

Pet Resource Guide

Animal Intake

intake@omhs.ca

905-845-1551 ext. 156



REHOMING YOUR PET

The decision to give up a companion animal is a difficult one. At the Oakville & Milton Humane Society we are here to help you explore all possible options so that you can keep your animal, but we recognize that sometimes, giving up your companion is the best option — for you and for your pet.

Our shelter has a finite number of cages, and we cannot safely house more animals than we have cage space. Due to limited space, we give priority to animals from the Oakville and Milton area. If you live outside our service area, please contact the shelter in your municipality.

Before you decide to give up an animal, ask yourself:

Training?

If the challenge you are experiencing is related to your pet's behaviour, is it something that possibly could be helped with training or by speaking with a trainer? The OMHS can be a resource to understanding your pet's behaviour challenges.

Medical care?

If the problem is health-related, is it something that your veterinarian may be able to help you with? Sometimes behaviour problems have a medical origin you can't easily see. An exam by your vet can be very helpful. If you are having financial challenges, ask your veterinarian about subsidy resources.

Allergies?

If you are suffering from animal allergies, are there steps that you can take to help control your allergies?

No time?

If you are concerned that you simply don't have enough time to spend with your companion animal, could you hire a pet sitter to (or dog walker if it's a dog) to help? Most mature pets are happy to stay at home if you can get a little help with your busy schedule.

Be honest...

If your pet has a chronic health problem or one or more serious behaviour issues, is it realistic to expect that another person will be more willing or able to deal with these problems? Is it fair or safe to re-home your pet to another family? Sometimes euthanasia is the kindest, most humane option.



SURRENDERING TO OMHS

The decision to surrender your pet is a permanent one. Once you have surrendered your animal, it becomes the property of the Oakville & Milton Humane Society and you will not be able to reverse the transfer of ownership. We realize that surrendering your pet is an emotional decision which you have made for a good reason. It would not be responsible of us to return an animal to someone who has told us that they are unable or unwilling, for whatever reason, to provide care for their animal.

We take animals in by appointment only from residents of Oakville and Milton, as we have limited space and resources. Please contact our Intake Department to speak to our intake staff about giving up your pet: 905-845-1551 ext. 156 or intake@omhs.ca.

Appointments are scheduled during the week from 10:30am to 5:30pm. Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Animals that were previously adopted from OMHS are given priority and we will always take them back. Many other organizations have similar policies and therefore you should contact the organization prior to surrendering the animal to OMHS.

There is a fee to surrender your pet and it is based on your animal's species, whether it is spayed or neutered and vaccination status. You will be informed of the fee when you contact us to give up your pet. This fee goes toward caring for your pet while they are with us. You should make sure that your pet's vaccinations are up to date before surrendering. If the fee is a barrier to relinquishing your companion, please let us know.

All animals brought to the OMHS must be either in a carrier or on a leash.



FINDING A RESPONSIBLE HOME FOR YOUR PET

We encourage pet owners to try and find a responsible new home for their pet before they consider surrendering their animal to our shelter (unless previously adopted from OMHS). If you need to rehome an animal that has been adopted from OMHS, that animal must come back to us.

Vaccinations

A healthy pet is easier to rehome so try and be sure that your pet is up to date on their vaccinations. Reach out to your vet and ask for copies of your veterinary records so that you can pass it along to the new owners.

If your pet is not spayed/neutered, it is recommended that this is done before they are rehomed. This is a guaranteed way to make sure that your companion animal does not end up in a puppy mill or breeding situation. Here are a list of some low-cost spay/neuter clinics in the area:

OSPCA Spay & Neuter Clinic: <https://ontariospca.ca/what-we-do/spay-neuter/spay-neuter-locations/>

Toronto Humane Society Spay & Neuter Clinic: 416-392-2273

403-Dundas Spay & Neuter Clinic: 905-997-9080

Kitchener-Waterloo Humane Society: 519-273-6600 ext. 256

Financial Assistance/Funding for Medical Resources

If you are having to surrender your pet because of financial challenges, there may be options available.

