her son Chandler Elkins greet the family's new dog -- Bones.**

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Kelsey Elkins and her son Chandler Elkins had come to the LCAS facility again on Saturday. They adopted the dog they named Bones.

Josh Elkins, husband and father in the family respectively, was not present although he is very happy to add the dog to their family. Josh Elkins is the drummer in The Chrome Band, which played Friday night at Mackenzie's Four Corners in Bronson the night before.

Bones, a male dog, has already met the female dog Burkley, and they get along, Kelsey Elkins said. The family brought Burkley to the LCAS facility earlier in the week to make sure they would be friends.

The family also has a cat named Zuri and a rabbit named Mr. Easter Bunny, although Chandler Elkins said he calls the rabbit Chocolate.



**The two male cats that were adopted enjoy food and drink in The Cat Room, before being adopted.**



**Ursula Williams (left) and Sylvia Robbins named the two cats Fred and George.**

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**Sylvia Robbins carries cats Fred and George to the vehicle that will transport the felines to their newfound homes.**



**LCAS Secretary III Crystal Pruitt is among the staff members who help people adopt animals.**

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**LCAS Administrative Assistant Bridgett Domenico is among the staff members who help people adopt animals.**



**LCAS Director David Weatherford is working on completing his 30th year with Levy County Animal Services. He has sought and achieved success in improving every part of this service in the county. Director Weatherford, Dr. Dee Esler, the veterinarian, the office workers and the men in the field who collect animals all deal with heartbreaking situations, and on occasion mean-spirited people as they do their best to find solutions against unsurmountable odds. The single-most issue is irresponsible pet owners. The problem of dog and cat overpopulation can be reduced if owners spay or neuter their pets.**

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County Commissioner Matt Brooks funded the adoption fee for two dogs for people who live in his district. He also bought an ad in *HardisonInk.com* to promote the event.

Commissioner Brooks said he would not be adopting a dog or cat that day, because his family has enough furry pets. The Brooks have two dogs, one cat and one hamster.

County Commissioner Lilly Rooks was present for the event as well, and she accepted the duty of being a puppy watcher.

Commissioner Rooks said she was reminded to not bring home any more dogs or cats. There are five dogs and two cats at her house now.

Among the many dogs and cats at the LCAS facility, there were four female puppies and one male puppy, all from the same litter.

LCAS Director Weatherford said the puppies are about eight weeks old. They are all wormed, spayed or neutered, vaccinated and ready to adopt.

These puppies are said to be a mix of bulldog and Chihuahua.

Normally open only during the weekdays, Levy County Animal Services conducted another after-hours adoption event on Saturday (Aug. 19) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to help people more easily adopt a dog or cat that may otherwise be euthanized.

## **YEAR-TO-DATE FIGURES**

Levy County Animal Services records from Jan. 1 through Aug. 19 (other than the adopted dogs and cats of Aug. 19, and the new intakes) are shown below:

### **Dogs**

There were 548 dogs brought to the facility in that almost eight-month period.

Of those, there were 33 that had to be euthanized. There were 109 adopted. Another 278 were rescued. There were 76 dogs returned to owner so far in 2017. Twenty dogs were returned to owner-clinic. Four dogs were listed as “other” for their disposition this year. Two dogs escaped in 2017.

There were 38 dogs in the shelter at the start of the day on Saturday (Aug. 19).

### **Cats**

There were 655 cats brought to the facility so far in 2017.

Of those, 324 had to be euthanized. There were 40 cats adopted, before the two on Saturday, in Levy County in 2017. There were 232 cats rescued. Eight cats escaped so far in 2017. Two cats were returned to owners. Twelve cats were returned to owner-clinic. Fourteen cats were listed as “other” for their disposition this year.

There were 32 cats in the shelter at the start of the day on Saturday (Aug. 19).

Given there are many dogs and cats ready to find new homes, people who are seeking a new pet may want to use the adoption process on Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., although staff members need people to start the adoption process by 3:30 p.m. on weekdays.

All transactions such as adoption, impounding, etc., are cash payment only – no checks or cards.

Levy County Animal Services is an animal shelter that takes in unwanted or stray pets. It is by no means a boarding facility for the general public. Animals that are housed here are dogs or cats that are owner-released, people drop off, or they are strays.

The policy for this facility is to hold dogs or cats that are dropped off or picked up as a stray for three to five working days. This gives the pet’s owner time to reclaim their pet.

After those days, the animal may be adopted, rescued or destroyed humanely. All animals that are adopted or rescued from the Levy County Animal Services are required by Florida Law to be spayed-neutered and also have a rabies vaccination.

All adoptions are done on a first come basis. A current list of adoptable dogs and cats can be found at a website by clicking [HERE](#).

And here is a link for general information about Levy County Animal Services - click [HERE](#).