

exercise buddy, and an amazing way to bring happiness into any day.

Like Floyd the hound at your local dog pound Lisa Brasel, Yankton's Animal Control Officer, works hard to find a home for ownerless pets, regardless of their age or breed, as long as they are of pet quality. Because she has limited space, she needs to move animals that are not claimed as quickly as possible, working with animal rescue organizations or humane societies in the process. A strong believer in having pets spayed and neutered before adoption, she prefers to work primarily with organizations that include this in their adoption process.

"I always try to encourage people to adopt a pet rather than buy from a breeder," she explains. She sees many types of dogs, many of them a wonderful candidate for someone's pet. "Second-hand pets make first-class fur families," she states, "and always keep in mind that our pets rely on us for their care so make sure you are ready to meet the needs of that particular breed. Animals like people, need to feel safe and loved also."

Another place to get a first-rate pet Jeanette Kranz, Foster & Animal Care Coordinator and Christa Kranig, Shelter Coordinator are from the Heartland Humane Society (HHS) in Yankton. Established in 2006 originally as the Yankton Area Humane Society, HHS is a private non-profit corporation that primarily serves Yankton, Clay and Cedar Counties though often providing assistance to 11 other counties. When considering adoption, Kranz explains the items to think through. The primary consideration is the financial commitment that is required of a furry family addition. If you are considering getting a young animal, you should understand that you are looking at a minimum of approximately ten years of the cost of food, grooming, veterinary care and emergency care.

"What we look for in trying to match our pets with the right home, is that they are really considering their future and where they will be in the next ten or so years. Does that future include this animal?" HHS asks that the adopter consider how much time they have to devote to the animal's training, grooming, exercise and socialization, as these are all key components of finding the right animal for their household.

Interested in adopting?

When seriously considering pet adoption, HHS asks that you come to the shelter at 3400 E. Highway 50 in Yankton, check out their website at www.heartlandhumanesociety.net or call them at

(605) 664-4244 for more information. If you are considering adopting a dog, they are not held at the shelter, so you will need to view them online, on the "dog wall" at the shelter or at their Meet and Greet events. They ask for an application to be completed, which doesn't commit you to anything, it just gives them an idea of what you are looking for in a pet and some other details in what will help find the most suitable pet for you. When they find a match, they will have you spend time with the animal, asking that all family members be present at the meeting at some point. If you already have a dog and are adopting another, they ask that your current fuzzy family member also be present to see how the dogs interact with each other.

Kranz explains that, for every animal that is bought through a breeder that means that there is one more animal that has to sit at a shelter waiting for a forever home. If you adopt from a shelter, she states, "You are helping save the life of an animal that deserves a chance for a good home. But we also want you to make smart choices about when to adopt, what type of animal to adopt and that if you aren't ready for a long-term commitment, then wait until you are ready."

If you would like to view any of the animals at the Yankton pound, contact Animal Control Officer Lisa Brasel from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday at 661-9494 or at 668-5210.

Other ways to help

If you're not ready to adopt or not considering adoption, you can still help out our furry friends by donating to the HHS or the dog pound. Because the HHS is a non-profit organization, they receive no state or federal funding and instead rely on private donations. They are currently in need of the following items: clumping cat litter, cat food, kitten food, bedding for Guinea Pigs and bleach. If you'd like to help out the Yankton pound, they are always in need of both canned and dry dog and cat food, flea and tick medicine and deworming medicine. Both agencies appreciate any donations they receive.

As I look down at Floyd, who's nestled in next to me and snoring deeply as I write, it's quite apparent to me the benefits of adopting a dog. I've reaped those benefits and by the smile on Floyd's face, I'm pretty certain he has too.

❖ *By Julie Eickhoff*

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