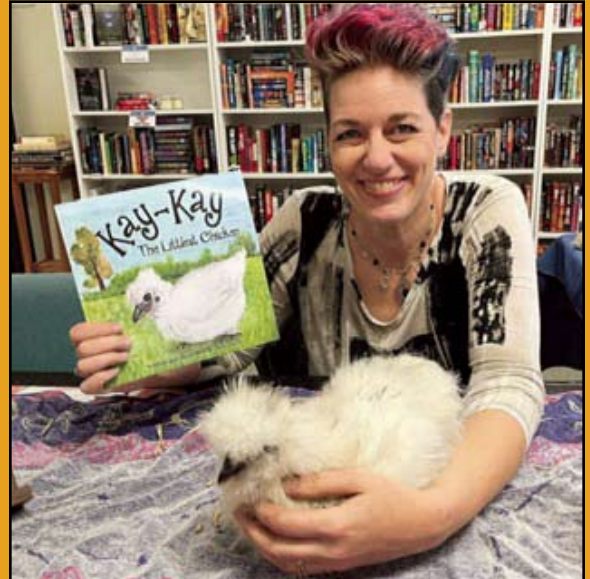


CATS AND DOGS

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO COMPANION ANIMALS



Hurrem needs a home.
Kittens in the Mitten — Page 6



Jean Davis and Kay-Kay — Page 19



J.J. LaBelle (left) with Manchego and
Kendi Helmus with Shiner Bock.
The Community Cat Crew — Page 12



Sam needs a home.
Pet Tales Rescue — Page 7

Fall 2023

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CATS AND DOGS

PO Box 996, Jenison, MI 49429-0996

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Rescue Tidbits



Bellwether Harbor: Get ready for two exciting upcoming events at Bellwether Harbor! Sept.9 we're hosting our Craft and Vendor Market, offering a wide array of unique handmade crafts and

local products. It's a perfect opportunity to support local artisans and find one-of-a-kind treasures. On Oct.26, join us for a Spooktacular Howl-o-ween Trunk or Treat and Pet Costume Contest. Dress up your furry friends, decorate your trunks, and enjoy a day of family-friendly Halloween fun. Both events take place at 7645 W 48th St, Fremont MI 49412. Don't miss out on the festivities! Contact us to participate! 231-924-9230.

Bunnies-R-Us Rescue has been hit hard this past year because of unwanted bunnies thrown out into the streets. These bunnies need your love just like any pet does. A domestic bunny cannot survive in the wild like people think. Our main mission is to get bunnies who come into our rescue spayed or neutered so they cannot reproduce. It is hard to find vets or clinics that are willing to give us a discount so we can help these bunnies. The cost to spay/neuter a bunny is anywhere from \$200 to \$400. You can help by donating so we can get these bunnies spayed/neutered and a chance to get a loving home that they deserve. We can't do it without your help. "Saving one bunny at a time." Visit our website bunniesrusrabbity.com to help these bunnies who are neglected and thrown into the streets. These bunnies need your help.

Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry: FREE Microchip Clinic • Sept.17 • 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Open to all, clients and our community! Microchips will be no-cost to the pet owner, but donations of any amount are appreciated but absolutely not necessary. This two-hour clinic is first come, first served. No appointment needed. Two pets per vehicle. Primarily cats and dogs. Please reach out ahead of time if you want to bring another type of pet. This will be the final clinic of the year for us.

Want to sponsor a chip? Your donation of \$5 covers one pet to be microchipped. You can donate on our website www.pleasantheartspetfoodpantry.org, Venmo, Cashapp, or PayPal.

*** PLEASE NOTE: Our new address is 705 11th St NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

Join **CSNIP** on Oct.19, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. for our 6th annual Wags & Whiskers. The event will be held at Wege Conference Center, 360 Division St., Grand Rapids. There will be free garage parking. Participate in raffles, live and silent auctions, a wine pull, and grab a free cocktail while you peruse all there is. Treat yourself to

some purr-ific items while supporting CSNIP's mission to prevent pet overpopulation and provide affordable veterinary care to cats and dogs. We look forward to seeing you! Purchase your tickets at our website: csnip.org/wags-whiskers or contact Madison: (616)-219-1076.

Join **Fig and Friends Pet Rescue** at Railtown Brewing on Wednesday, Oct.11, all day from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. We automatically get 10 percent of all food sales but if you bring in a flyer (coming soon) we will get 20 percent! Both dine-in and takeout are included. Railtown has 20 kinds of beer and salads, tacos, burgers, sandwiches, and the best mac and cheese. The address is 3595 68th St. SE, Dutton.

West Michigan Ferret Connection: October 2023 marks 22 years of advocating for ferrets by the West Michigan Ferret Connection. The work continues. We exist with the compassion and support of generous people. Our Wish List consists of: Gerbers Chicken baby food, canola oil, salmon oil, paper towels, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, Swiffer pads and Swiffer cleaning fluid. Our ferrets eat a combination of Totally Ferret, Zupreem and Wysong Epigen 90. We use wood stove pellets for litter. Monetary donations are gratefully accepted via PayPal to dddmgage@att.net. Visit our website at www.westmichiganferretconnection.com. LIKE our on our West Michigan Ferret Connection Facebook page.

Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary & Furry Friends Pet Recovery: Looking for a way to make a difference in the lives of cats and kittens? Look no further than Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary & Furry Friends Pet Recovery! This cat and kitten rescue organization is dedicated to rescuing felines from bad situations and finding them loving homes. They specialize in special-needs cats and less-adoptable felines, are committed to TNR efforts and education to help properly control the population of community cats. However, they need your support to continue their mission. They are always looking for donations from fellow animal lovers to help these furry friends. So if you're looking for a way to make a difference, consider donating to Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary & Furry Friends Pet Recovery and help provide these cats and kittens with the love and care they deserve. scarlettscatssanctuary@gmail.com
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Cannonsville Critters Newsletter

Fall Sept 2023



Remember Mr. Bojangles he's now looking pretty dapper !!!



Hope is doing great she's going to make someone a good Kitty...



Supporting Your Local Resue Does Make a Diifference. Be that Difference.. We LOVE our SUPPORTERS !!!



Thank you everyone! You have no idea how much this keeps the rescue going. Thank you Kaleidoscope of times for all you do !!

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Hurrem is a unique lady being an orange female polydactyl. We don't know much about her background. She was found living on the streets. She is friendly, enjoys pets and conversations, but is not a cuddly lap cat. She gets along with other cats and dogs. She does chew small hot spots from stress/anxiety, which cortisone cream heals right up. She is spayed, vaccinated, and microchipped. She is available for adoption through Kittens In The Mitten.

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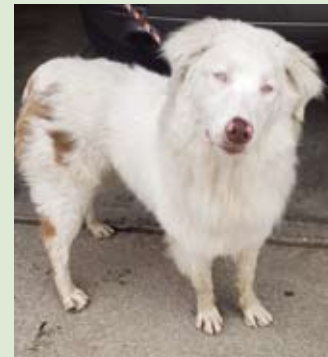
Pet Tales is a non-profit rescue organization serving the greater West Michigan area.

