

Does your house need a new pet at Christmas?

The last two weeks before Christmas, it is very common for area animal shelters or organizations to hear from families looking to adopt a pet.

For some, a puppy/kitten or older animal represents the perfect holiday gift. But for those who work with animals, it is perhaps the worst time for a family to bring in a new pet, particularly if they haven't done their homework.



NAFA believes that two weeks prior to Christmas or other special days, like birthdays, might make people want to get a family gets a pet. However, holidays, especially Christmas finds more and more families dealing with hectic schedules, traveling, visiting family/friends and over stimulated family members.

It is important for the entire family to come to a meeting of the minds and find the pet and time that best matches the needs of the family. A new pet, coming into a home during the rush of the holidays, is not likely going to get the training and attention it needs, leading to the worst-case scenario - the pet developing unwanted behavior such as no housetraining, jumping, chewing, and other destructive behavior becomes unwanted and is either given away or surrendered to a rescue or shelter.

This year NAFA has launched its "Pet for the Holidays Gift Program" aimed at helping individuals find and adopt the perfect family pet at the perfect time. The "Pet for the Holidays Gift Program" includes a stocking or gift bag filled with a variety of different pet related items, such as a stuffed dog or cat, small bag of treats, a gift certificate for two free puppy or adult dog classes, a discount coupon for grooming, a child's contract for animal care and a coupon for a free gift book at our local Petco Store. Individuals can give the stocking or gift bag on Christmas. Then after Christmas the stuffed animal can be exchanged for an adopted or purchased pet that the recipient chooses.

Additionally, NAFA will be providing specific information on Saturday, December 12th throughout the afternoon 1 to 4 pm at Petco to offer tips to families on how to strengthen the bond between dogs and children, how to house train a puppy or adult, help with chewing and inappropriate jumping. For kittens or cats information is provided on litter box training, eliminating destructive clawing and counter surfing.

NAFA will also be available to provide information on the local costs of owning a pet. It is important to remember that the first year can be quite expensive, once you consider things such as a crate, a leash, toys, food, treats, training, medical costs, heartworm preventative and flea and tick preventative. And in subsequent years, medical and food costs don't go away. Families need to know it is going to be a substantial expense and should be prepared for that



NAFA will be available to talk with parents about the importance in homes with children to "child-proof" the pet through consistent training.

For more information please contact NAFA – 870-932-1955 or email wannadat@fastdata.net. Visit us at www.nafarescue.org or tutstake.blogspot.com or www.facebook.com/NAFA.rescue