



Animal Chatter

Washington Area Humane Society **WINTER 2007**

1527 Route 136 | Eighty Four, PA 15330 | 724-222-PETS | www.washingtonpashelter.org

A No Kill Shelter Giving Pets A New Leash On Life Funded By Your Contributions

★ Wish List ★

- Dry Cat and Dog Food
- Frontline Plus for Cats
- Dry Kitten Food
- Cat Litter (*we use a ton/week*)
- Bleach (*we use 20 gal/week*)
- Laundry Detergent
- Paper Towels
- Baby Food (*meat only*)
- Reply Envelopes
- Postage Stamps
- 39 Gal. Garbage Bags
- HP15, 17, 78 cartridges

PLEASE

Join PATHS

All new members will receive a **FREE 2007 WAHS Calendar**. For as little as \$5 per month you can help us meet expenses. Download a membership form from our website or call us at 724-229-0404 to request one.

Fostering the Dog Nobody Wanted *by Adaira Rufer*

I have been volunteering at the shelter since February 2006. At first I worked a lot with the dogs in *court case limbo* in the Falconi Building. They were the sweetest dogs I'd ever met. Fortunately, one by one they were placed in foster homes.

Lance and I always had a special relationship. I didn't think I could possibly love another dog as much as I loved my dog, Dixie, but Lance was just so shy and sweet. My husband and I would take him up in the play pen and he would romp and play with us and we would laugh and have such a good time. I kept saying to myself, I can't take another



Lance, (niece) Alana Rufer and Dixie

dog home. I have 3 cats and Dixie, at 14 years old would hate it. But by the end of July, still no one had fostered Lance. I couldn't take it anymore. I asked the shelter manager if I could take Lance for an overnight, just to get him out of the cage. I think she knew he wasn't coming back.

When we got home, the cats were apprehensive, but Dixie went right over to him and gave him a good sniff. She didn't seem to mind. He was kept outside most of his life – he didn't know what carpet was and was a little freaked out by the television. It took a few days for him to get used to the house and the cats to get used to him, but

now he is totally at home. The cats lay with him and they touch noses a lot. A neighbor dog visits frequently and they love each other too.

He has been to Oglebay Park, Wheeling Park, Barkcamp, etc. He has always been well behaved. We all walk in the woods together – his favorite.

He has NEVER had an accident in the house. I don't even need a leash for him, though he prefers that I go out *with* him. He doesn't like to go out by himself like Dixie does, so I get some fresh air. When he comes back in she gives him the sniff over to make sure he's okay and they lay on the big dog pillow together.

He prefers to sleep in the living room and guards the house at night. He protects my older dog with his life and never oversteps his bounds with her. He is a precious addition to our family and I don't know what we did without him.

Can you foster a dog or cat? Call Jeannie at 724.225.9898.

Party Brings Gifts to WAHS

This past September, board member Diane Bandy and her husband Andrew Ku M.D., hosted a fundraising party at their home in the North Hills. Monetary donations, dog treats, toys, chews, a dog house, cat food and gift certificates were collected prior to and at the event that have been shared with the Washington Area Humane Society.

The event drew people of all ages who enjoyed complimentary chair massages and had their portraits drawn by caricature artists. The fundraiser generated a lot of

interest and raised awareness for the plight of animals who reside in shelters. Millions of adoptable animals in America alone are euthanized due to lack of homes, when sterilization can prevent this cruel, vicious cycle of overpopulation.

Diane strongly encourages everyone to spay and neuter their pets early (before puberty at 6 months) because it is PREVENTION that can stop the flow of unwanted animals entering shelters.

This party heightened awareness of the desperation of these animals.



Please consider hosting a birthday or anniversary "party" and ask your guests to bring pet donations in lieu of gifts. Animals have no voice, but they will bark and purr their THANKS very loudly in appreciation.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

"I Wish I Had More Time to Spend Here"



I had always grown up with cats and never had a dog.

I had made a decision to do some type of volunteer work, and after reading the WAHS

newsletter and visiting the website, I saw that there was a volunteer meeting two minutes from my house and I decided to go. I found out how much help they really needed in so many different areas.

Even though I had no experience with dogs, after hearing about the need for walkers for the dogs in the Falconi building, I agreed to give it a try. The dogs were barking and jumping and my first thought was *what did I get myself into?* I was

trained how to put a collar on them, hook the leash, and how to get in and out of the cages. All I was thinking was that I was going to be eaten alive by these dogs. But they were so happy to be outside and to my surprise, very friendly. Each time I came back, I felt a little more comfortable around the dogs. I've now gotten over my fear of dogs, but I still don't like being licked. I continue to walk the dogs in the Falconi building on Tuesday evenings.

