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## Keeping Your Dog Active – and Safe – This Summer While Still Having Fun

Summer is underway around the region, and dog owners are looking forward to some quality time with their furry friends after months of being cooped up. What's open, and what can you do if you are still not ready to be out and about within the community? Let's take a look.

Many dog parks in the Mercer County area have re-opened with some precautions that can benefit dog owners and their pets in need of cabin-fever relief. Here are just a few:

In Ewing, the John and Anna Karras Memorial Dog Park in Banchoff Park (located off Mount View Road), is one option for owners looking to let their pets run around. The enclosed dog park features a fountain with human and canine spigots. It is currently being refurbished with funds from the estate of animal advocates John and Anna Karras. All dogs must be healthy, and

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*Pictured: Linda Waskiewicz, who builds families when matching cats with adoptees*

## Spotlight on Our Volunteers: Linda Waskiewicz

EASEL's reputation is so highly regarded in the greater Mercer County area for its processes, staff and operations that it has always been able to adopt out cats and kittens easily on a regular basis, leading to its measurable success. Behind every reputable organization, however, is the dedicated staff who keep the wheels running. Linda Waskiewicz is the epitome of one such volunteer.

Perhaps much of the success EASEL has had with its cat adoptions over the years can be attributed to Linda's philosophy and approach to her work: "building families." This mantra guides Linda's passion, and she uses it as a compass to drive the process, from reviewing applications to reviewing potential adoptees and matching them with EASEL's pets.

"I take great joy in building families," she says. "That's the one thing about our shelter that defines us. We really put the right animals with the right people. I love the animals, and I love seeing them go into great homes."

The process for building these families starts with applications, which Linda manages. Once an adoption application comes in, Linda manages the intake process. She personally reviews every single application that comes in, talks to potential adoptees, learns about their families and helps them meet their future furry companions. She also oversees the outlets, including PetSmart and Petco, where some of the cats and kittens are showcased to aid in their quick adoption. Her approach is thoughtfully tactical, as

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# Reducing Stray Cats: One Kitty at a Time



One of the questions EASEL's cat volunteers often get asked by potential adopters is just where do all the cats we have up for adoption come from? There are a wide variety of answers to this question, largely because our cats come to us from so many different situations. Some of the most frequent are:

- Owner surrenders
- Strays brought in by concerned citizens
- Transfers from other shelters
- Cats rescued from hoarding situations

However, one of our most common stories for many of our cats and kittens is that they came to the EASEL Cat Room through another EASEL program – our TNR efforts.

## What is TNR?

TNR stands for Trap-Neuter-Return. TNR programs are common place at many larger shelters. What TNR aims to do is reduce feral cat colony populations by sterilizing the colony members, thereby reducing new kitten births and, over time, reducing the overall population of the feral colony. Adult cats returned to their colony

are ear-

tipped for identification and vaccinated for their safety. Colony feeders are given instructions for future safe care of the cats.

## What Are Feral Cat Colonies?

Cats, despite the stereotype, are not solitary creatures. Much like lions live in prides, cats in the wild often live in colonies. These colonies are often comprised of stray cats and, occasionally, cats who were

previously in homes but were either lost or abandoned and found their way into a colony.

## Why Are Feral Cat Colonies Bad?

Cats, despite the stereotype, are not solitary creatures. Much like lions live in prides, cats in the wild often live in colonies. These colonies are often comprised of stray cats and, occasionally, cats who were previously in homes but were either lost or abandoned and found their way into a colony.

Feral cat colonies face a great deal of challenges. Not only are the colony cats regularly exposed to harsh and inclement weather (keep in mind, these cats live outdoors year-round – even in the harsh NJ winters), they face danger from local predators as well as humans.

Sadly, feral cat colonies can be targets for inhumane traps and poisonings by humans seeking to reduce cat populations. Large cat colonies can be detrimental to the local wildlife by hunting birds and other small prey animals – disrupting the natural food chain in the area. TNR

programs seek to reduce the feral cat colony population overtime, by reducing the number of kittens born to female cats in the colony. Untreated, unmanaged feral cat colonies are also at greater risk of contracting and spreading diseases both among its members, to other indoor/outdoor cats in their territory as well as other animals and humans.

