



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Adopt, Don't Shop

PATTY RITCHIE August 1, 2014

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

From being a source of love and friendship to improving our mood and our health, pets can be such a big part of their owner's life. Last week, we told you about new regulations to help protect our pets. But there's another group of animals who need your help too—pets that are in shelters and looking to be adopted.

According to the Humane Society of the United States, 6 to 8 million cats and dogs enter shelters each year. It's estimated that of that population, 2.7 million shelter pets are not adopted each year and only 30 percent of animals in homes come from shelters or animal rescue organizations.

To aid in this effort and encourage people to give pets in shelters a "forever home," I've been featuring a "Pet of the Week" on my Facebook page each and every week. From dogs to guinea pigs, these animals come from local organizations, including the Jefferson County SPCA, The St. Lawrence Valley SPCA and the Oswego County Humane Society. Since I first told you about this program when it launched this past winter, I'm happy to report that numerous successful owner and pet pairings have been made.

While adopting a pet is a wonderful opportunity to save an animal's life, it also comes with a great deal of responsibility. If it's something you're considering, I encourage you to ask yourself the following

questions:

- Are you ready for a long-term commitment?
- Do you have the time to devote to a pet?
- Can you afford to care for your new pet's health and safety?
- If you have a family, are they ready to welcome a pet?
- Does your home have the necessary space?

Adopting a pet can be a fun and rewarding experience. If you think you're ready to welcome a pet into your home, I encourage you to check out my featured "Pet of the Week" each week on my Facebook page.