



FRIENDS OF THE KENDALL COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER GIVES SHELTER DOGS AND CATS A BETTER CHANCE AT FINDING A HOME

By Ann Koehler :: Photography by Lisa Childs

Tucked behind Joshua Springs Park in Comfort, the Kendall County Animal Shelter (KCAS) is easy to miss on a first visit. New building signage has made it easier to find, and thanks to the Friends of the Kendall County Animal Shelter nonprofit (Friends of KCAS), visitors to the park will soon see additional signs directing them to the shelter just steps away.

But what many residents don't realize is that KCAS serves a much larger area than the City of Boerne Animal Care Services (Boerne ACS) facility downtown. While Boerne ACS serves Boerne proper — a boundary that does not include communities such as Cordillera Ranch — KCAS serves the remainder of Kendall County, operating under the Kendall County Sheriff's Office.

Staffed with seven employees and three Animal Control Officers, KCAS takes in approximately 500 dogs each year and facilitates around 320 adoptions or transfers to other rescues. The remainder are reunited with their owners or euthanized for health or temperament issues. The shelter takes in around 600 cats each year with 250 being adopted or transferred. It's important to note that the majority of cat intakes are feral, which have a much higher rate of euthanasia.

The shelter's mission is straightforward: Provide a safe, humane environment and quality care for every animal at the shelter. Friends of KCAS's mission is twofold: enhance the animals' experience while at the shelter and assist KCAS in getting animals seen, thus increasing adoptions.

A VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

When Cordillera Ranch residents Mark Anderson, his wife Gina, and fellow resident Chad Schatzle began volunteering at KCAS earlier this year, the dogs spent most days in indoor kennels, measuring 3 x 6 feet, with concrete floors, creating a very loud environment. Without a consistent volunteer program, dogs were rarely taken outside, limiting opportunities for exercise, socialization and human interaction. "The dogs would stay in their kennels day after day, where they become

stressed," explained Mark. "Over time, they essentially go kennel crazy." Prolonged confinement can make even well-tempered dogs appear anxious, making them more difficult to adopt.

What the volunteers discovered, however, is the dogs simply needed attention and time outside their kennels. "They just need love," Chad said. "They need to be petted, walked and allowed to run off leash in the nearby Joshua Springs dog park. They decompress. They sleep better. They're different dogs, which increases their chance at adoption. You see who they really are."

EXPANDING THE IMPACT

Recognizing the need to assist KCAS on a much larger platform, Mark, Gina and Chad, along with Lisa Childs and Jaz Eilles, created the 501 (c) 3 nonprofit

Mark Anderson and Chad Schatzle walking Bane and Sandy

Friends of KCAS in April 2026.

Their efforts quickly gained momentum. In just a few months, a volunteer team grew to 24, with 18 being Cordillera Ranch residents. Two to five volunteers now visit the shelter each weekday, walking dogs, providing outdoor park time, socialization, playtime with cats and assisting the shelter staff as needed.

Ultimately, the nonprofit's primary goal is to make shelter animals more adoptable. They created a regularly updated website showcasing adoptable dogs and cats, along with a growing digital campaign, and assists with adoption events at locations including Fair Oaks Ranch, Tractor Supply and Pet's Barn. The efforts are paying off: June 2026 marked the shelter's highest adoption month on record, with 47 animals finding forever homes.



Kendall County Animal Shelter Staff

Broader initiatives include a multi-project fundraising campaign. The first is to purchase 20 outdoor kennels. The second, later this year, is to create a dedicated KCAS dog park in the adjacent Joshua Springs Park.

ROOM TO THRIVE

Inside the temperature-controlled building, KCAS includes 28 intake kennels for dog observation, 28 adoption dog kennels for vetted animals and a large cat room. Outside the kennel building, there is beautiful land adjacent to the Joshua Springs dog park that is not currently being utilized, but that is about to change.