Female cats can have up to 3 litters a year, averaging 4 kittens per litter. She can also become pregnant as early as 4 months old. This means that in the span of just seven years, an unsprayed female and her offspring can result in over 420,000 new cats (data from the Suncoast Humane Society).

## What Has EASEL Done to Reduce Local Cat Colonies?

Some of EASEL's volunteers are part of the TNR program. They either coordinate or assist local residents in setting up humane traps for feral cats and bring the animals into the shelter, where they are evaluated either by trained volunteers or our veterinary partners to see if they have already been fixed. If they haven't, they are sterilized by a veterinary partner.

Since 2012, when EASEL moved to its current location, our TNR efforts have reduced population growth in over 300 cat colonies in Mercer County, sterilizing approximately 3,750 cats.

You may be wondering if there is a way to know if a feral or stray cat in your neighborhood has already "graduated" from a TNR program. One way to possibly tell if a feral/stray cat has already been sterilized is if they have been "ear-tipped."

This is a procedure some vets perform on TNR cats which involves snipping the

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Donations are urgently needed during this time. Please [click here](#) to donate online.

# Hachikō: a Symbol of Undying Loyalty In a Dog

The Japanese culture reveres loyalty above all other qualities. As stated in the Japanese Times, “Japanese have been taught over the centuries that loyalty is the supreme virtue.” It is fitting then that the dog Hachikō, whose name has become synonymous with loyalty, lived in Japan.

His story is one of incredible sadness and yet demonstrates the unwavering fidelity that dogs are famous for. Hachikō was an Akita, a breed known for its unflinching courage and unwavering protection of those he/she loves. This legendary breed has a fascinating history.

According to the American Kennel Club, although the Akita was specifically bred to hunt big game, their ownership was once restricted to the imperial family and their court. Because of their loyalty and strength, “Akitas have for centuries been the object of myth and legend and occupy a special place in Japanese culture. When a child is born, the parents will usually receive an Akita figurine signifying happiness and long life, in keeping with an old Japanese tradition.”

Then how ironic that Hachikō was not the companion to an imperial family or a formidable hunter of big game, but to a kindly professor of agriculture who lived in Tokyo in the early 1900s. Professor Ueno Hidesaburo was a highly respected and accomplished expert in agricultural engineering. Although he was unexpectedly presented with Hachikō as a small puppy, if not for his care and devotion, Hachikō would have not grown to adulthood. A fragile puppy, “Hachikō became weaker and developed a fever, causing Ueno and his wife to bolster their efforts to nurse him back to health. They kept his head cool with ice bags and packed hot water bags beside his feeble little body.” The professor and his wife even violated the norm of the day by allowing the pup to stay in the house and sleep under his “western-style bed, wrapped in fabric.”

With this care, Hachikō gained his health and grew into a strong adult. Every morning, dog and owner would walk to the Shibuya Station where the professor would depart to teach and conduct research at his university. At the end of the long day, Professor Ueno would return to the station to be greeted by Hachikō who was eagerly awaiting him, regardless of weather. This routine continued for a number of years.

Until the tragic day of May 21, 1925, Hachikō bid the professor goodbye one last time as his best friend boarded the train to the university. Later that day, while lecturing, Professor Ueno suffered a fatal stroke. Naturally no one could convey to Hachikō that his best friend had died, and that he would never again return home on the train.

So for nearly the next ten years, Hachikō waited for the professor each day at the train station so they could once again walk home together. Every morning and evening, at the appointed time, Hachikō would make the trek from the house to the station. In those days, stray dogs were not regarded



with sympathy by most Japanese. Mistook as a stray by workers and travelers at the station, he was often mistreated. Fortunately, one day, one of the professor’s former students recognized Hachikō at the station. Deeply saddened by the misunderstanding and abuse directed towards this most devoted companion, he contacted a local newspaper, who published a story entitled “Tale of a Poor Old Dog: Patiently Waiting for Seven Years for the Dead Owner.”