We place dogs and cats in loving, responsible, committed permanent homes following a comprehensive adoption process which includes taking considerable care in finding good matches and educating prospective adopters about the responsibilities and costs of bringing a dog/cat into their homes and lives.

To meet Sam or Apollo head to www.PetTalesRescue.com and fill out an application!



MEET APOLLO! This beautiful blue boy was dying a slow, painful death in the shelter due to a blockage in his G.I. tract. We were able to procure a transport for him at the last possible minute, and he was delivered to one of our veterinary partners just in time. Apollo underwent surgery to remove the blockage and has since made a full recovery. He is happy, healthy, and slowly gaining weight back. He is a total lover and is doing great with people and other dogs alike. Apollo is ready for adoption!



MEET SAM! Sam is searching for a loving home with someone who will cherish him, become his new best friend, and teach him new things while keeping him safe. Sam is deaf, but it doesn't slow

him down! Sam deserves a home where he can continue to learn and thrive every day. Sam came to his current foster home from Genesee County as a stray. At about three years old and 50 lbs, he's the perfect companion for exercise or lounging around. Sam is in the early stages of learning hand signs and is eager to understand and communicate with his forever family. He's a social butterfly who adores attention from everyone he meets. Sam is also working on walking on a leash and enjoys playful moments with other dogs, especially in the doggie pool!

Santa Paws



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When: Saturday, December 9th
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What: \$20.00/family - gets you and your family members pictures with Santa. Furry family members more than welcome!

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With your continued support, we aspire to achieve even greater heights and touch the lives of countless more animals in the years to come!



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MEET OUR FEATURED ADOPTABLE PET!



HI I'M LUNA I REALLY ENJOY MEETING NEW HUMANS! I AM A BIT MUCH ENERGY-WISE AND SIZE-WISE FOR THE LITTLE HUMANS THOUGH. I FIND OTHER DOGS DON'T ALWAYS RESPECT MY DESIRE FOR SPACE, WHAT CAN I SAY, I'M A GIRL WHO KNOWS WHAT SHE WANTS AND LIKES. I LIKE TOYS, SQUEAKY THINGS, PEOPLE, OUTSIDE FUN, AND LEARNING NEW TRICKS. I KEEP MY KENNEL SUPER CLEAN AND LOVE TO SNUGGLE ON THE SHELTER COUCH. IF YOU HAVE A BIG YARD AND LIKE TO DO THINGS OUTSIDE, I'D LOVE TO MEET YOU!

IMPACT REPORT

JANUARY-JULY, 2023

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Furry Philosophy

By Jodi Jarvis -Therrian CPDT-KA CTDI
Certified Pet First-Aid & CPR Instructor
AKC CGC Evaluator



"A dog is not a thing. A thing is replaceable. A dog is not. A thing is disposable. A dog is not. A thing doesn't have a heart. A dog's heart is bigger than any 'thing' you can ever own." - Elizabeth Parker.

I agree! They are family. You don't dispose of your family.

When I moved to this side of Michigan I moved quite quickly. I thought after a couple months I could find a nice little house to rent that would allow me to have my two dogs, one a large shepherd size. I had no luck. When the time came to move, I did not even once consider giving up my dogs, not once! A sweet friend offered her camper for us to live in until a place appeared. So I proceeded to move on blind faith. Magically, moving day my friend found me a place that would allow my dogs.

I know there is the occasional dire situation. I am not here to judge, I just want to educate. I believe you should foster or research your breed before you make a commitment.

If a pet has to be given up, I could never imagine what goes through their minds when they are no longer wanted. I hope that this article will be shared to help keep more animals in their homes. Prevention can save lives.

Fifty percent or more of dog bites are face-to-face and our littles fall into that category.

If you are planning for children or already are a parent, before you get a pet, ask yourself, "Can I handle a pet and a child?" If the answer is 'no' or 'I don't know' please don't get a pet in the first place.

If you are expecting a child, here are some ideas that will help make the transition easier. Go walking with your empty baby stroller and start practicing walking your dog (and wait for a neighbor to pass by and laugh). Let your dog know this is normal. Get them comfortable with walking politely and not be afraid of the wheels. Start talking to stuffed animals in a crib, get them used to the idea and familiar with baby gates, not as punishment but as a kind preventative. The dog doesn't have to be with the child or have access to the whole house 24/7.

I have heard many people say, "I will never have a dog if it growls at my child."

A growl is just the dog saying, "I'm uncomfortable," which is preventing a bite. When your children are old enough teach them the proper manners.

Educate,
because
all
life
matters



I have also heard others say, "I want to trust my dog with my child and if I can't, he is out of here." That is not fair to the dog. I have the most laid back, chill dog who adores kids. I still don't believe it's a good idea to ever leave a dog alone with a child, ever. The child may not know the proper manners and do something to the dog to make the dog fearful when unsupervised. If a pet has sore hips and a child falls accidentally on him, the pet may instinctively protect himself. It is not the pet's fault if he is in severe pain. We would rather be safe than sorry.

Remember to socialize your dog properly with other children, not just yours. You do not want your dog to be afraid of other children or people. It is our job as adults to prevent this. Research your breed. Know what to expect. Try fostering. Remember that adorable puppy can be 100 pounds in a minute and still have the puppy energy. They will have the same behavior of jumping or grabbing things off the counter. Consult a professional dog trainer who uses positive reinforcement, like myself. Socialize and practice no matter the age of your dog. One of my missions in life is to help all dogs live their best lives and stay in their homes. Please share, please educate, and help me on my mission.

Save the date: Oct.6-8 Dog Blessed Fall Fest. Sports, games, sales, photos, scavenger hunt and more. Go to www.dogblessedllc.com for more info.



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Training Tips

Understanding Aggression

By Robert Crough

Understanding and dealing with aggressive dogs can be difficult, stressful and dangerous. Animals rarely show dangerous levels of aggressive behaviour overnight. There are always signs well before most people seek help.

Once identified, aggression seldom has a simple solution. Often times it can be several issues at once, which leads the dog to frustration and ultimately manifests as the type of aggression you're dealing with. Try your best to not waste time trying to figure out "why your pet is acting that way" and start thinking "what is my pet actually doing?" This will help you focus on what the dog is currently doing and keep you moving toward a solution. Always check with your veterinarian if you suspect a medical issue, sometimes a simple antibiotic or medical procedure can solve the problem quickly and easily. Understanding the type of aggression you see in your pet is the first step in being able to solve the problem. Once identified, I highly suggest you seek help from a professional dog trainer seasoned in handling aggression. Check education and experience levels in that area.

Seasoned professionals will first categorize the behaviour. Doing so enables us to predict when aggressive behaviour is likely to occur and then implement solutions. Also, we will often come to your home to evaluate the

situation. We do this to determine what type/types of aggression you are dealing with, the severity, and any other environmental factors that may be contributing to the problem. Once this is determined, a course of action can then be planned.

How you approach the solution completely depends on the reason for the behaviour. To prove the point, we obviously deal with a dog who is in pain and bites differently than a dog who guards his bone and bites.

