

CUTLINE: Nassau Humane Society Executive Director Dionna Sowers with some of the many silent auction items ready for bids at the Pasta 4 Paws community supper, Saturday, Oct. 21 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Atlantic Recreation Center. Advance tickets are available now, with proceeds benefiting NHS.

Great food, worthy cause – it's Pasta 4 Paws, Oct. 21

If you love animals – and great food, live music, bargains and more – mark your calendars for Saturday, Oct. 21.

It's the 19th edition of Pasta 4 Paws, a community pasta dinner and important annual fund-raiser for the Nassau Humane Society. A large silent auction held during the event will let you get a jump on your holiday shopping, save money and benefit homeless animals.

The delicious meal, which includes pasta with or without meatballs, is prepared by students in the Fernandina Beach High School culinary program, under the direction of well-known local Chef Michael Gass. Take-out will also be available, along with vegetarian options.

"It's a family-friendly event that brings the community together," NHS Executive Director Dionna Sowers said.

Items up for bid will include Jacksonville Jaguars tickets, golf packages, gift baskets and gift cards from local businesses. "We will have a local artist auctioning off a commissioned portrait of your fur baby," Dionna said.

"Handbag connoisseurs will be excited with the Prada Saffiano purse that was donated by our very own The Closet store. We have our signature wine and spirits baskets created and donated by our dog walking volunteers," she added. "We are doing a Wine Pull, and while the 'pull bottles' can't be opened at the event, you can enjoy them at home." Glasses of wine with your meal will be available for purchase.

Musicians Hupp and Ray will provide live music to keep guests entertained while they eat and visit with other animal lovers. The NHS Adoption Waggin' will make a special appearance, with adoptable dogs from the NHS shelter to meet and greet you outside the auditorium. If you should fall in love with one of them, staff will place the dog on hold and you can adopt your new best friend at the shelter the next day.

"Every year, one of the dogs we bring to Pasta 4 Paws finds an adopter that night! We hope to keep that streak going this year," Dionna said.

The event will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Oct. 21 at the Atlantic Recreation Center, 2500 Atlantic Avenue in Fernandina Beach. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$22 at the door, and are available now at the NHS Adoption Center, 639 Airport Road; Aurora's Dog Park, 641 Airport Road; NHS Second Chance and The Closet resale stores in the Eight Flags Shopping Center, 1116 and 1002 S. 14th St.; and Redbones Dog Bakery, 809 S. 8th St. Admission is free if you'd like to bid on silent auction items but not have dinner. Dress is casual.

Nassau Humane Society takes in hundreds of homeless dogs and cats each year, gives them medical care and helps them find loving homes. "And there is so much more to the Humane Society than just the Adoption Center," Dionna said. "There is our foster program, there is our food bank program where we give pet food to those in Nassau County who are in need, so they don't have to give up their pets." Professional trainers and enrichment programs, along with caring shelter staff and volunteers, help make pets more adoptable.

NHS relies on support from the public, business support, and the work of volunteers and staff for fund-raisers like Pasta 4 Paws. About 100 volunteers are needed each year just to put on the pasta event. The shelter and resale stores will close at 1 p.m. Oct. 21 so staff and volunteers can help with the preparations.

"Living in such an animal-friendly community, we are blessed to have donations from local businesses, and support from community members near and far," Dionna said. "Hupp and Ray generously donate the music. Businesses have donated gift cards, sponsored tables and donated decor.

"We hope you'll join us for an evening of food and fun, dogs and cats, and helping our life-saving mission of bringing people and pets together."

NHS is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization and operates its "no-kill" shelter and adoption center at 639 Airport Road in Fernandina Beach, open daily except Mondays and holidays. For much more information about NHS and its mission,

and to see pictures and profiles of dogs and cats currently available for adoption, please visit NassauHumane.org.
For more information about Pasta 4 Paws, please call (904) 321-1647.