Almost overnight, Hachikō became a national celebrity and symbol of undying loyalty and love. Ordinary and famous people alike sought Hachikō out at the train station and spoiled him with treats. Even the shopkeepers, who had once regarded him as a nuisance, treated him with kindness and respect. While he was no doubt content to have this attention, nothing could distract him from his sole purpose; to be reunited with his beloved companion Professor Ueno.

In his last year of thirteen years, Hachikō grew too weak to walk from his home to the station. Instead, he chose to live out his remaining months at the station, “sprawled on the ground, eyes still searching for his master.” The day before he died, a station employee spotted Hachikō walking into shops, and later, he was seen sleeping in a baggage room. The next day, on March 8, 1935, an employee worried by his absence frantically searched for him. He found Hachikō lying dead on the side of a road.

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# Happy Tails: Suede's New Life on the Road to Recovery

Sometimes a little extra care can go a long way. That is the case with Suede, a dog whose new life has returned the light to his eyes.

Suede was adopted from EASEL more than three years ago, but recently found his way back to the shelter when his owner had to move. EASEL volunteers pulled him from another shelter that had filled up. He was a calm, healthy dog when he was adopted, and years later, he still had that same gentle soul. However, he was noticeably thinner – and aged.

Days before he was returned to the shelter, a golf ball-sized lump on his rear leg had suddenly appeared. The lump continued to grow when he came back to the shelter, and soon after, he had surgery to remove it. The lump turned out to be an aggressive Grade 3 mast cell tumor that is likely to grow back within six months.

Fortunately, in the brief time that he was posted for adoption, EASEL volunteers located the perfect adopter for Suede, an adopter who has adopted special needs dogs in the past and who is connected with several exceptional veterinarians who are developing a plan for Suede to treat the cancer.

In the meantime, Suede is living the perfect life: he lives in a home in the woods with plenty of walking paths, a fenced area to run, and he goes on multiple walks every day. He romps in



the little pond featured on his property with another dog as his companion.

He also eats three prepared meals a day with plenty of marrowbones for treats. With all of the extra care and attention, Suede has since put on 15 pounds, is completely recovered from his surgery, and has a shiny coat and clear eyes again.

Here's to a happy and safe life, Suede!

## Pet Adoptions

We are still holding adoptions by appointment once an adopter is approved. You can fill out an application online by [clicking here](#). A phone interview is conducted prior to meeting pets.

Additionally, pet stores are considered essential, like grocery stores. So, our cat habitats at Petsmart are occupied with cats that the public can meet. Social distancing practices are in effect when pet meet and greets take place.

## Join Our Team of Volunteers!

The EASEL Animal Rescue League's Volunteer Program consists of dedicated and compassionate individuals who are looking to match their skills and passions with their love of animals. We couldn't achieve all that we do without volunteers — they are the reason behind our success.

Volunteers are involved in almost all aspects of the shelter and help provide organization, direction, and energy to our efforts and programs. EASEL is active on many fronts and we need motivated volunteers to help us. Volunteers actively help with our day-to-day operations, fostering, adoptions, Adoption Day Events, medications, training, and community education.

### Volunteer Opportunities

*Organizational Support Opportunities*

Fundraising – Community Outreach – Humane Education – Event Organizing – Advertising – Event Promotion – Maintaining Donation Boxes – Collecting Food Donations – Photographer – Grant Writing

### Animal Care Opportunities

Cat Adoptions – Dog Adoptions – Cat Socializing – Dog Socializing – Home Fostering – Barn Cat Placement – Dog Walking – Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) – Adoption Events – Medication Administration – Transporting Animals – Dog Training – Grooming – Cat Pawsitive training program

## Volunteer (continued from page 1)

she employs her marketing background to the strategies she uses.