Farley Foundation

www.farleyfoundation.org

Assists those who are struggling financially to pay for veterinary care for their pets

Petcard

www.petcard.ca

Offers an affordable way to finance the treatment your pet needs and it allows you to get it without delay



Waggle

www.waggle.org

Submit your pet's profile to raise funds for their medical care utilizing this crowdsourcing platform.

Use Social Media

Utilize social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or NextDoor.

When you post on any social media channel to share your pet, try these quick tips for success:

- Accurately describe the appearance, size, and age of your pet.
- Include the pet's name and an appealing photograph. Make sure when taking a picture, the animal is giving the camera eye contact and shows the entire body of the animal.
- Make sure to include if the animal is spayed/neutered or up to date on vaccinations.
- Be descriptive! Describe their personality, likes and dislikes.
- Define any limitations the pet might have (e.g., not good with cats or small children, etc.).
- Don't forget your phone number, email, and the times you can be reached.

Example Poster:



We're looking for our Forever Home!

Hoops and Yo-yo are two 5-year-old Holland Lops.

Hoops is very relaxed, quiet and loves gentle petting. He loves munching on hay and being with his brother Yo-yo!

Yo-yo is an energetic fellow, and loves to exercise, mostly by way of "Zoomies"! He does also love to take a lounge in sunspots after bouncing around his pen.

Hoops and Yo-yo are both neutered. They are looking for a loving, indoor-only home with someone who can provide them with all the care and attention that they need.

For more adoption information, please contact:

Hoopsandyoyo@gmail.com or 905-845-1234



Networks & Community Connections

If you purchased the animal from another shelter, rescue group or a breeder, try contacting them first to see if they can take the animal back. If you purchased your animal from a reputable source, there will likely be a clause in the contract you signed that stipulates that the animal needs to come back to them. This may be an easier and faster solution than finding a home on your own.

Ask friends, family members, co-workers or neighbours to see if they are interested in taking on your pet.

There are many Facebook groups where you can post your animal. For example, Pets for Rehoming Ontario is group that you can utilize.

You can also create flyers that can be posted at veterinary clinics, pet stores, coffee shops, restaurants, work, schools, or other community boards. When creating a flyer use the same basic information you used when posting on social media. Use a large appealing photo to capture that attention of would-be adopters.

There are breed specific dog rescue groups available that may be able to take your dog:
<https://www.speakingofdogs.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020-Rescue-Directory.pdf>

Behaviour & Training

If you are willing to work on modifying your companion animal's behaviour, please **do not try this on your own**. Seek the help of a professional positive based trainer for your dog or cat. You may also need to consider medication to help with the process which will involve the help of a veterinarian.

We stress the importance of only using positive based training for both cats and dogs. Here are a trainers or resources:

Dr. Sophia Yin Dog Behaviour Issues

<https://cattledogpublishing.com/dr-sophia-profile-history/>

ASPCA

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care>

Canadian Association of Professional Dog Trainers

www.cappdt.ca

International Positive Dog Training Association

www.ipdta.org



The Jackson Galaxy Project

<https://greatergood.org/jackson-galaxy#resources>

What Dog Trainer Should You Choose?

Searching for a trainer for your dog's needs can be overwhelming. It can be difficult to decide between one trainer and the next. Below we have provided you with the information to help you find a trainer that is going to help you and your dog learn together in the correct environment.

OMHS Dog Training Philosophy:

Here at the Oakville & Milton Humane Society, we believe in the use of positive reinforcement also referred to as reward-based training. OMHS endorses training methods that allow a dog to work for things that motivate them. These motivators are typically: food, play and attention. We do not endorse training methods that use pain or fear to discourage or punish the dog for unwanted behavior.

The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) has great information regarding the use of dominance theory and punishment in behaviour modification. These articles can be found in the resource section of their website, www.avsab.org, under position statements.

What to look for when selecting a trainer:

1. *Uses reward-based training/positive reinforcement training only*

At OMHS we train our dogs based on positive methods only and are looking for these training methods to continue in their forever home.

