

Principal Media Contact: Caroline Reppert
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
803-952-8367
caroline.reppert@srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEAP Members Volunteer at the Aiken County Animal Shelter

AIKEN, S.C. (March 23, 2017) – Twenty-three members of Savannah River Nuclear Solutions LEAP (Leaders Emerging Among Professionals) recently spent their Saturday morning with adoptable cats and dogs at the Aiken County Animal Shelter.

During LEAP's first outreach event of the year, the volunteers were greeted by Ellie Joos, FOTAS (Friends of the Animal Shelter) board member and on-site events chair; Kathy Jacobs, FOTAS Program Coordinator; and Carolina, an American pit bull and American Staffordshire terrier mix who the staff affectionately called their "pit-opotamus."

"On average, each dog at our shelter receives 30 minutes of outdoor playtime each day, and it's often longer when we have enough volunteers," said Joos. "The volunteers are very valuable to the shelter since they are able to support the work of the shelter staff in caring for the animals. We appreciate the LEAP group's enthusiasm for tackling the yardwork, as well as spending time with the animals that greatly benefitted from the one-on-one attention."



Savannah River Nuclear Solutions LEAP (Leaders Emerging Among Professionals) members recently volunteered at the Aiken County Animal Shelter, where they planted flowers, cleared walking trails and played with cats and dogs.

News from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE • AIKEN • SC 29808

During the outreach event, LEAP members got the shelter grounds ready for spring by planting flowers at the entrance and cleaning the walking trails.

The group also played with the dogs in a fenced-in area and with the cats in the cat house, which is equipped with an enclosed outdoor patio, or “catio.”

The event concluded with a tour facility and an overview about year-round volunteer opportunities and the FOTAS programs that help the animals find forever homes.

The shelter has been certified through the national Dogs Playing for Life program. “Since dogs are here for such a short time before they are adopted, we don’t have the ability to teach them obedience training,” added Joos. “This program uses play groups to help socialize dogs and teaches them non-aggressive ways to interact with other dogs and with people.”

In addition, their new Doggie Day Out program gives Aiken County residents the opportunity to pick up a dog from the shelter for a few hours, so the dogs become comfortable with spending time with people and have a break from the shelter.

In 2016, the FOTAS Fix-A-Pet program organized and paid for the spay/neuter surgeries of 599 cats and pets owned by citizens who were in need of financial assistance. “We are leading the effort in Aiken County to reduce our homeless dog and cat population through this program. FOTAS is committed to reducing the number of unwanted pets in our county to reduce the number of animals coming into our animal shelter,” Joos said.

Founded in 2009, the Friends of the Animal Shelter - Aiken County is a nonprofit volunteer organization to supplement the resources of the Aiken County Animal Shelter. Last year, 4,880 homeless and abandoned animals were consigned to the care of the shelter.

The organization’s mission is to support the Aiken County Animal Shelter by promoting animal welfare and responsible pet ownership so that one day, no adoptable animal will ever need to be euthanized in the shelter. For more information about FOTAS, visit www.fotasaiken.org.

LEAP is a peer-led organization whose members are full-time employees at Savannah River Nuclear Solutions and have earned, at a minimum, an associate’s degree within the past seven years. In addition to providing networking and professional development opportunities, LEAP organizes community outreach events for its members through organizations such as the Special Olympics, Ronald McDonald House, Aiken Equine Rescue and Golden Harvest Food Bank.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

Visit us on the web at www.savannahrivernuclearsolutions.com

SRNS-2017-567
