

## ***Are You Ready to Adopt?***

*(from the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention for Cruelty to Animals MSPCA)*

Falling in love with a pet is easy. And no wonder! Dogs, cats and other pets, give us unconditional loyalty and acceptance, provide constant companionship and even help relieve stress after a hard day's work.

Adopting a pet, though, is a big decision. Dogs and cats are living beings and require a lot of time, money and commitment — over 15 years' worth in many cases. Before you make that final decision to bring a furry friend into your life, take a moment to think about these questions:

### ***Why do you want a pet?***

Ask this simple question before adopting a pet. Adopting a pet just because it is "the thing to do" or because the kids have been pining for a puppy usually ends up being a big mistake. Don't forget that pets may be with you 10, 15 even 20 years.

### ***Do you have time for a pet?***

Dogs, cats and other animal companions cannot be ignored just because you are tired or busy. They require food, water, exercise, care and companionship every day of every year. Many animals in the shelter are there because their owners did not realize how much time it took to properly care for them.

### ***Can you afford a pet?***

The monetary costs of pet ownership can be quite high. Training classes, veterinary care, grooming, toys, food and kitty litter and other expenses add up quickly.

### ***Are you prepared to deal with special problems that only a pet can cause?***

Flea infestations, scratched-up furniture, accidents from animals who are not yet housebroken and unexpected medical emergencies are unfortunate, but common aspects of pet ownership.

### ***Can you have a pet where you live?***

Many rental communities do not allow pets or have restrictions. Make sure you know what they are before you bring a companion animal home.

### ***Is it a good time for you to adopt a pet?***

If you have kids under six years old, for instance, you might consider waiting a few years before you adopt a companion. Problem-free pet ownership requires children who are mature enough to be responsible. If you are a student, in the military or travel frequently as part of your work, waiting until you settle down is a wise choice.

### ***Are your living arrangements suitable for the pet you'd like?***

Adopting a large or energetic dog to share your small apartment, for example, is not a good idea — he likely will not have enough space to move around in, and giving him enough exercise will require quite a bit of activity on your part. Choose an animal who will be comfortable in your surroundings.

### ***Do you know who will care for your pet while you are away on vacation?***

You will need either reliable

friends and neighbors, or money to pay for a boarding kennel or pet-sitting service.

### ***Will you be a responsible pet owner?***

Having your pet spayed or neutered, obeying community leash and licensing laws and keeping identification tags on your pets are all part of being a responsible pet owner. Of course, giving your pet love, companionship, exercise, a healthy diet and regular veterinary care are other essentials.

### ***Finally, are you prepared to keep and care for the pet for his or her entire lifetime?***

When you adopt a pet, you are making a commitment to care for the animal for his or her lifetime.

### ***Adopt an Animal for Life***

Sure, it's a long list of questions. But a quick stroll through the animal shelter will help you understand why answering them before you adopt a pet is so important.

Many of the shelter's homeless animals are victims of irresponsible people who allowed their pets to breed. But there are at least as many dogs and cats at the shelter who are more than a year old — animals who were first obtained by people who did not think through the responsibilities of pet ownership before they got a pet.

Please, do not make the same mistake. Think before you adopt. Sharing your life with a companion animal can bring incredible rewards, but only if you are willing to make the necessary commitments of time, money, responsibility and love — for the life of the pet.

## Support the Mission of St. Croix AWC

The St. Croix AWC depends on community support to fund and implement our programs and services. Help us help the homeless animals in St. Croix and put an end to pet over population in our island community.

**Become a Member**—just \$35 for individual/family or \$100 for corporate membership. These funds help offset the cost of providing animal control, animal care and rescue services on St. Croix. In addition to our Adoption and Pets from Paradise programs, your funds also make a difference in the following areas:

- Stop Pet Overpopulation—our Low Cost Spay Neuter program treated an astounding 2,000 animals last year. Help us match those numbers this year.
- Stop Animal Neglect and Cruelty on St. Croix—our Animal Control team respond to reports of stray and missing animals and reports of animal cruelty and neglect.
- Spread the Word—our Humane Education department works to educate the public about responsible pet ownership.

To find out more about how you can support our animals, call 340-778-1650 or email [development@stcroixawc.org](mailto:development@stcroixawc.org).

**Volunteer**—give your time. Help with animal care at our shelter facility, aid in special fundraising events, visit schools with our humane education program or help us raise funds through our flea market. The need is great and your gift of time priceless. Call Gretchen at 514-6326 for more information or email [communications@stcroixawc.org](mailto:communications@stcroixawc.org).

## Crayon's Story: An Adoption Love Story

Crayon, a four week old kitten was dropped at the St. Croix AWC shelter facility by an owner who "had too many." Crayon was so very tiny—weighing in at under 1 pound. But her small size did not stop Roxy and Scarlett Wallace and their mom from falling in love with Crayon.

No pet leaves our shelter facility without being spayed or neutered, but Crayon was just too small to be adopted right away. So, Roxy and Scarlett came to our shelter 2 or 3 times each week to visit their baby! Roxy, age 4 and Scarlett, age 2, asked their mother at each visit when Crayon would be able to come home with them. The hardest part of each visit was having to end these playful afternoons and leave Crayon behind. Roxy and Scarlett knew, however, that one day Crayon would come home with them.

During those visits, Roxy and Scarlett got to know Wishes, Crayon's best friend and cage mate, and the girls decided to adopt them both, so Wishes and Crayon have begun a new life in their forever home with the Wallace family.

This photo was taken on the day when Crayon was finally able to go home with her new family.

