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## Police & Fire

# Reuniting Lost Pets in Coconut Creek: City Animal Services Officer Pushes Initiative to Register and Tag Pets



Jennifer Shoffner, the Coconut Creek animal services officer, shows the PetHub tag which is part of the city's Critters in the Creek initiative.

TAPinto Coconut Creek

By Leon Fooksman

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COCONUT CREEK, FL – Jennifer Shoffner is on a mission in Coconut Creek to reunite lost dogs, cats, horses, and even tortoises with their owners.

As the animal services officer for Coconut Creek Police Department, she is giving out specialized tags to pet owners, so they can register their pets online and be able to reunite with them more easily if they stray from home.

By registering with PetHub.com and putting a tag on the collar or another part of a pet's body, pet owners will be contacted if their pet leaves homes and



someone spots the animal, calls the phone number on the pet's tag or scans a QR code on the tag, and then uses the contact information to reach out to the owner.

"It's user-friendly for everyone," Shoffner said this week.

Coconut Creek police call their initiative -- free registration with PetHub.com and tagging the pet -- Critters in the Creek.

Shoffner said she has given away 900 tags to Coconut Creek residents since becoming the city's animal services officer last summer.

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The department is planning to order another 500 tags to keep up with demand, police spokesman Scott Leamon said.

Shoffner explained that if she finds a lost pet in the city, she'll take the animal to the city's kennel and then, if the owner isn't found, she'll bring the pet to Broward County Animal Care where the animal could eventually be put up for adoption.

The goal of the Critters in the Creek initiative is to reconnect lost pets with their owners faster and avoid bringing pets to shelters, she said.

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"The point is to cut out the middleman and the shelter," she said.

Since she started working in Coconut Creek, she said she hasn't been involved in any lost pet reunifications through the PetHub.com tag – but that doesn't mean they didn't happen since pet owners and those who found their pets could have been in touch directly.

Nationwide, 96 percent of lost pets with the PetHub.com tag are reunited with their owners within 24 hours, Shoffner said.

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She said she hopes more people sign up for Critters in the Creek to essentially make her job easier of finding owners of stray pets.

"We have plenty of these tags to give out in the community," she said.

**To get a pet tag, contact Jennifer Shoffner by calling at 954-973-6758 or emailing her at: [jshoffner@coconutcreek.net](mailto:jshoffner@coconutcreek.net).**

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