I also care for the shelter cats at PetSmart twice a week, and I try to make it to the shelter on the weekends to help in the cat area where I make my rounds from cage to cage to pet and hold them. It is sad to see so many cats in cages with very little room to move around. They don't get to go outside in the fresh air to play

like the dogs. I wish I had more time to spend with the animals at the shelter. My friends say they don't know how I do it, that they would want to take them all home. I admit that a handful pull at my heartstrings and I hope and pray that the next time I visit that they have been adopted.

My boyfriend Anthony travels for work and was upset when I started volunteering because I was at the shelter instead of with him. I talked him into joining me one Saturday. I told him if he didn't like it he didn't have to come back. Lucky for me he loved it and still volunteers when he can. I have met a lot of wonderful people with huge hearts for animals like me. So if you have a huge heart for animals please visit the shelter and maybe you will decide to volunteer, too!

Alternative vs. Last Resort

Cynde Morse had owned many dogs. When she was ready to add another one to her household, she visited our shelter and a little black dachshund mix captivated her. Although he wasn't housebroken and seemed timid, she believed that her experience with dogs would be enough to help her and "Dylan" smooth over the rough spots. But by the end of her two week grace period with the little guy, Cynde feared she might have to return Dylan to the shelter.

Dylan was terrified of Cynde's husband, son and her daughter's boyfriend. So terrified, that he was frighteningly aggressive – hackles up, teeth bared and growling. More than once he had to be muzzled, despite having been playing nicely just minutes before. Cynde sought advice from a dog trainer and called the shelter. She understood the triggers, but could not implement an effective solution from any of the advice. Desensitization to fears of this magnitude can require the endurance of a long distance runner and the patience of a saint. Cynde and her family were literally at their wit's end.

Staff at the shelter prepared for Dylan's return.

When we heard from Cynde again, two more weeks had passed. Cynde decided to take a more radical step. She hired a pet psychic – suffering the teasing, eye-rolling and ridicule, even from her own family. But she had tried conventional wisdom and it had failed. After a phone consultation and "psychic" session, Cynde noticed a dramatic improvement in Dylan in just a couple of days. And remarkably, within a week, his fear of her husband diffused and then turned into absolute adoration.

It's now been 6 months and "every now and then his old fear pops up with men but the improvement was so significant that this therapy was definitely worth considering. It was also his LAST chance," Cynde said.

Dogs are returned to the shelter for many behaviors that are not difficult to solve with a little knowledge and patience. Here is an example of true determination to seek a solution, despite the non-traditional path – a lesson that others may benefit from as well.

Sad, Abused and Neglected



Taffey was found in a yard near death. She only weighed 14 pounds, could not walk and would likely have died if she had not been rescued that day. With good people and a steady diet she is now 23 pounds. A trial date is being set for her owners. Taffey is nearly blind, but gets around quite well. She just needs someone to love her for what time she has left.

Abandoned by her owners, **Serenity** was found by the landlord. She had urine burns on her feet from being confined to a cage for weeks. She has since been adopted and will need time and love to show her that not all people are as bad as her previous owners. Her cage was completely filled with feces and urine and she could not even lay down without laying in her own waste.



Steps to Eagle Scout Badge

Jeff Fudurich walked into the Washington Area Humane Society in the spring of 2006 with a goal to help improve our shelter for his Eagle Scout project. Although Jeff was not sure what our shelter needed, he spent time with us, attended a volunteer meeting and then proposed to take on one of our "bottom of the list" projects. These are projects on our wish list that rarely get off the ground. It takes a volunteer like Jeff who is willing to research, design, implement and complete the project independently without shelter funding.

We wanted and needed a staircase that led from the concrete pad at the back of our Falconi building that houses dogs, up a steep grassy slope that was difficult for staff and walkers to scale.

We were delighted to see Jeff and his helping hands at the end of the summer constructing the long awaited staircase. They worked in the rain and completed the project which has significantly improved the ease of egress from the building that staff and volunteers will benefit from for a long time.



It is impressive to meet young people like Jeff who set goals, are motivated to see things through and dedicate their time and expertise to help others. It is both uncommon and inspiring.

Making Plans Without Funds

Improvements at the shelter move at a glacial pace due to lack of funds. Your generous support keeps us going month to month, but the big projects fall to the bottom of the list. For the past year we have been preparing to tie-in to the local sewage system. Our leech beds and pumps are so inadequate that our walking trail is a swamp. Modernizing is imperative, but the cost – \$70,000+ – is prohibitive. Still we inch forward a few thousand dollars at a time to finance this important upgrade.

Other items on our wish list include a new food storage facility to replace the two smaller wooden structures that leak and are not rodent-proof; a concrete walkway to connect the Falconi building to the staircase that leads to the parking lot; and a fence around the Falconi building that would allow us to let each dog out while we clean the kennels.

In addition, our antiquated computer system needs to be modernized. The data must be transferred to a supported hardware and software system. For this to happen, what we need much more than money is the help of a knowledgeable computer professional to help us evaluate our needs, then select, design, implement and train staff on a new system.

As always, we will keep pushing to get these projects completed, but it can never be too soon and volunteer help is always appreciated. If you or someone you know can help with any of these projects, please call us at 724-222-PETS.

