

WHEN YOU DECIDE TO GIVE UP YOUR PET

It is a huge decision to give away your pet, no matter how long or brief the period of time of ownership. Remember, for whatever reason you no longer are choosing to keep this pet, you are the person in this world who loves your pet more than anyone else and you no longer want your pet! First ask yourself if there is anything about your pet behaviorally or personality-wise that could be worked on in order for you to keep him. It is exceedingly difficult to find good, permanent homes for adolescent or adult animals (as you are finding out first hand). There are a few things you need to do to be responsible and caring until the last possible moment:

- Take your pet to the veterinarian for a check-up, vaccinations, and, most importantly-spaying/neutering! If you were thinking that your pet might make a good breeding animal-STOP-why breed from an animal that no one wants anymore? Why make more unwanted animals in a world where even great pets don't remain very long in their first home? You want someone to adopt your pet as a COMPANION, not just because it might make a good or profitable breeding animal. You are much more apt to find a responsible, permanent home by placing an already sterilized pet. Get it done, it's the least you can do, and the best thing you can do.
- Spaying and neutering also reduces the risk your pet will run away from it's next home, and helps to insure that your pet won't urine mark his new home and thus become quickly unwanted-again!
- If your pet is already spayed or neutered, and has not bitten anyone, try to find a new home for your pet through advertising. Place a classified ad in your local newspaper, and screen any callers carefully. Be completely honest about all of your pet's behaviors-good and bad. No pet is perfect, and people are more likely to adopt a pet they know about, for better or worse. When screening callers, tell every caller that someone has already come to look at your pet, but you are still taking names and telephone numbers and references, in case, so you can call them back. This gives you an instant "out" if you think the caller is not right for your pet, and hurts no one's feelings.
- Take a few good, color photos and make some posters. Include your pet's name (it personalizes him...) and include his best traits, his most endearing qualities, and some guidelines for the best possible home: i.e. no small kids, someone who's home a lot, no other pets, good for experienced dog owner, etc.
- Be careful in choosing an animal shelter. Visit the kennels, meet the staff, and familiarize yourself with the shelter's policies. A "No Kill" policy might look good at first, but not if your dog will end up living out hls life in the kennels. Dogs can deteriorate emotionally and mentally very quickly in a shelter, even a good shelter, and no dog should suffer that kind of stress endlessly, month after month, living in a concrete kennel run, hoping for that magical, perfect home.
- If your pet is aggressive, or has nipped or bitten someone, EVER, then please get a professional behavioral evaluation before giving away your pet. Check with state and local laws, too, about liability in re-homing a pet with prior knowledge of aggression. Do not try to find a new home for an aggressive animal without professional help.
- If your pet has a behavior problem, he'll take it with him to the next home. Many problems are workable, or at least manageable. Contact a trainer or behavior counselor and see if it's not possible to work things out so you can keep your pet