The following are the most commonly recognized categories of dog aggression:

1. Dominance Aggression
2. Fear Aggression
3. Interdog (dog-to-dog) Aggression
4. Protective Aggression
5. Predatory Aggression – a.k.a. Prey drive
6. Territorial Aggression
7. Food-related Aggression
8. Possessive Aggression – a.k.a. Resource guarding
9. Redirected Aggression
10. Play Aggression
11. Idiopathic Aggression
12. Maternal Aggression
13. Pain Aggression
14. Learned Aggression
15. Defensive aggression

If you suspect you are dealing with one of the above behaviours do not wait. Do research and educate yourself, or reach out to a professional trainer.

Robert Crough, Owner/Professional Trainer Paradigm Dog School, (616) 796 2275, Paradigms@gmail.com.

Include your pets in estate planning

As an estate planning attorney, I help make sure that no matter what happens to you, there is a plan in place to deal with it and an appointed person who has the legal authority to assist you and your loved ones when you are not able to do so.

For many of us, our loved ones include our pets.

The first thing everyone should have is a financial power of attorney (POA) so that if you are not able to handle your affairs, there will be someone that can handle things on your behalf. As a pet owner, there should be a provision in your POA that your agents can handle anything to do with your pets, such as paying for their veterinary care or ensuring that someone will take care of them.

The weakness of POAs is that they list all the things that an agent can do for you, but don't give much guidance on what the agent should do on your or your pets' behalf. POAs also cease to work upon your death.

On the other hand, a Will only becomes effective on your death, but it takes a while—days to weeks—to get it in front of the court and for someone to be officially in charge of your estate. What if that is too long?

Enter the Trust. A Trust is your "rule book" on how

you want your things to be handled in the case of your incapacity or death. Either way, the Trust goes on, and the successor Trustee can carry out your instructions in the Trust.

Trusts can be very detailed. You can spell out exactly how you want your money, other assets, and pets to be handled. The Pet Trust addresses all of the following: who will be in charge of the finances, who will be the pet caregiver, either the same person or different; and how each pet will be cared for. You can spell out daily activities, veterinary care, end of life decisions, the disposition of remains, and even what to do with money left over.

Your Pet Trust could be a stand-alone document, but if you don't have another Trust to handle your finances, your home, etc. your estate may still have to be probated. For most people, it makes sense to have a Pet Trust inside your living Trust.

Don't forget that Trusts need to be funded, for example, with a bank account, life insurance, etc.

Charles Cottrell is an attorney at Cottrell Law in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He may be reached at 616-560-3843, charles@cottrell.law or at www.michiganpettrust.com.



Wanderlust Acres Animal Sanctuary

Rockford, Michigan

With all the recent rescues, our feed and bedding needs have increased. We need help in donations. Serious need. If you can help even a little it would be greatly appreciated!

Donations of duck pellets, pine shavings and vegetables and fruits are always needed. Also needed are 10x10x6 dog kennel/fencing and buckets. Thank you.

VENMO @WanderlustAcres

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Amazon Gift List: Wanderlust Acres Animal Sanctuary

Current ducks available for adoption

3 Pekin drakes from Dean's Lake Rescue
2 Calgyua drakes from Rogue River Rescue
1 Rouen/Pekin, 5 months
1 Khaki Campbell, 5 months
2 Khacki Campbells drakes from Sand Lake Rescue

Proof of predator proof house/enclosure and pet home required.

WanderlustAcresAnimalSanctuary@hotmail.com



These two Pekin ducks were dumped and had been hanging out with a flock of wild ducks near the dam in Rockford for at least a week. We were anticipating a challenging rescue as multiple animal captures tend to be that way, however, it was our lucky day because we ran into this young duck whisperer! The ducks were quite enamored with him, and followed him to an area that was far easier to facilitate capture. With duck food we brought, and a donation of French fries as a shameless bribe (not a recommended food by any means, but this was desperate times), he was able to coax the ducks up out of the water, and with some patience we were able to get them both in a pen. We didn't even have to drag the kayak out! The wild ducks that were in the pen were quite unperturbed and were released after the domestic ducks were secured. Thank you so much duck whisperer and your mom for your great help, the gentleman for donating more French fries, and everyone who stopped to politely inquire about the sanctuary and the ducks. The duck whisperer named our new rescues. Welcome to Wanderlust, French(ie) and Fry! If you're interested in adopting them, please send a message. Their adoption fee is \$20 and required proof of a predator proof enclosure/house.



This page is sponsored in the memory of Dick and Penny Mercer.

Dick and Penny Mercer were lifelong animal welfare advocates. Dick was a founding member of CSNIP, which strives to prevent pet overpopulation and improve the quality of life for dogs, cats, and their caregivers with accessible, high-quality, reduced-cost veterinary care.

Both Dick and Penny spent many volunteer hours working with animals in need. It was their wish to keep their legacy alive by supporting animals, long after they were gone.

Community Cat Crew

advocating for outside cats

By Janet Vormittag

One of the goals of the Community Cat Crew is to stop spring from being known as kitten season.

Five women founded the cat rescue and advocacy group in January 2022. The director is Kendi Helmus of Hudsonville, but she doesn't want to take credit for starting the group.

"I told her if she tackled it I'd be her right-hand woman," said J.J. LaBelle who lives in Eastown. "We wouldn't have done it without her. She had the passion and we supported her."

Other founders include Trish Keyzer and her daughter Syd Keyzer of Grandville and Erin O'Keefe of Jenison.

"We share the workload," Kendi said. Each woman works with a network of foster homes in her area and works to find homes for the cats and kittens in their care.

"We have kittens in homes from Sparta to Zeeland," J.J. said. The group has close to 25 foster homes.

The group became a 501(c)3 in April 2023.

Kendi explained that the group's name has two meanings. First, they're dealing with community cats—outside cats who have no owners, the community is their home. Second, they want to educate people in the community about the importance of getting the cats spayed/neutered to stop the birth of unwanted litters of kittens.

"Eighty percent of kittens in shelters come from community cats," Kendi said.

Anyone involved in cat rescue soon learns that spring is when rescues and shelters are overwhelmed with kittens.

"It took years to educate people to fix their personal cats. Our mission is to educate people to fix community cats," J.J. said.

Before starting Community Cat Crew, the women volunteered for local rescue groups.

Their focus is TNVR, trap-neuter-vaccine-return. They live-trap outside cats and have them spayed/neutered and vaccinated before returning them to where they were caught. If the cats are friendly they place them in foster homes and find them new homes. If they come across kittens, they're also placed in foster homes where they can be socialized before being put up for adoption.

Kendi's passion is trapping cats. She got her start in rescue when as a teenager she found a litter of kittens and snuck them into her bedroom closet. When she showed one to her mother, she learned the kitten had fleas. Her parents soon discovered she had a closet full of flea infested kittens. She was allowed to keep one kitten who she named Gus. "He was my first rescue kitty," she said.

With a husband and three children, Kendi's time is precious. Part of what she does for the group is record keeping. "I'm a spreadsheet queen," she said with a laugh.

