



## HASS Playbook: Supported Self-Rehoming Self-Rehoming Pet Marketing

### Benefits of Pet Marketing

Providing community members seeking to rehome their pets with resources on how to create positive biographies and best practices for pet photos for adoption profiles can increase visibility and overall engagement with the pet's adoption listing, potentially expediting the rehoming process. Not everyone will want support with this process, and that's okay! Ensure community members are aware they can connect with your organization at a later time if they change their mind.

### Pet Photos

Pet photos are the first thing a potential adopter sees when looking for options. When taking a pet's photo, keep in mind the following best practices. For more information on the following practices, see a dog-specific example through the [Dog Rescue Photography](#) guide from Friends of Marshall Animals. Here's also a quick guide for [cat photo tips from Pet Finder](#).

- Prepare the area you are photographing.
  - Clear the space of any debris or major distractions and ensure there is ample lighting. Full sun can be complicated, so indirect light is preferred.
    - Be careful of areas with harsh shadows that may be seen on your pet when taking a photograph. *(Be sure not to take a photograph with the sun directly behind you or your silhouette may accidentally block the light!)*
    - Ensure the sun is not directly in your pet's face to avoid squinting!
  - If photographing outdoors, secure a leash to a wall or anchor point so that your pet may stay in one place while you take photographs.
- Before you take your photos, ensure your pet is exercised to reduce distractions and energy bursts during the photo session.
- Have treats, squeakers, or other high-value items on hand to ensure you can get your pet to look at the camera when photographing.
- Check their face for fuzz, dirt, or other. Remove as necessary.
- Take photos on their level whenever possible. Kneeling to take photos at the pet's eye level can create more intimate shots.
- Use portrait mode on your phone or a small f-stop (aperture) on your camera to create a slightly blurred background and keep your pet as the main focal point.

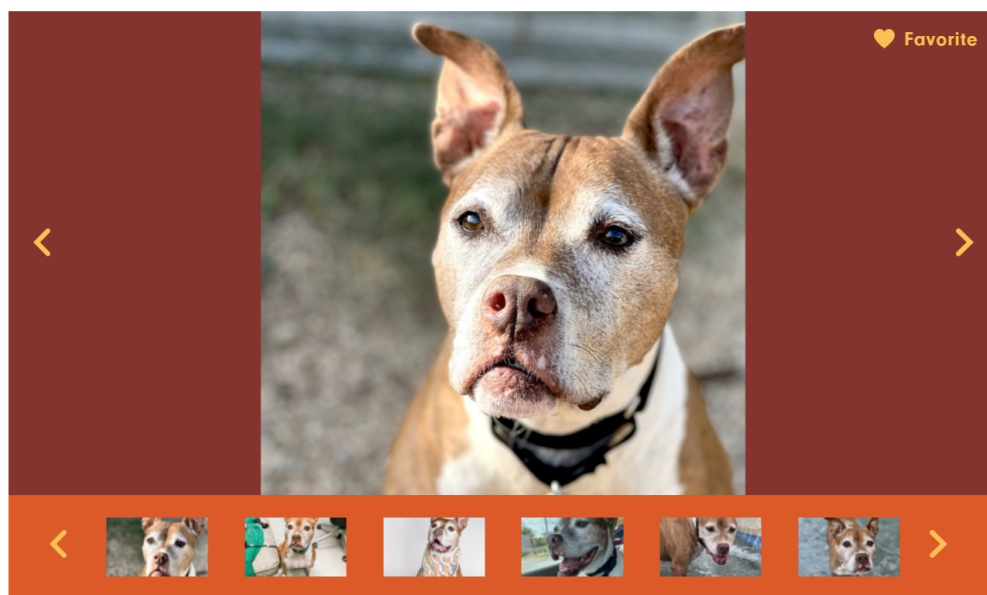
### Pet Biographies

Pet biographies should highlight a few key qualities of the pet for the best chances of increased visibility and clarity among potential adopters.

- Tell a story about the pet including things they like such as food, games, toys, or rolling in the grass.

- Highlight their strengths
  - Training history or tricks they know
  - Cute quirks
- Keep good qualities at the forefront, but be transparent about any potential challenges the pet may have
  - When approaching medical or behavior challenges, do not include jargon that is not easily understandable by the general public such as 'HW+' or 'flight risk'.
  - Always provide context! If the pet is healing from a broken leg but is already in the middle of a care plan, ensure the biography mentions that they are already on the mend and how long they can expect until full recovery.
  - If a pet has a specific behavior challenge, place it in a story format whenever possible to create a full picture for potential adopters. For example, a pet that is fearful of new people you might say, "This girl can be shy when meeting new people and will prefer slow introductions. Once she is comfortable with you, she's a cuddle bug!"
- Keep relevant details up front and leave less relevant details out of biographies in favor of individual matchmaking conversations, such as "up to date on vaccines."

**Sample (Austin Pets Alive!):**



This mature girl is ready for a new home! Just give her a yard and a spot on the couch and she is a happy camper. "Sugar Plum really is a sweet baby. She's a very easy girl," said her previous caretaker. Work full time? No worries, Sugar Plum does well left alone for extended periods of time. She loves having a yard and a way she can get to it by herself. She's quiet and easygoing. Sugar Plum's owner became ill and was unable to take care of her any longer, otherwise Sugar Plum wouldn't be available to join your home. She would make a wonderful companion to any number of loving homes. Come meet this sweet girl!

## Additional Resources

The following resources are primarily geared towards pets in the care of the shelter, but the content can also be utilized to support community members in their marketing efforts.

- [Ethical Standards for Marketing Shelter Pets](#)
- [Marketing FUNdamentals](#) - Maddie's® University
- [Bio Writing, Photography, + Marketing Resources](#) - HeARTs Speak
- [Shelter Pet Marketing is Not Adoption Counseling](#) - Maddie's Fund®
- [Refresh Your Marketing for Long-Term Shelter Animals](#) - ASPCApro