

What should people know about adopting a pet?

When considering adopting a cat or dog from the Hinsdale Humane Society, adoption counselor Katie Wolfe Baran said there are a few items to mull over even before setting foot inside the shelter.

Are one's activities primarily indoor or outdoor? Is someone home most of the time or will there be a lot of solitary time for the pet? Will the pet be interacting with young children?

"I would recommend actually looking at your lifestyle and seeing what kind of animal would fit within that," Baran said.

Having answers to some of those questions will provide a filter for identifying a suitable breed.

"Do your research first, definitely. That'll give you just a little advantage of what you're looking for, and then we can steer you," she said.

The adoption application is available online — hinsdalehumanesociety.org — as is a list of all of the cats and dogs being housed at the shelter.

"It's updated almost daily," Baran said.

Additionally, someone looking for a specific type of dog can submit a breed request online.

Once that advance groundwork is laid, prospective pet owners should visit the shelter and talk with an adoption counselor.

Visitors are encouraged to look around the shelter to see all of the animals firsthand and see if they form a connection with one.

A counselor will talk with the person or family about their lifestyle needs and see if any of the shelter residents caught their eye.

The shelter performs temperament evaluations on all its animals, which is especially helpful if one's family includes little ones.

"That can be a good indicator of what age range of children that they'd be appropriate for," she said. "If one dog doesn't fit what you're looking for, we're here to advise you on others ones that we have that could match you."

Baran has witnessed on numerous occasions people stopping into the shelter with a particular breed in mind only to change that plan based on the shelter visit.

"They came for one dog and ended up falling in love with another one," she said. "I go more so on the personality of the dog than, maybe, necessar-

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KATIE WOLFE BARAN, PET ADOPTION COUNSELOR

■ MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Making a Difference is a partnership between The Hinsdalean and the Hinsdale Humane Society, which is dedicated to the care and adoption of homeless animals and advocacy for the compassionate treatment of animals

ily the breed."

Those who are away from home for long stretches may find a cat more maintenance friendly than a dog.

Counselors help families understand the responsibilities that pet ownership entails. Those who decide to adopt can take the pet home that day if it is spayed or neutered. If not, the procedure can be scheduled with a local veterinarian.

Baran said the humane society takes very seriously its mission to find good homes for pets and good pets for homes.

"We try to stress to people that it's a lifetime commitment," she said.

Baran said finding the right fit can take time.

"We keep them on file here for about a year, so if they don't find a match they can just keep coming back in and they're already on file."

— by Ken Knutson



Hinsdale Humane Society adoption counselor Katie Wolfe Baran said prospective pet owners are guided through the adoption process at the shelter. They can also receive post-adoption support through obedience training and other humane society programs (Jim Slonoff photo)