

— The Humane Society of Manatee County —

Why Adopting a Cat or Dog During the Summer is a Great Idea!

By Rick Yocum, CNE,
Executive Director, Humane Society of Manatee County

Summer is often associated with vacations, relaxation and new adventures. It also happens to be one of the best times to welcome a new animal companion into your life. Adopting a cat or dog during the summer months can be a rewarding experience for individuals and families alike. Not only does it provide more time to bond with your new pet, but it also aligns with the time of year when animal shelters are often overcrowded and in need of support.

One of the biggest advantages of adopting during the summer is having more free time. For students, teachers or families with kids, summer offers a break from the regular school routine. Even adults who work full time may find themselves with more flexibility in their schedules due to vacations or lighter workloads. This extra time makes it easier to focus on helping a new pet adjust to his/her new environment.

Whether house training a puppy, introducing a kitten to his/her new home or simply building trust with a shy rescue animal, having time and patience is key. Summer gives pet owners the opportunity to establish routines, reinforce good behavior and develop a strong bond that can last a lifetime.

Warm, sunny days provide excellent opportunities for outdoor play and exercise. For dog owners, this means long walks, hikes and trips to the park where dogs can burn off energy and socialize with other pets. Dogs need regular exercise for both physical and mental health, and summer makes it easier to stay active together. Even cats can benefit from the season—window perches, screened porches and supervised outdoor time in a safe enclosure can enrich their environment and stimulate their curiosity. Engaging with a pet outside in the fresh air helps strengthen your bond and provides essential mental stimulation for the animal.

Unfortunately, animal shelters often see a spike in intakes during the warmer months. This is due to a variety of reasons, including an increase in stray animals, surrendered pets and unplanned litters of puppies and kittens. By choosing to adopt during the summer, you're not only gaining a new companion, you're also giving an animal a second chance. Adoption helps reduce the strain on shelters and allows them to focus resources on caring for other animals in need.

If you have children, adopting a pet during the summer

can be an incredible teaching experience. Kids can be more involved in the early stages of pet care when they're not distracted by school and homework. Feeding, grooming, cleaning up and playing with the new family member are all ways children can contribute. These tasks help teach responsibility, compassion and empathy. In addition, having a pet can provide emotional support and companionship, especially during the often long and unstructured days of summer break.

Finally, adopting a cat or dog during the summer allows you to start your journey together during a joyful and active time of year. From weekend adventures to lazy days in the sun, summer gives you the chance to make lasting memories with your new pet. Those first weeks are critical in shaping your pet's sense of security and trust. Starting off in a relaxed and positive environment can set the tone for a loving, lifelong relationship.

In conclusion, summer is more than just a season—it's a perfect window of opportunity to bring a new pet into your home. The extra time, good weather and urgent need in shelters make it an ideal time to adopt. So if you've been considering adding a cat or dog to your family, this summer could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Visit humanemanatee.org to start your search for adopting your new family member. Our Humane Society of Manatee County Second Chance Adoption Center is located at 2515 14th Street W. in Bradenton. The shelter is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (We are closed 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. for lunch), and no appointments are needed.

Make this the summer to give a shelter animal a true second chance! 🐾



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Humane Society of Manatee County (HSMC) Veterinary Clinic is located at 2415 14th Street West in Bradenton and can be reached by calling 941-747-8808, Option #1. Open to the public, the veterinary clinic is open by appointment Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For details about the HSMC veterinary clinic, visit www.humanemanatee.org.

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Top Photo, at left: @123rf.com/lenanichizhenova; Bottom photo: @123rf.com/yurolaitsalbert