J.J. loves to care for bottle babies—newborns who



Two of the founders of the Community Cat Crew, J.J. LaBelle (left) with Manchego and Kendi Helmus with Shiner Bock. Both kittens are bottle-babies.

don't have a mother. "They're my passion," she said. She falls in love with each one of them but knows they're only with her temporarily. "I'm a huge believer that good-bye is the goal," she said, but she admits saying goodbye to kittens she raised is bittersweet. "They go and it makes room for new residents."

J.J. grew up on a farm and taming feral barn kittens was an ongoing passion. When she was older she spent two years transporting close to 100 cats and kittens from her mother's farm in the Upper Peninsula to Grand Rapids to get them spayed/neutered and rehomed.

She usually has 12 to 18 fosters plus a dozen or more bottle babies. "For six months I don't sleep," she said. She works at Schmidt's Animal Hospital in Walker and can bring the babies to work to care for them.

The group is funded through adoption fees and fundraising. "TNVR is expensive and you're not getting a return, but it has to be done," Kendi said.

Members of the group attend various events including farmer's markets to educate people about the importance of spaying and neutering community cats and to sell craft items to raise funds. This year they've partnered with GR8 Food Trucks to staff their beer tent at Riverside Park in Grand Rapids.

One of their needs is volunteers to staff events and to make items they can sell. They would also appreciate monthly donors. "A small commitment on a monthly basis—something we can count on—makes the work a little easier," J.J. said. They also have an Amazon Wish List.

Last year, which is the year the group started, the women TNVR'd 93 cats and had 140 adoptions. Their goal was to double those number in 2023. At the end of July they had trapped 93 cats and had close to 180 adoptions.

"We're moving in the right direction but we are a long way to go before spring isn't considered kitten season," J.J. said.

For more information or to contact the Community Cat Crew: admin@communitycatcrew.org, www.communitycatcrew.org.

You can also follow them on Facebook.



Community Cat Crew is a 501c3 Non-Profit Cat Rescue dedicated to TNVR (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return). CCC focuses on taking in vulnerable cats and kittens to get them adoption ready, while educating the community on the importance of vaccinating and sterilizing.

Wishlist

- Kitten Wet/Dry Food
- Unscented clumping litter
- Adult Dry Food
- Pet Store Gift Cards
- Monetary Donations
- Fosters

Community Cat Crew is looking to open an adoption center in Grandville, MI. Our new center will hold our adoptable adults, as well as regular adoption events for our kittens. The center will also double as a storefront for all things cat! Everything our volunteers make will be on display. But, we need our supporters help to make this dream a reality! To help us reach our goal and follow the progress, follow our GoFundMe!



Upcoming Events

September 1st- Food Truck Friday Beer Tent
Riverside Park, Grand Rapids 4p-9p

September 10th- Fulton St. Market
1145 Fulton St., Grand Rapids 10a-3p

September 16th- Septemberfest Arts & Crafts Show
5435 Park Ave., Hudsonville 9a-2p

September 15,16,17th- Art of Food Festival
Calder Plaza, Grand Rapids 11a-9p

October 1st- Halloween Bash
1145 Fulton St., Grand Rapids 3p-7p

October 8th- GVA Pop-Up Bazaar & Art Market
1145 Fulton St., Grand Rapids 11:30a-4p

November 11th- Harvest Festival
4700 Canal Ave., Grandville 9a-3p

November 18th- Holiday Arts & Crafts Market
3330 Highland Dr., Hudsonville 9a-2p

Admin@CommunityCatCrew.Org CommunityCatCrew.Org 616-885-0831

This page sponsored by Quick Fix Veterinary Clinic.



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www.quickfixvet.com

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Our Mission: To prevent the unnecessary euthanasia of healthy dogs and cats by providing quality, reduced-cost spay and neuter surgeries, and to provide low-cost basic services to those who need it.

Reuben's Room Cat Rescue

A 501(c)(3) non-profit, all volunteer, no kill cat rescue.

www.reubensroom.org

catrescuereubensroom@gmail.com

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Baby-14 yr. old
Front declawed female



13 yr. old bonded pair – front
declawed Smokey (male) &
Pumpkin (female)



Ucey
12 yr. old girls (not bonded)



Dorothy-12 yr. old
Front declawed female



7 yr. old Gizmo (female)



16 yr. old Little Bit (female)



4 yr. old Zack (male)



7 yr. old Mila (female)



4 yr. old Clarabelle (female)

FOSTERS NEEDED

Email us today to help!

Mewsings

Nobody's Cat is Everybody's Cat

By Kristina VanOss



The call came unexpectedly to my cell phone, a number I seldom give out to people I do not know.

"I have a cat emergency," a deep voice stammered as if saying the words out loud caused him discomfort.

"Who is this?" I responded to the unfamiliar voice.

"Jon...just Jon." (not his real name)

"Hi, Jon. First, how did you get this number?"

"Um... I think I got it from Animal Control. They won't help me. They only help dogs. They said to call you." This Good Samaritan had likely called 911 Central Dispatch, for which I am designated contact for animal emergencies.

Animal Control is under their purview. It was true, due to budget cuts the AC only responded to dog emergencies. For better or for worse, citizens were left to do what they pleased with cats, with zero help or regulation. With the community cat population on the rise, it meant cruelty toward them was up as well.

Jon's story unfolded. He lives in a trailer park I know well. It is known for its large population of unowned cats, including several inbred, birth-defected kittens who have undeveloped eyes. For years, several individuals, including myself, have attempted TNR (trap-neuter-return) and rescue efforts at the park. Met with a series of changing park managers, who are not always receptive to our help, we have only been partially successful. Too often management, in their impatience, has resorted to their own cruel methods of cat extermination...or at the very least, turned a blind eye to the malicious efforts of cat-hating residents.

Three days earlier, Jon had come upon a cat ensnared in an *illegal* leg-hold trap. This type of trap has a clamshell jaw attached to a short, heavy chain, which is supposed to be staked to the ground. Once caught, an animal's movements are restricted so the hunter can easily shoot or club it to death from a safe distance. It is a practice that is unnecessarily cruel at worst, unsportsmanlike at best. We don't know who set this trap, but the chain had either not been stake or someone had released the chain with the cat still writhing in pain at the other end of it.

Jon had tried to no avail to get near enough to the cat to help it. The best he managed was to provide food and water, which, thankfully, was motivation enough for it to stay on his property.

I previously knew nothing of leg-hold traps. Nicole McAndrews, the friend I called for help, didn't either, but she is young, spunky, and has her own certified rescue with a team of knowledgeable volunteers. Despite her busy day, she agreed to meet me at the specified address to evaluate the situation.



We arrived to find two glimmering eyes peering back at us from an opening Jon had made in the trailer skirt. It was hard to tell from our vantage point what the device attached to the cat looked like but there was evidence of her movements all over the almost grassless lot. Narrow, smooth pathways with one long, grooved track swept over the dry, dusty earth and led directly back to where she sat now. We baited my largest humane trap and butted it to the opening, hoping there was enough room for the encumbered cat to hobble into it.