2. *Offer the right type of class of your dog*

There are many training classes for you to choose from and each has its own benefits. The most common classes that you find are:

- a. Group Classes – these courses have 4-6 dogs in each class. These are the most common type of class and are suitable for most dogs adopted from OMHS. They offer socialization and great in class distractions to help your dog on learning to focus on you for direction. We recommend looking for a group class for dogs adopted from OMHS unless told otherwise.
- b. Private Lessons – private lessons are typically done at your home. The benefit of a private lesson is that is catered toward your dog's needs and behaviours. They are great for dogs who already have a good training foundation and just need a little help on a specific area.
- c. Behaviour Adjustment Training – these type of classes are often referred to as “reactive rover” and are meant for dogs who have reactivity issues they need to work on in the future. These courses can also help a dog that is fearful.

3. *Certified dog trainers*



Look for trainers that have dog training certifications. These trainers have studied training methods on how a dog learns, taken exams to show their understanding and practiced these methods for a specific number of hours prior to receiving certification. These trainers are constantly continuing their education to best help the dogs they work with.

4. *Ask for vaccinations prior to the course starting*

A good trainer will look to protect all dogs in the class and therefore have a requirement for owners to provide proof of vaccination. They will also encourage that owner's leave a sick dog at home and attend the class with human family members only to learn that week's lesson. Please note, most trainers will ask that you bring proof of vaccines to the first lesson.

How to tell if a trainer uses reward-based training and positive reinforcement only:

1. *Will clearly state throughout their website, handouts and descriptions that they use only positive reinforcement or reward-based training*

Trainers that are unclear or do not state their training philosophies are often hiding their methods. Trainers that use both positive reinforcement methods and punishment methods are referred to as balanced. Often these trainers will state that they use treats to motivate but also offer a balanced program. We do not recommend using a balanced trainer as they may still use fear or pain to discourage unwanted behaviours.

Where to look for a trainer's position on training methods online:

- About pages
- Training philosophy
- Trainer's biography pages
- Course descriptions

2. *Check their photo gallery on their website to see what training tools they use in their courses*

Many trainers have galleries on their websites. In these photos you can see what type of training methods and tools they are using. Avoid trainers that use choke chains, prong collars or electric collars as these tools are based on negative reinforcement or punishment techniques.

3. *Testimonials from clients*

Testimonial pages are a great place to see the personality of the trainer and how past clients felt their experience in the class was. Testimonials can be found on trainer's websites, google reviews or from friends or family.

Things to consider when finding your pet, a new home:



Be honest about your pet, and why you must re-home him/her. It is not fair to your pet to send him/her to a new home with false expectations of its behaviour or medical requirements.

Ask questions:

- *What are the new family's expectations of your pet?*
- *Has the family had pets before? What happened to them?*
- *Are their current pets vaccinated and fixed?*
- *How often will the cat's litterbox be cleaned?*
- *Are the parents willing to supervise the children to make sure small animal (hamster, rabbit, etc.) receive appropriate care?*
- *Does anyone in the household have allergies?*
- *Are the new owners thinking of moving soon? If so, will they take their new pet with them?*
- *Will the pet be kept inside or outside?*
- Visit the prospective home. As the caregiver of an animal, it is up to you to ensure your pet goes to a responsible, caring home that can meet its needs.

Ask for valid identification and an adoption fee. Keep a record, along with a contract signed by both of you, outlining the requirements you both agreed upon and transfer of ownership. You can Google "Cat/Dog Adoption Contract" for an example. Be available if the new home needs help in the first few weeks and be realistic that if it isn't working out, they may ask you to take the pet back. If your pet has a microchip, make sure that you update the new owner information with the microchip company.

Do not be afraid to say no. You have a responsibility to your pet to find him or her a good home.

One Last Thing:

Never release a rabbit outside anywhere, no matter how safe the setting may seem. Domestic rabbits are not equipped to survive in the wild and inevitably end up dying. Also, do not rehome a cat or dog to a farm environment to live outside thinking that will solve the problem. Remember, the animal has been living inside in a home environment and re-homing them to a farm where they would be living outside will unlikely be successful and may they succumb to the elements and predators.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you need assistance or advice on finding your pet a new home.