"When I choose animals to go to different places, or how they are placed and located within the shelter, I know it's about marketing," she explains. "If it's a black cat next to a black cat next to a black cat, unfortunately that isn't going to be good marketing. But if we place a black cat next to a calico, next to a tabby, it will help."

Linda likens the process to helping shoppers in a supermarket see all of their options via the way shelves are organized, and how grocers strategically place products on shelves to help increase sales. "It's based on the cats' colors, their personalities, so that when people are looking at them, they are seeing variety," she says. "There is a science to that part of the field."

Behind the scientific approach Linda takes is her love of animals, which drew her to EASEL six years ago (she says the decision about her future career came down to the fact she was either going to be

a veterinarian or open her own restaurant, the latter of which she did for some time).

The combination of her analytical skillset with that passion drives her work in evaluating families who want to adopt a cat. "There are so many lovely people out there, but our procedures are very strict – probably stricter than most."

For example, her team evaluates whether they already have a veterinarian if they have other pets in the household, they look at whether their medical records for those pets are up to date, and they also check to make sure potential adoptees are being honest when they say they own or rent – just to name a few.

"It can be difficult sometimes," she admits. "But we're not here for the people, we are here for the animals, and people have to understand that."

Under these guidelines, team has never had a problem adopting out its cat population, even though there are always cats to adopt (EASEL pulls from high-euthanizing shelters or overloaded

shelters). The least amount the shelter has had was 20, but it can be in the upwards of 60 cats. In the beginning of July, the shelter was down to 25.

One unexpected positive to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it has helped adoptions tremendously, she says.

"We used to adopt out between eight and ten cats a week," says Linda. "We are probably going to be close to 1,000 this year. At this point in the year, we already adopted as much as we did in a full year in 2018."

The pandemic has changed how the volunteers and staff can work at the shelter, and Linda is putting in more time than ever, but Linda manages with the help of her team [insert names and roles here].

"It's a team effort, that's for sure."

# EASEL 50/50



## Win money for YOU and our animals!

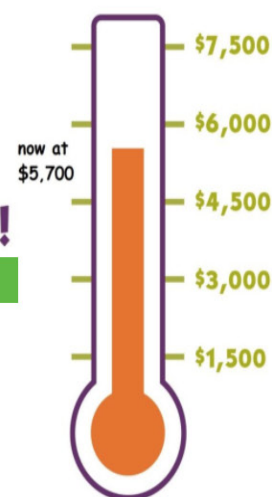
NOW AT \$5,700, that's \$2,850 for you!

[click here for tickets](#)

### \*\*\* \$5 per ticket \*\*\*

Drawing will be JULY 25<sup>th</sup> at the shelter at 1pm.

You don't need to be present to win!!! Staff, senior volunteers, and their families are not eligible to participate.



## CONTACT US

### PHONE / WEB

(609) 883-0540  
[info@easelnj.org](mailto:info@easelnj.org)  
[www.easelnj.org](http://www.easelnj.org)

### ADDRESS

4 Jake Garzio Drive  
 Ewing, NJ, 08628

(Near Trenton-Mercer Airport off I-295,  
 behind the municipal building.)

### ADOPTION CENTER

Everyday: 12 noon - 3 p.m.  
 Wednesday Evenings:  
 5-7 p.m.

# Who Will Be Our Next Happy Tail?

## Featured: EASEL Pets for Adoption



### Baloo

*Adult/ Male/ Neutered  
Cane Corso & American Bulldog  
Mix*

Hey, Guys! My name is Baloo. I was taken in by a good samaritan and then surrendered to EASEL. I had some skin issues that my caretakers resolved, and since I'm feeling better, I'm a happy-go-lucky gsweetheart that has learned that toys are fun and people can be good. I'm a little nervous with new people, but I warm up to be a nice, friendly companion!



### Maple

*Senior/ Female/ Large/  
Spayed*

Hi, I'm Maple, and I found my way to EASEL via transfer from St. Huberts. I am originally from a hoarding case out of Trenton, and I am looking to find my forever home in a nice environment.