A few hours later, after gobbling the trail of tidbits we laid out for her, the cat sat at the trap entrance, staring at the bowl of food at the end of it, apparently unable to go any further. Nicole called her friend Mary, a seasoned trapping expert who had turned her passion for rescue into a pet recovery business. It was sheer luck (or maybe a gift from the Cat God) that this woman happened to be in the vicinity after a successful dog rescue. Minutes after her arrival, the small, no-nonsense woman in blue jeans grabbed a small fleece blanket and crawled into the filthy underbelly of Jon's trailer. With only the light of her cell phone, she cornered the injured cat, swaddled her, and passed her through to the light of day. It was all in a day's work for this modest heroine, now covered in all manner of filth. With the cat safely secured in the trap we now used as a carrier; she headed home for a well-earned shower.

I took a quick peek at our casualty before covering the trap. She was surprisingly alert but sat very still and silent. My eyes traveled from hers down to the menacing steel clamped above her right elbow. It took my brain a few seconds to process what I was seeing. Below the trap's jaws, appearing like short ends of two white sticks, were all that was left of her tibia and fibula, surrounded by tufts of matted black fur.

In a futile attempt to free herself from agony...this cat *had chewed off her own foreleg*.

I choked down the vomit rising in my throat and closed the hatch of my car. I then realized that I was being watched by a neighbor wearing a very worried expression.

Continued on page 16

She told me that she had seen the cat three days earlier than the man who called me and had also been unable to get close enough to help. The length of suffering for this cat was now at a tally of at least six days. Finally, the ordeal would be over, one way or another I assured the woman even though I was not even sure what that meant.

I was truly amazed at how things fell into place from there. It was late in the day, yet within the hour, another person answered Nicole's call to transport the cat to a waiting veterinarian an hour away. On pins and needles, we waited for the outcome.

We are amidst the worst shelter overload crisis in a long time. It would have been easy to justify euthanizing this cat. Yet, this small creature's suffering and her tremendous will to live moved everyone involved.

Sylvia, as she was so named by a loving vet tech, weighed a mere 4½ pounds, small by any standard for an adult cat. The remaining portion of her foreleg was amputated up the shoulder and during her concurrent spay surgery, it was determined that she was indeed an adult cat who had survived giving birth to at least one litter. Fortunately, she tested negative for feline leukemia and feline AIDS. Sylvia was vaccinated and dosed with parasitical treatment for her many fleas, worms, and ear mites as well as given antibiotics and long-acting pain medication. In a few days, she returned to me as a foster needing rest and recovery.

The dilemma was that she was acting unsociable and untouchable. TNR would dictate that a feral cat should be returned to its environment, but it was much too risky for her to live outside with only three legs. Even worse, under anesthesia, it had been discovered that Sylvia had broken off all four canine teeth in her battle with steel, flesh, and bone. Defenseless and all but blinded by pain, she had been daunted but not defeated. She dragged a burden that *outweighed* her until she found help. The kindness of Jon had kept her from dying before Nicole and I arrived. Little does she know how many hearts she has touched. She has earned comfort and sanctuary in whatever form we can manage.

Sylvia is an all-black waif with bright green eyes and a plumed tail. To those of us who love black cats, she is a beauty, even minus one leg. Yet, black cats are among the least adoptable and the most stigmatized, feared, and mistreated for their perceived "evil". Being a homeless, all-black cat is practically a recipe for disaster.

Fortunately for Sylvia, being brutally maimed was her ticket to a better life. Along with donations toward her medical care, have come offers to adopt her...if she can be tamed. In the past weeks, Sylvia's physical injuries have healed well. We are working toward healing the emotional wounds. I am not convinced she is truly feral, but she remains deeply guarded, begrudgingly allowing herself to be petted briefly with only minimal hissing and growling. I am hopeful that she will eventually surrender to the pleasure of touch...and enjoy human companionship enough to be someone's much-loved pet. She recently

received a booster vaccination without incident, which seems like a step in the right direction. I am giving her the grace to connect with people in her own time. Aside from the obvious trauma, who knows what else transpired in the week or more that she was shackled to suffering? Was she chased by laughing children or aggressive dogs? Did someone try to beat her to death while she was disabled? Did a passing car catch the trap's chain under its wheels and drag her? How could she even rest in such pain and anxiety? Maybe I am glad she cannot tell us.

Sylvia is the poster cat for why there needs to be a better solution for the city's community cat population. Let us start with better-funded, better-equipped, and trained Animal Control staff. We also need more support and funding for the existing TNR programs and rescues that we do already have. Most importantly, we need more compassion from the public at large.

Cats are not the problem. They are not born and then reproduce by choice. They don't scavenge food and invade property out of spite or wanton disrespect. They are simply doing whatever is necessary to survive. Survival often means a hard and short life under the best circumstances.

Cats deserve better.

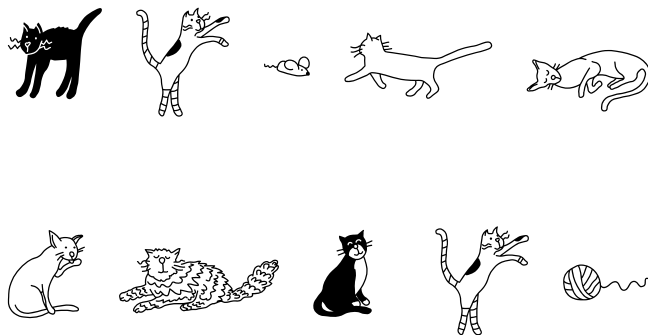
Humanity created this problem through carelessness, irresponsibility, and plain ol' heartlessness. Too often I have heard the excuse. "It's not *my* cat."

It's high time to admit the reality.

"Nobody's cat is everybody's cat."

A special thanks to Nicole McAndrews of Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary & Furry Friends Pet Recovery and Mary Humphrey.

Kristina VanOss is an artist, writer, and life-long animal lover and advocate. Her latest endeavors include chronicling her adventures in cat rescue in an upcoming book due to be released later this year.



Our Readers Write

Fred's Cats

By Tina Lonski

He told me it started with one cat.

I was talking to Fred Erbsch, a neighbor who lived down the street from me in East Lansing. A few years ago, I learned Fred cared for several feral cats who frequent our neighborhood. I'm a cat person and have had several cats over the years, most of whom were walk-ins who found me.

So, I had to talk with Fred. What I learned was heartening. Not only does Fred feed and water the ferals, he shelters them and perhaps most importantly, has them neutered at the humane society.

One side of our two-block-long neighborhood backs up to a city park that's home to many types of wildlife: deer, of course, but also opossums, raccoons, wild turkeys, rabbits, squirrels and an occasional coyote. Apparently, the park's untamed area is a natural hangout for "lost" cats, too.

These days, Fred has four feral cats living in the homemade shelter he and his wife Pam built from two picnic table kits they put together and covered with a large tarp. "We piled tree branches on top to make it look more natural," he said.

Fred told me he's had as many as 11 cats at one time. He estimates that he's probably cared for 30-40 cats over 20 years.