As part of the broader Joshua Springs Park revitalization project, nearly one acre behind the shelter will become a dedicated dog park exclusively for KCAS animals. The planned space will feature walking trails, agility play elements, shade structures, water stations, open-air covered kennels and a rainwater catchment system. This is important because KCAS can only use the county dog park when it's not occupied.

In addition, Friends of KCAS is raising funds for 20 outdoor covered kennels that can be placed amongst trees directly behind the shelter. The goal is to allow dogs to spend most days outdoors in the shade while giving potential adopters a chance to see them in a calmer environment. When the dedicated shelter dog park is completed, these kennels will be relocated there.

RESCUE NETWORKS MATTER

When the recent flooding impacted the Boerne ACS facility, 17 dogs and 25 cats were transferred to KCAS, creating an overcrowded situation. Austin Pets Alive! stepped up to help and accepted all of the dogs from Boerne ACS and many dogs from KCAS, utilizing its extensive foster and transport network to relocate animals to areas where adoption opportunities are greater. "The dogs were on the APA! website in less than a day," Mark said. "I check on their status every day, and within a few weeks, 8 of the dogs had been adopted, 12 were in foster homes, 15 were sent to out-of-state rescues."

The experience highlighted an important reality in animal welfare: Where a dog is located can significantly impact its chances of being adopted, and some animals face greater challenges. Large dogs, black dogs and pit bull-type breeds are historically the most difficult to place.

Mark stated. "We're willing, as a non-profit, to assist KCAS in getting dogs to where they can have a fresh start and better chance of adoption."

LONG-TERM SUCCESS

At its core, Friends of KCAS is building a community around giving shelter animals their best possible chance at finding permanent homes.

Finding an adopter is only part of the equation. Keeping dogs in their new homes is equally important. To help set adopters up for success, Friends of KCAS is covering the cost of one training session with professional dog trainer Dean Duet CPDT-KA (Double D Dog Training) for every adopted dog. The nonprofit hopes early guidance will reduce the likelihood of animals being returned to shelters and increase successful placements.

Whether it's expanding volunteer opportunities, creating outdoor enrichment spaces, funding training programs, supporting adoption events or helping with rescue networks, every effort serves the same purpose. "We're trying to make these dogs and cats more adoptable and more seen," Mark said.

Sometimes, all it takes is a walk in the park, a few extra minutes of attention and a volunteer willing to show an animal that it matters. For the dogs and cats waiting at Kendall County Animal Shelter, that can make all the difference.

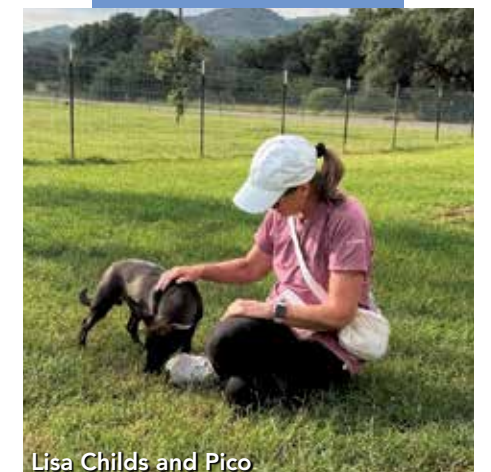
To volunteer, donate or view available dogs and cats for adoption, please visit FriendsOfKCAS.com.



CORDILLERA RANCH VOLUNTEERS

Mark and Gina Anderson
Chad Schatzle
Lisa Childs
Jaz Eilles
Mike Schroer
Wayne Hauger
Todd Hallberg
Dina Oglesby
Stephanie Dines
Ann Rice
Cyndy and Ava Richards
Kristen and Keith Meers
Kelsey Milman
Jackson Spencer
Audrey Barowsky

Gina Anderson and Gordo



Lisa Childs and Pico



Mike Schroer, Jackson Spencer and Todd Hallberg with Logan and Paula



Kelsey Milman and Paula