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Mid-South Shelters and Rescues Learn How to Save More Lives with Dog Playgroups from Dogs Playing for Life

Training hosted by Memphis Animal Services thanks to Animal Farm Foundation grant

Memphis, Tenn., Dec. 27, 2018 – Last week Memphis Animal Services hosted dog playgroup training by Dogs Playing for Life, a non-profit organization that has trained over 230 shelters to incorporate playgroups for dogs into their daily operations.

Memphis Animal Services applied for and received a grant from Animal Farm Foundation, a national nonprofit that brings dogs and people together to end breed discrimination, to fund a DPFL playgroup training at the shelter. The training was attended by MAS staff, volunteers, and rescue partners, as well as staff and volunteers from other area shelters including Bartlett Animal Shelter, the Humane Society of Memphis & Shelby County, Collierville Animal Services, Germantown Animal Shelter, West Memphis Animal Shelter, and the Northeast Arkansas Humane Society.

“Playgroups allow the dogs to be dogs!” said Emily Grossheider, Chief Innovation Officer for Dogs Playing for Life. “By getting time outside and with each other, dogs are less stressed in the shelter and get to show us more about their personalities, which help us find them homes. Our goal is to help shelters reach every dog, every day, so that every dog is afforded an opportunity for meaningful enrichment.”

The six-day training consisted of a presentation in a classroom setting followed by nine possible three-hour hands-on sessions where the DPFL trainers ran dog playgroups for MAS shelter resident dogs, assisted by MAS staff and training attendees.

“The Dogs Playing for Life training was completely mind-blowing,” said Alexis Pugh, director of Memphis Animal Services. “Their protocol, which gives just about every dog in our shelter safe playtime with other dogs, is going to help us save even more dogs in our most at-risk category of large adult dogs.”

The feedback was equally enthusiastic from other participants, such as Bartlett Animal Shelter.

“We are very excited about this program,” said Angela Klein, division manager of the Bartlett Animal Shelter. “We have already implemented it at our shelter and it has made a huge difference in the adoptability of several dogs in our care. This program will save so many lives now and in the future.”

Memphis Animal Services has already used information from playgroups to help get dogs adopted and rescued. The shelter plans to incorporate regular playgroups into their activities after the first of the year to help give more information about dogs to adopters and rescue partners, to improve



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the dogs' quality of life while in the shelter, and to improve the dogs' stress level and behavior in and out of the kennel.

About Dogs Playing for Life

Dogs Playing for Life is a non-profit organization founded and led by Aimee Sadler, a prominent dog trainer. It has worked with over 230 shelters in the United States and Canada and is spearheading an industry-wide effort to incorporate enrichment and daily playgroups to help elevate the standard of care and quality of life for shelter dogs. The two primary open admission shelters that have implemented Dogs Playing For Life in its entirety now maintain a canine live release rate in excess of 95 percent. For more information visit www.dogsplayingforlife.org. To become a fan of Dogs Playing for Life on Facebook go to: <https://www.facebook.com/dogsplayingforlife>. Follow Dogs Playing for Life on Instagram @dogsplayingforlife.

About Animal Farm Foundation

Animal Farm Foundation (AFF) is a 501(c)3 whose mission is to secure equal treatment and opportunity for "pit bull" dogs through recognizing that all dogs are individuals. Established in the 1980s, AFF works to achieve this goal by offering free resources to animal care workers and community advocates, as well as through their assistance dog, detection dog, and grant programs. For more information visit animalfarmfoundation.org.

About Memphis Animal Services

Memphis Animal Services offers a wide range of programs and services including the sheltering of lost and homeless animals, pet adoption and placement, spay/neuter programs, handling of animal control complaints & bite cases, dog licensing, cruelty investigations, humane education, and more. Memphis Animal Services has maintained an 88 percent save rate for the past year and is working toward the goal of saving every healthy, adoptable pet. For more information, visit www.memphisanimalservices.com, call 901-636-1416, or visit the facility at 2350 Appling City Cove. To become a fan of Memphis Animal Services on Facebook go to: <https://www.facebook.com/memphisanimalservices/>. Follow Memphis Animal Services on Twitter & Instagram @AdoptMAS.