

Suffolk Humane: On the right track

By **Staff Report** | Suffolk News-Herald

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Three years ago, when a small group of people got together and decided that something needed to be done to cut back on the number of dogs and cats that were being euthanized in Suffolk's animal shelter, the Suffolk Humane Society was born.

In the ensuing years, the group has grown in both size and scope. Today, Humane Society volunteers continue to help search for homes for the city's abandoned and stray dogs and cats.

But they're also involved in numerous other pursuits designed to improve the lives of both the animals and their eventual families. Visits from the Neuter Scooter help keep Fido from making puppies. Pet wellness checks at events like the Mutt Strut help make sure pets are healthy and strong. And education efforts help people around Suffolk learn about pet care, humane treatment of animals and compassion and empathy for all living things.

But people aren't the only critters the Humane Society educates. Two different sets of dogs and their owners graduated on Monday from the society's first set of obedience classes. Now that the classes are over, about 20 different dogs know how to sit, stay and come.

Perhaps more important, though, about 20 different pet owners have closer relationships with their animals and a better understanding of the things that motivate and inspire their four-legged friends. It may not be a moment as emotional as placement of an animal that faced being put to sleep, but the moment when a pet owner realizes that he can train his animal to behave in a predictable fashion is also a moment of great bonding and one that helps ensure the two will be lifetime companions.

Since building lifelong relationships is one of the primary goals of the Humane Society, the organization's recent foray into providing obedience training turns out to be right on track.