For our full list of adoptable pets, visit [easelnj.org](https://easelnj.org).

## Donations Needed!

Not unexpected, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many, if not all of EASEL's important fundraisers were put on hold or cancelled. Unfortunately, animals coming into the shelter will not be!

If you can find it in your heart, please think about donating a few bucks, food, grocery store/pet store gift cards, or any of the items listed below to EASEL.

Items especially needed during 'kitten season' are:

- Kitten Formula (KMR)
- Dry Kitten Food
- Chicken or Turkey Baby Food
- Kitten Nursing Bottles & Nipples
- Plastic Forks, & Knives
- Old Towels, Sheets, & Blankets
- SnuggleSafe® microwave heating pads

[Click here to donate online!](#)

You can also order items from our Amazon wishlist and have them sent to us or call to arrange a drop-off at our site. [Click here for our Amazon wishlist!](#)

Thanks, fellow animal lovers, and be well. Take care of yourselves and each other!

## Summer Fun (continued from page 1)

puppies under 4 months are prohibited in this dog park. Capacity limitations may be enforced at this dog park facility.

Veterans Park in Hamilton also features a dog park with separate fenced-in areas for larger dogs and smaller dogs with activities for each. The dog park enclosure is located closer to the park's Kuser Road entrance. Currently, COVID-19 restrictions limit the number of people to 10 in each of the two sections for larger dogs and smaller dogs.

Pennington Township also boasts a nice dog park facility: the Rosedale Dog Park, a five-acre dog park broken with separate areas for small and large dogs. The park features man-made hills and tunnels as well as agility jumps and a water fountain made for the dogs. The park has picnic tables and ample parking. Capacity limitations may be enforced at this dog park facility.

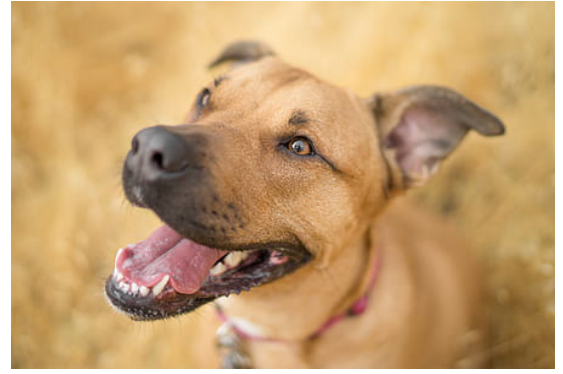
For county residents familiar with Mercer County Park in West Windsor / Princeton Junction, a dog park is located at the Southeast corner of the park. The dog park section has two fenced areas, with a small swath of land between them. These fenced sections are for canines of different sizes, one for large dogs and another for small breeds and puppies. Just inside the gate of either section are water fountains, bags for dog waste collection, and garbage cans. Capacity limitations are currently enforced at this dog park facility.

For dog owners looking to stay closer to home, here are some other activities you can try this summer to keep your pets happy, while also keeping your kids busy while school is out:

- **Do-It-Yourself Agility:** You can create your own agility course for your dogs in your backyard or living room, if the space allows, using household items like a broom pole and chairs as anchors. Place the pole between the two anchors. Practice introducing your dogs to the jump first, and then guide them over the jump with their favorite toys or treats.

- **Paw Print Masterpiece:**

Engage your kids to help create a paw print finger paint masterpiece; this will create fond memories with your kids and foster a deeper bond with your pet that creates a lasting memento of your time together. Of course, use non-toxic paint and gently place your dog's clean, dry paw into the paint. Move their paw over to the paper and lightly press their paw down. After you are done, wash your pup's paw off using warm water and their favorite dog shampoo.