Naturally, I had to ask, "How'd you get started caring for the cats, Fred?"

"Well," he said, "shortly after Pam and I married, about 20 years ago, a cat showed up one morning. It needed food, so we fed it. Named it Bright Eyes."

He continued, "After a while, another cat showed up. That was Blackie. And then more cats came." He said he suspects some of the castaways were left behind by students who moved from the area after graduation.

The current four cats in resident in the outdoor shelter are Boris, a golden; Chuck, a spotted tiger; Buster, a tiger; and Missy, a gray. According to Fred, each cat knows its name! He can talk to them, and occasionally, the cats will allow him to pet them and pick them up.

"But I can only pick them up a little bit," Fred said.

The cats have a routine.

"At 7:50 a.m. four cats appear on the back deck, near the feeding area," he said. "Then, at 5 p.m. they are back for dinner."

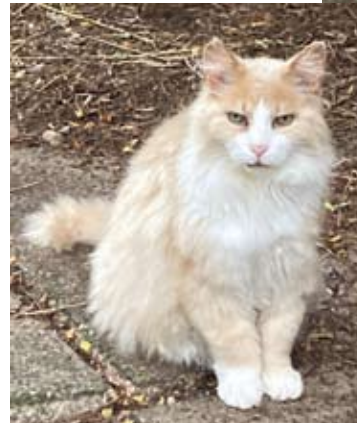
"When the time changes, of course the cats don't know that," Fred said, "so I have to adjust my feeding schedule!"

The morning meal is two cans of Friskies wet food and Meow Mix. The evening meal is one can of Friskies and some Meow Mix. The *indoor* cats are fed at the same time!

Fred currently also has four indoor cats. One black cat named Junior has been around for 15 years. Another cat, Sydney, was brought to Fred by a neighbor who found the tiny newborn kitten abandoned in his yard.

In addition to providing shelter for the cats, Fred has a heated water bowl for wintertime and an area with fresh straw where the cats can make "nests."

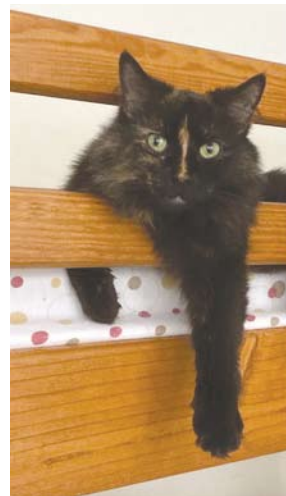
Fred Erbsch is a retired university professor, having taught biology and botany at Michigan Technological University for 30 years. Then for 10 years he was an administrator handling intellectual property rights for Michigan State University. Fred's retirement is not your normal retirement life, but it's easy to see the pleasure and satisfaction he gets from his furry companions.



Boris, one of Fred's outdoor cats.



Fred shows the shelter built for his resident feral cats.



Indoor cat, Streak, on the bunk bed.



Fred with Junior, a stray who's lived with him for 15 years

Consider the Chickens

By Ginny Mikita, JD, Animal Chaplain

"Dogs and cats were created by God to be our soul companions...unlike the chicken I ate at Chik-fil-A today."

As these words were uttered at the most recent Animal Companion Loss Grief Support Group gathering, my heart sank.

Compartmentalization is a psychological defense mechanism in which conflicting thoughts and feelings are held separately in the mind. For those of you who have seen the current blockbuster, "Oppenheimer," the word is spoken several times. It became a mantra for those involved in the Manhattan Project as a way to make peace with the conflicting science and morality of creating a weapon capable of killing tens of thousands of living beings.

The statement my Group participant made reflects our society's ability to do the same with animals. Our minds have the capacity to hold competing thoughts at the same time, but at what cost?

Imagine your brain as a school building. Something different is taught in each room. In Room 1, you learn that pulling the wing off a bird is cruel. In Room 3, you learn it is acceptable to eat chicken wings. In Room 2, you learn a dog is your best friend. In Room 4, you learn about other parts of the world where dog meat is considered a delicacy.

When we gather in the school auditorium to share all that we've learned in the Rooms, the contradictions become too much, so we compartmentalize. As many of you know, compartmentalization takes effort and, for many, a toll on our mental health. I have a sweatshirt that reads, "If it costs you your peace, it is too expensive."

Dianne Waltner, one of the women with whom I completed my animal chaplaincy studies grew up working in her family's poultry hatchery. She authored an autobiography, "Evolving into Wholeness: A Journey of Compassion," in which she explores her journey from

believing that what she, her family and other employees did to their chickens, e.g. debeaking and dewinging without anesthesia, didn't cause them pain to realizing the birds' agonial cries were real. "These were good people who, like all of us, had been so indoctrinated to believe that animals were here for us to use, that they couldn't see anything wrong with what we were doing."

Over the last couple years, I have had the opportunity to spend hours with and caring for a flock of chickens. My friends who live in northern Michigan have 16 hens and one rooster. These beautiful beings live outdoors where they spend their days in community with one another, foraging for food (in addition to the meals and snacks my friends provide), giving themselves dust baths and sleeping lazily in the sunshine. They now know me well (chickens can recognize up to 100 faces), respond to their names and many love to snuggle on my lap.

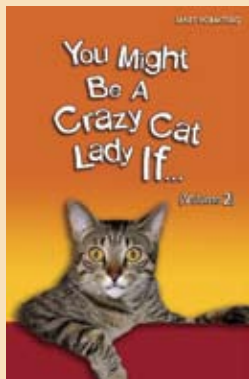
Looking into their eyes, I see the Divine Spark.

I know many of you who are reading this magazine have expansive hearts that have made room for cats, dogs and other animal companions. I encourage you to consider befriending other species—especially those who are often relegated to our plates—to learn about and from them. If in doing so, it costs you your peace of mind, please reconsider your relationships with them. And give me a call if you need a few good vegan recipes!



Ginny Mikita, JD, Animal Chaplain
www.animalblessings.love
ginny@animalblessings.love
616.460.0373

Facilitator of West Michigan Companion Animal Loss Grief Support Group, 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Heaven at Home, 1530 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids. Please RSVP, text or call 616.460.0737 before noon on the day of the gathering.



You Might be a Crazy Cat Lady If ... (vol. 1 & 2) are collections of humorous, heartwarming short stories with photographs.



In *Cat Women of West Michigan, the Secret World of Cat Rescue*, you'll meet women who start rescues, trap-neuter-return feral cats, foster homeless cats, socialize wild kittens, bottle-feed orphans, transport cats for spay/neuter surgeries, fund-raise and so much more. You'll learn the stories behind rescues such as *Heaven Can Wait*, *Faithful to Felines*, *Carol's Ferals*, *Focus on Ferals*, *Crash's Landing*, *Cat Tales Rescue* and several others.

Available at amazon.com, some local stores and at www.janetvormittag.com or by mail:

Mail your order and a check made out to Janet Vormittag to: Cats and Dogs Magazine, P.O. Box 996, Jenison, MI 49429 \$13 per book, plus postage (\$3.50 for the first book and \$1 for each additional book).

