

9/19/2009

Last Update: 9/19/2009 9:52:00 AM

Humane Society of Berks County offering free veterinary exams for adopted pets

By Steven Henshaw
Reading Eagle

As if giving a permanent home to a shelter animal isn't reason enough, prospective pet owners now have a financial incentive to adopt a pet from a shelter.

The Humane Society of Berks County this week announced a new program that offers free veterinary exams to adopted animals - as well as 20 percent discounts on wellness services such as vaccinations, diagnostic testing and most medications - even if the animals were adopted from another shelter.

Owners just have to prove that they adopted the animal from a legitimate shelter or breed rescue within 30 days of taking the animal to the society's veterinary hospital in Reading or Douglassville.

The purpose of the Thanks for Adopting Anywhere veterinary health program is to encourage people to adopt animals in shelters rather than buy from stores or breeders, said Karel I. Minor, Humane Society executive director.

Adopting an animal frees up vital resources for other homeless pets, he said.

It also helps prevent animals with treatable health problems from being returned to shelters by encouraging owners to seek medical care as quickly as possible, he said.

"We think this is a mission imperative," he said. "We know that getting these animals treatment will keep them from coming back."

The program is based on the Humane Society's 30-day adoption health guarantee program for animals adopted at its shelter at 1800 N. 11th St.

That program provides the same free

examination and discount on wellness care, but includes free treatment of common illnesses for the first 30 days.

Minor said both programs should help pet owners develop a relationship with a veterinarian, which is important. Lack of consistent veterinary care is one of the leading causes of animals being returned to shelters for conditions or behaviors that could easily be treated by veterinarians, he said.

"We know that not all adoption organizations have the veterinary resources to offer these services and rely on outside veterinarians," Minor said. "We have both the resources to offer and the mission imperative to offer them to all adopted animals."

Minor said the humane society hopes its move will encourage other shelters and private veterinarians to follow its lead.

The Animal Rescue League of Berks County provides a coupon for a free veterinary exam for pets adopted from its shelter in Cumru Township, said Harry D. Brown, executive director.

The coupons are honored at VCA Detwiler Animal Hospital in Reading and VCA Cacoosing Animal Hospital in South Heidelberg Township.

Contact Steven Henshaw: 610-371-5028 or shenshaw@readingeagle.com.



Click on picture to enlarge.
Reading Eagle: Susan L. Angstadt
Humane Society of Berks County veterinarians Dr. Alicia Elwell, left, and Dr. Heather Westfall examine a cat.

Thanks for Adopting Anywhere program

Overview

- The Humane Society of Berks County is extending many of the adoption benefits already offered to animals adopted from its own shelter to animals adopted at any legitimate private or municipal adoption center, breed rescue or animal shelter.

Services

- Free veterinary exam at one of the Humane Society's two animal hospitals, 1801 N. 11th St. or 1201 Ben Franklin Highway in Douglassville.
- Twenty percent discount for most veterinary wellness services such as vaccinations, diagnostic testing and most medications.

Requirements

- Owner is required to provide an original adoption contract showing the adoption took place within 30 days of the appointment.

More information

www.berkshumane.org.