- **Box Search Scent Game:** This might be the easiest to try at home if the delivery boxes have been accumulating during quarantine. Gather several empty, clean boxes, and while your dog is in another room, space the empty boxes out on the floor. In one or only a few of the boxes, place treats. Bring your dog into the room and encourage them to search. Each time it finds a treat in the box, praise your pup and let them eat the treat. When your dog has found all the hidden treats, come in with another treat and lure your dog out of the search area by keeping its nose on the treat in your hand. Praise and give the treat that you used to lure them away, as this helps reinforce to your dog that this is a game you are playing together and prevents frustration from continuing to search and not find anything after the game has concluded.

## TNR Success (continued from page 2)

very tip, or point, of one of a cat's ears – so one will appear to have a plateau or flat part, instead of coming to a point.

### So If Cats in Colonies Are Feral, How Do They End Up Available for Adoption At EASEL?

Occasionally, EASEL volunteers realize that a feral cat that has been brought in for sterilization may not be truly feral, and with some time and interaction with volunteer cat socializers, may become adoptable.

Sometimes a female cat is brought in already pregnant. If that is the case,

she is put into foster with a volunteer experienced with mother cats and kittens.

Once she delivers and recovers, she is sterilized and either released or, if she is friendly, put up for adoption. Her kittens are weaned, raised in foster care until there are old enough to receive shots and be fixed, and then brought in for adoption as well.

### How Many Cats Has EASEL Adopted?

EASEL is very proud of the tremendous success we've had adopting both cats and dogs from our shelter programs. Since

2012, EASEL had adopted out over 3,440 cats, averaging nearly 500 cats a year. In 2019, EASEL adopted out 682 cats into loving homes, over 100 more cats than we did in 2018. In fact, EASEL has increased its adoption numbers nearly every year since 2012.

In 2020, due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and EASEL's concern for its shelter animals, volunteers and the public at large, EASEL was forced to move to an adoption-by-appointment-only system. Despite the significant changes to EASEL's normal adoption policies, we've continued to see tremendous success in adoption both cats and dogs from our shelter. In fact, we've seen no decrease in our adoption numbers thanks to the hard work of our dedicated shelter staff and volunteers.



# Become A Monthly Donor!

As a monthly donor, you play a vital role in ensuring that we can care for all of our shelter animals, including veterinary treatments, food, shelter, transportation to adoption events and more.

- Join online: [easelnj.org](https://easelnj.org)
- Join by phone: (609) 883-0540
- Join by Email: [info@easelnj.org](mailto:info@easelnj.org)

## Yearly Success Stats



250+ Dogs Adopted



570+ Cats Adopted



\$100K+ In Veterinary Services Rendered

## Loyalty (continued from page 3)

As movingly recounted on a website dedicated to Hachikō: *The locals believed Hachikō's late night visits to the shopkeepers during his last days were a final goodbye. Thousands of people gathered around Hachikō's statue with sweet treats, flowers, cards, and letters.*

*On March 10, 1935, a small memorial was held at Hachiko's shrine which was located next to Ueno's resting place. Hachikō's death made front page news, and the people of Japan deeply mourned his passing. Schools in Japan often cited Hachikō to their students as an example of loyalty, friendship and good character.*

*He was buried next to Professor Ueno. Finally reunited in death, it doesn't take much to imagine the comfort Ueno*

*and Hachikō now share, once again side by side.*

There stands a very famous statue of Hachikō erected in his honor at the Shibuya Station, with the surrounding plaza known as "Tokyo's most popular rendezvous point". People come from all over the world to see the statue of this incredible dog, often snapping selfies posing next to Hachikō's bronze image. Amazingly, the "statue is often noted as a pivotal point in saving the Akita breed from extinction, which had been in steady decline post-war". If true, the kindly professor who lovingly worked so hard to save Hachikō's life as a puppy may have unknowingly saved an entire breed.

Far less known is a statue depicting Hachikō with his loving companion, Professor Ueno, which stands at Tokyo University where he once taught. It shows a person and dog, forever bound by their love and loyalty, lost in that sublimely happy moment of undying companionship and belonging.

## Double the Impact!

If your company has a matching gift program, please include a matching gift with your donation. [Click here for information or to donate online!](#)