Kay-Kay the Littlest Chicken

By Janet Vormittag

Jean Davis is an author of science fiction, fantasy, horror and a children's picture book about a chicken.

Davis's passions for writing and raising chickens and ducks collided last year. The Holland resident had signed up to attend a festival to sell books, but one of her chickens wasn't feeling well. She didn't want to leave Millie alone so she packed up the ailing chicken, along with her books, and took her to the festival where she could keep an eye on her.

"I was surprised at people's excitement at seeing a chicken," Davis said. She added that one person told her it made their day to pet a chicken.

Davis realized having a chicken drew people to her booth and gave her an opportunity to talk about her books. Book sales increased.

Millie's health improved but she wasn't happy going to shows. Another chicken, Laya, was more social and Davis trained her wear a harness and walk on a leash. She regularly accompanied Davis to her weekend gigs.

Several people asked Davis if Laya was a character in one her books.

"No, but it's a good idea," she would tell them.

But Laya didn't have a story. "A good story needs conflict and Laya had a happy life. There was nothing to write about," Davis explained.

But fate soon brought Davis a chicken with a story. Her niece saw a post on Craigslist regarding a disabled chicken who needed a home with someone experienced with handicapped chickens.

The two-month-old chick had been hatched in an incubator. She was smaller than the other chicks and had a leg that didn't develop properly. The healthy chickens in the flock picked on her, which is what chickens do.

After a lengthy discussion with the owner, Davis agreed to give the chick a home. She was surprised at her size. "She fit in my hand. She was the same size as a one-day-old duck."

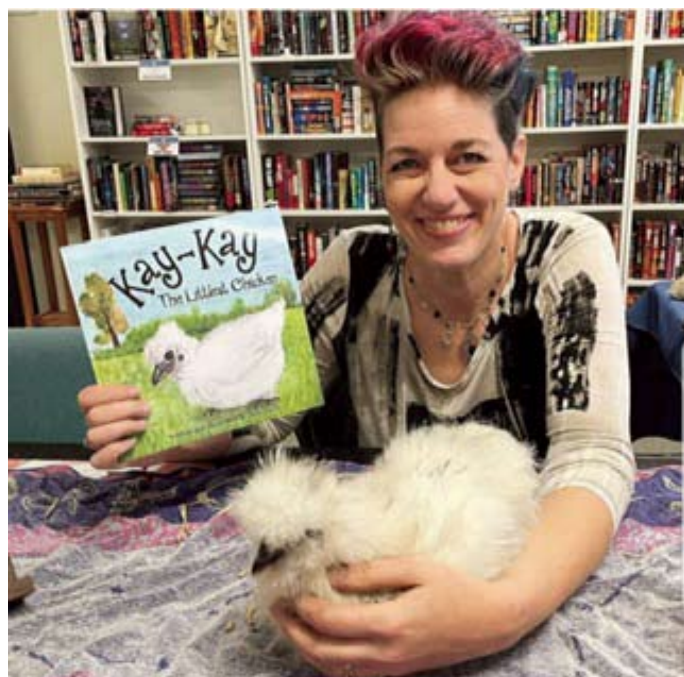
She named the new family member Kay-Kay after her niece, Kaylee, who had brought the homeless chicken to her attention.

Kay-Kay is a Silkie, a breed of chicken named after its fluffy plumage that feels like silk. Silkie's feathers don't have "teeth" so they don't weave together. Instead they're fluffy.

"It looks like a feather explosion on their head," Davis said. She has to give Kay-Kay a haircut so people can see her eyes.

Silkie's are cuddly, calm and love sitting on laps. They also interact well with people, which make Kay-Kay the perfect companion at shows.

Kay-Kay's arrival coincided with a chicken raising a duckling.



Jean Davis and Kay-Kay, the star of the book Jean wrote and illustrated about the disabled chicken.

Davis lives in a residential area where roosters are not allowed due to their crowing. Therefore, she never has baby chicks. But it is okay to have male ducks since they aren't noisy like a rooster.

One of her Silkies, Henifer, often gets "broody" meaning she wants to sit on eggs. When that happens, Davis puts duck eggs under her.

All is well until mama Henifer tries to teach her young hatchlings how to be chickens.

"Henifer gets frustrated raising ducks—they can't jump or roost," Davis said. They also won't scratch in the dirt looking for food.

Henifer just happened to be raising a duckling when Kay-Kay arrived. Davis put the chick under Henifer

"She took her over like one of her own," she said. "Henifer had a chick to raise and I finally had a chicken with a story."

Davis wrote a children's book about how Kay-Kay found a new family that accepted her with her disability. Davis revived her watercolor skills, which had been shelved for 30 years, to illustrate the story.

Kay-Kay, The Littlest Chicken was released May 6 and is Davis's 14th book.

Kay-Kay, who now weighs one pound, two ounces, accompanies Davis to her book events.

"It's amazing how many people love chickens," Davis said.

Kay-Kay, The Littlest Chicken can be bought on Amazon and other online retailers. In addition, it can be purchased at jeandavisauthor.com. Davis's schedule is also on her website if you are interested in meeting her and Kay-Kay.

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True Story Children's Picture Books Animal Rescue Stories

These true stories for children provide an important medium for fostering love and respect for animals.

Michele Dunckel, former Michigan resident and long-time author of *The Cat Corner* in *Cats and Dogs Magazine*, moved to Ireland in 2018. Since then she's been active with a local animal rescue group, participating in the rescue and rehoming of dozens of animals. She has written, illustrated and published three of these stories into children's picture books. In addition to teaching about animal rescue, they provide a glimpse of life in Ireland, its people and the beautiful landscape.

The True Story of Romeo, A Very Lucky Connemara Lamb, tells the story of an abandoned, brand new lamb the author scoops up and enlists the help of her neighbors to find a great home.

The True Story of Peaches, A Very Lucky Connemara Kitten is about a mother cat and her baby who bring together a group of strangers to care for the two of them.

The True Story of Patch, A Very Lucky Connemara Pony follows Mark and Molly, twins from America, on

their first visit to Connemara, Ireland. They meet Patch and hear the story of how the Irish found this neglected pony a loving, happy home.

For more information or to purchase, go to Facebook True Story Children's Picture Books or email: michele.dunckel@gmail.com.



Michele Dunckel and the animal rescue books she wrote and illustrated.

Community Resource Guide

Cemeteries

Clock Timeless Pets

1469 Peck St., Muskegon, MI 49441
231-722-3721 - www.clocktimelesspets.com

Noah's Pet Cemetery & Crematory

2727 Orange Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-949-1390 - noahspc@comcast.net
www.noahspetcemetery.com

Trusted Journey Pet Memorial

2755 64th St. SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
616-538-6050 - www.trustedjourney.com

Feral Cat Support Services

A Feral Haven

Supporting feral/community cats in Ottawa and Allegan Counties by loaning live traps, and providing spay/neuter vouchers and food.