Fierce Competition at Pet Costume Contest



Pictured above are some of the winners of our Annual Pet Halloween Contest which was

held on October 21st at the Washington Crown Center: Lexi (Elmo) and Sadie (Snow White) owned by Emil and Barb Pohodich, and Lindsey (Princess) owned by Janet Malinsky.

There were 30 entries that included many dogs, two cats, a bearded dragon, and a miniature horse.

We thank the Washington Crown Center merchants, Garfield's Restaurant, PetSmart, and Just Dogs Barkery for donating prizes; Mark Maloy, our emcee; Stephanie and Abby Cole, Adaira Rufer, and Linda Hughes for judging the contest; and all the volunteers for registering the pets and manning our table.

Cookin' Up Some Cash for Shelter Animals

Sisters, Caroline Miller of Elrama and Alta Kuzma of McKeesport have written their second cookbook, and they are donating a portion of the proceeds to WAHS. "Having seen the animals at the shelter and the great care they are receiving and finding that they receive no state or county funds, it didn't take long for us



to decide to help our little friends." The shelter is carrying the cookbook, and will receive all profits from the books purchased there. Hey, Good Lookin' Whats Cooking? contains 450 recipes

that are for the most part easy and every day type cooking.

If you get tired of hearing the same old reply when you ask

your family what they want to eat, then these recipes are for you! If you are looking for some new or old Christmas cookie recipes you can probably find them here.

In addition to the shelter, cookbooks can be purchased at Delallo's in Jeannette, Joseph Beth Book Sellers on the south side, and they are also available by mail, and at cookbooks.com, (listed under community cookbooks - cookbooks of the month).

Thanks to The Beach Room owner, Joe LiSanti, entertainers Griz, the one man band Aftershock and Greta Shepardson and celebrity bartenders, Kevin Battle Bob FM, Chris Winter Radio Personality, Whipping Boy from 105.9 the X, Val Porter from the DVE Morning Show and Mark Jacob WJPA Washington, the Washington Area Humane Society Holiday Party was a great success!

Crate and Rotate by Diane Bandy

This is a simple way to slowly introduce a new pet to your household and a good way to lessen tension between dogs. It involves placing one dog in a crate while the other is let out. Each dog should have their own crate with clean cushions and a chew toy in it. This prevents territorial issues.

Many dog lovers notice that their same gendered canines seem to exhibit more anxiety around each other. Crating one dog allows her a "time out" where she will find comfort and security in her little den. This gives the dogs a break from trying to compete for your attention at the same time.

When you decide that the dogs can be left out together, they will feel more relaxed around each other and enjoy the other's company. It takes a bit of time and patience to crate and rotate, but it is effective. Eventually you can wean dogs away from the routine if you notice improvement, but most dogs return to their crates willingly if the doors are left open.

You can place the crated dog in a separate room or in a family room. If the uncrated dog stares or bothers the crated one, drape a sheet over it to shield the dog from the unwanted teasing.

Puppies or new adoptees need to be shielded from the current dogs in your home until they are comfortable and safe around the existing pack. Crating the newcomer in the same room as the others will give everybody an introductory period with which to interact and become familiar with the new sights, sounds and smells.

The third Sunday of each month has been a bonus to WAHS thanks to Oreck Clean Home Center Manager, Greg Malenky who donates 15% of all sales generated from 1-4pm on those days. The program which began in September yielded \$90 the first month, \$88 in October and Malenky hosted a WAHS offsite event in December. The store is located in the Washington Crown Center.



Chipper is a very special cat who has been with us for about a year. A few months ago he had a special operation to fix a bowel problem. He has been better since then, but he requires a special high fiber cat food (Purina carries it) to keep him regular. In spite of this issue, Chipper is a very sweet, pretty, gray and white cat with bright green eyes who loves to cuddle, and has been in a cage too long. Chipper would do well in an adult home and does get along with other cats.

More Than a Good Sport

Toots was removed along with several other dogs, from a neglectful owner. Toots, a little beagle mix, is now enjoying the soft, warm, indoor comforts of her foster home. She is only about 10 years old, loves to go for strolls and romps around the yard, and like any good beagle, is eager to sniff out all the chipmunk and mole holes. She weighs 20 pounds, is housetrained and well mannered. Toots likes to follow her foster mom around the house to help with daily chores. You would never know that she is blind (from glaucoma). Always happy and wagging her tail, Toots is very sweet and friendly and loves to meet new people, young and old. She is also great around other dogs and cats.



Toots loves rump scratches and having her long, silky ears rubbed. She has discovered the treasures of treat balls, Kongs and soft, cushy pet beds. Although Toots has short seizures occasionally, she is in great health and enjoys her new indoor life immensely. Please consider adopting Toots or another adult dog. They have so much love to give and ask for so little in return. For more information on Toots, Call Jeannie at 724-225-9898.