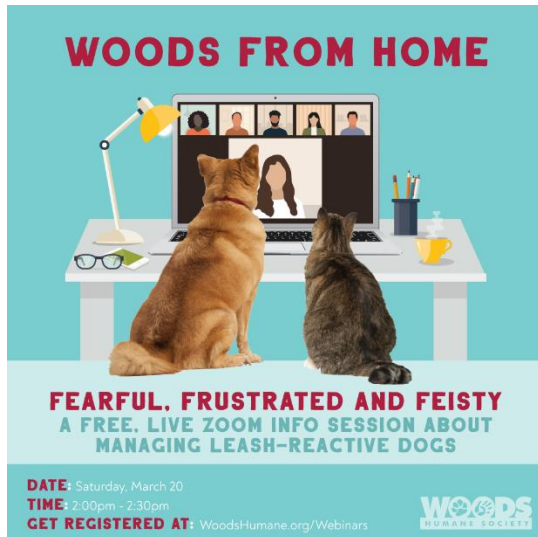


For Immediate Release

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Woods Humane Society Announces Free Webinar to Help Owners of Leash-Reactive Dogs *'Fearful, Frustrated and Feisty' Webinar on March 20 Kicks Off New 'Woods From Home' Series*



San Luis Obispo, CA (3/11/2021) — [Woods Humane Society's](#) training department, **Woods University**, has heard from increased numbers of pet parents lately about one common issue: **What do you do if your dog is "leash-reactive"?**

The term refers to dogs that lunge, bark, growl, and otherwise lose their "cool" on leash-walks—and it's no surprise that our community is experiencing more of it lately: We've experienced a pandemic pet boom.

The entire country has seen [record numbers of dog and puppy adoptions in the year since the first stay-at-home orders began](#), with many first-time pet-owners taking advantage of having more time at home by adding a puppy to the family. The Central California SPCA in nearby Fresno even reports a ["Pandemic Puppy Shortage."](#) While this is wonderful news for

shelters near and far, it also means that a lot of new pet owners are navigating dog walks, training, and socialization for the first time—and likely without the help of a training class, due to stay-at-home orders.

"By far, the largest number of calls we get in our training department are for dogs that are reactive on leash walks," says Woods Humane Society Behavior and Training Manager Michelle Rizzi, CPDT-KA, CAP-2. "There are many, many dogs out there that are difficult for their owners to walk. Unfortunately, they are often kept in the yard or not taken for walks at all."

Rizzi and Woods Humane Society would like to help change that with the ["Fearful, Frustrated, and Feisty," webinar, on Saturday, March 20th from 2-2:30 p.m.](#) This will be Woods' first webinar event, kicking off a new "Woods From Home" webinar series, which will cover a variety of pet-related topics throughout the year via Zoom. This first informational session aims to connect with owners of leash-reactive dogs, and provide both compassion and guidance for managing this tough issue. It will cover such topics as: why punishing the dog doesn't help; understanding your dog's triggers and thresholds; what to do when a loose-dog approaches; and how to design a safe, satisfying and successful walk.

The webinar also serves as an introduction to Woods University's [Feisty Fido class](#), a regularly offered six-week course for reactive dogs. Both are led by Rizzi, a nationally Certified Pet Dog Trainer and an active member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, who specializes in behavior modification for fearful and/or aggressive dogs. Rizzi began working with shelter dogs at the SPCA in L.A. in 2001, and was the first trainer to introduce Positive Reinforcement Training to the Humane Society of Utah where she worked for many years.

In addition to helping leash-reactive dogs at Woods and in classes for the public, Rizzi also tackles the issue at home, with her own adopted dog. For that reason, she plans to offer webinar participants something that they might not often experience when out on walks in the neighborhood: empathy and validation.

Rizzi says people with leash-reactive dogs often feel guilty or ashamed when they have to ask someone with a “friendly dog” to leash him in order to prevent him from running towards their “unfriendly” dogs. But, she says, “The law does not require that dogs be social or friendly to other dogs. It does, however, require that all dogs should be on leash unless otherwise indicated.”

She hopes that this webinar will help the community as a whole to be more understanding of owners with leash-reactive dogs and remind people to please keep their dogs on a leash.

The “Fearful, Frustrated and Feisty” Webinar will take place on Saturday, March 20th at 2 p.m. via Zoom, and is free and open to the public. **To register and get the link to join the webinar, visit www.WoodsHumane.org/Webinars. For media inquiries or high-resolution images, please contact EmilyL@woodshumane.org.**

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About Woods Humane Society

Founded in 1955, Woods Humane Society is a privately funded, non-profit, animal sheltering and welfare organization that annually places more than 3,000 dogs and cats into loving homes. All animals are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and microchipped prior to being placed for adoption. Visit www.woodshumane.org to view available animals, donate or learn more. To make an adoption appointment, call Woods Humane Society SLO, located at 875 Oklahoma Avenue in San Luis Obispo, at (805) 543-9316, or Woods Humane Society North County, located at 2300 Ramona Road in Atascadero, at (805) 466-5403.