<http://www.aferalhavenmi.org> - 616-377-4783
a.feral.haven.mi@gmail.com

Humane Societies/Shelters

Allegan County Animal Shelter

2293 33rd Street, Allegan, MI 49010
269-686-5112 - www.petfinder.com/shelters/MI299.html

Harbor Humane Society

14345 Bagley Street (at US 31), West Olive, MI 49460
616-399-2119 - www.harborhumane.org

Humane Society of West Michigan

3077 Wilson Drive NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534
616-453-8900 - www.hswestmi.org

Ionia County Animal Shelter

3853 Sparrow Drive, Ionia, MI 48846
616-527-9040 - www.petfinder.com/shelters/MI342.html

Kent County Animal Shelter

740 Fuller Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-632-7300 - www.accesskent.com/kcas

Pound Buddies Animal Shelter & Adoption Center

3279 E Laketon Ave., Muskegon, MI 49442
231-724-6500 - www.poundbuddies.org

Pet In-Home Hospice

Heaven at Home Pet Hospice — In-home pet hospice, palliative pet care and euthanasia for companion animals

616-498-1316 - doc@pethospicevet.com
www.pethospicevet.com

Pet Services

Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry

705 11th St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
info@pleasanthartspetfoodpantry.org
www.pleasanthartspetfoodpantry.org
Distribution is every other Saturday, email with any questions

Pet Training

Paradigm Dog School, LLC

Professional dog training and doggie daycare
616-796-2275 - paradigmds@gmail.com
www.paradigmdogschool.com

Rescue Groups

Bellwether Harbor Animal Shelter and Training Center

PO Box 475 - 7645 W. 48th St. Fremont MI, 49412
Call for an appointment 231-924-9230
www.bellwetherharbor.org

BestPals Animal Rescue Center

13888 Blair St., Holland, MI 49424
Call for appointment, 616-212-3368
www.bestpalsarc.wix.com - bestpalsarc@gmail.com

Big Lake Humane Society - a no kill, non-profit shelter

Formerly Muskegon Humane Society
2640 Marquette Ave., Muskegon, MI 49442
231-773-8689 - www.muskegonhumanesociety.org

Bunny Adoption & Rescue Services

www.bunniesrusrabbitry.com
Bunniesrusrabbitry@hotmail.com
Owner/Founder Diane Dykema

Cannonsville Critters

Michelle Hocking — Helping cats in Montcalm County
989-287-2553 - www.cannonsvillecritters.org

Faithful to Felines

Adult Cat Companionship
www.faithful2felines.com
Info@faithful2felines.com
231-773-3030

Fig and Friends Pet Rescue

Every pet deserves a chance
[Facebook.com/figandfriendspetrescue](https://www.facebook.com/figandfriendspetrescue)
616-320-2400 - figandfriendspetrescue@gmail.com
www.figandfriendspetrescue.org

Pet Tales Rescue

A non-profit, volunteer, foster-based, all-breed dog/cat rescue.
Kathy Brown, P.O. Box 88084, Kentwood, MI 49518
616-446-1591 - pettalesrescueboard@gmail.com
www.pettalesrescue.com - www.facebook.com/pettalesrescue

Reuben's Room Cat Rescue

Jeanine Buckner
A no-kill, non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization
www.reubensroom.org
catrescuereubensroom@gmail.com

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Community Resource Guide

Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary & Furry Friends Pet Recovery

A non-profit 501c3 in-home based cat and kitten rescue
Recovering lost pets & finding homes for the homeless
<https://www.facebook.com/furryfriendspetrecovery>
scarlettscatsanctuary@gmail.com

West Michigan Ferret Connection

Rescue - Adoption - Boarding - Education
Dee Gage, 616-447-2978 - wmfc2001@att.net
www.westmichiganferretconnection.com
LIKE West Michigan Ferret Connection on Facebook

Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance

Managing the Allegan County Animal Shelter
P.O. Box 124, Douglas, MI 49406
269-455-5247 - www.wishbonepetrescue.org

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www.quickfixvet.com
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Specialty Businesses

Wishbone House Thrift Store and Cat Adoption Center

Household items, pet items and more
165 Blue Star Hwy, Douglas, MI 49406
269-455-5247

Veterinarians

Laketown Cat Hospital

3604 64th Street, Saugatuck, MI 49453
(269)455-5056 mail@laketowncathospital.com
www.laketowncathospital.com

Quick Fix Veterinary Clinic

www.quickfixvet.com
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Wildlife

West Michigan Wildlife Center

Call 616-361-6109 or text 616-606-5805
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Foundation helps animals

By Janet Vormittag

Who would have thought that giving money to nonprofit animal rescues and shelters would be difficult?

As animal lovers, Steve and Marge LeBel, along with other family members, started a foundation to help animals. During their working years, the couple saved and invested. Recently, they formed a nonprofit foundation funded through retirement funds, hoping to build a foundation to continue their commitment to animals after they're gone.

"There are resources for people but not so much for animals," Steve said.

In 2021, the Muskegon couple established The LeBel Foundation. The private foundation is a 501(c)3 organization.

Grants are limited to 501(c)3 organizations or public entities and funds cannot go towards salaries.

"We're looking for worthy things to fund," Steve said.

The LeBels initial goal was to help animal rescues and shelters in Muskegon County, but response to their requests to apply for funding has been low.

"We had an assumption there was a need out there," Steve said.

The couple toured area rescues and shelters to introduce themselves and to explain about their foundation. They also mailed letters asking for applications for funding.

"We're not getting a lot of response," Marge said.

They have funded dental equipment for the Big Lake Community Animal Clinic and supplies for a few animal rescue groups. Because additional applications have been few, the LeBels are opening requests for funding to any Michigan-based animal shelters, animal rescues and related organizations.

Funding requests in the \$500 to \$2,000 range are preferred, but higher amounts will be considered.

Besides a general fund, The LeBel Foundation has special donor designated funds where the person who donates the money decides how the funds will be allocated.

The Larry LeBel Fund is earmarked for unmet needs of veterans and law enforcement personnel and their families in Michigan.

The Stibitz-LeBel Memorial Fund, which is dedicated to the memory of Peggy Lynn and Mary Jo Stibitz, is dedicated to animal rescue and the animal shelters in the Muskegon area.

The Steve and Marge LeBel Fund is also a general fund and has been used to help animal organizations, the Salvation Army, the Prostate Cancer Foundation and other charities in the Muskegon area.

The LeBels have always like animals and currently



Steve and Marge LeBel.

have two cats. Over the years they've had cats, dogs and saltwater aquariums—their daughter Wendy's first word was fish.

Steve, who grew up in Norton Shores, said when he was young he had to catch his pets—snakes, rabbits, mice, chipmunks and even a raccoon. The raccoon, named Rickey Raccoon, was an orphan and loved to ride on Steve's shoulder. When Rickey got older he went from a cuddly, loving pet to a wild animal who preferred to live on his own in the woods.

Marge grew up in Dearborn where, she said, there was only cement and a toad.

The LeBels have been married 53 years. "We want to make a difference," Steve said.

The deadline for applying for the current round of funding is Oct.1, 2023. For more information visit www.thelebelfoundation.org.





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