

CATS AND DOGS

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO COMPANION ANIMALS



Chris Huntoon — 1st Micro Greenery
Wheatgrass is for cats, too — Page 17



Our Readers Write
Good Grief — Page 16



Emilia needs a home
Bunnies-R-Us Rescue — Page 4



Miss Cairo needs a home.
Pet Tales Rescue — Page 4

Spring 2024

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STORMIE NEEDS A HOME
FIG AND FRIENDS PET
RESCUE — PAGE 4



A DOG NAMED CODY
OUR READERS WRITE
PAGE 15

CATS AND DOGS

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Rescue Tidbits



Bellwether Harbor's volunteer program empowers individuals to make a meaningful difference in the lives of animals. Volunteers assist with socializing, grooming, and enrichment activities, enriching the

lives of shelter pets. Whether walking dogs, cuddling cats, or aiding in administrative tasks, every contribution counts. Join us in our mission to provide love and care to animals in need. Visit our website at www.bellwetherharbor.org or call us at (231) 924-9230 to learn more and sign up. Together, we can create a brighter future for the animals in our care and build a compassionate community dedicated to their welfare.



In the heartwarming realm of **Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary & Furry Friends Pet Recovery**, compassion reigns supreme. Amidst the rescue of 40 feline companions from a somber circumstance, where an owner's sudden departure left them vulnerable, up to eight seniors, aged around 10

years, are seeking forever homes. These wise cats require dental care, with some needing teeth removal. Scarlett's Cat Sanctuary is on a mission to raise funds for their medical needs and secure loving homes for these experienced feline friends. Extend a helping paw by contributing to Venmo @ScarlettsCatSanctuary or PayPal scarlettscatsanctuary@gmail.com. Join us in giving these seniors a second chance at happiness.

West Michigan Ferret Connection: Did you know ferrets were not always companion pets? They were working animals on farms (ratters) and illegal to own as pets. The birth of the ferret craze is credited to Dr. Wendy Winstead, a young vet student from New York in the 1970s. She had a de-scented pet skunk and bought ferrets from a breeder (Marshall Farms), de-scented them herself and kept them as pets. The 1982 movie "The Beastmaster" featured two ferrets, Kodo and Podo, and the ferret craze began. Ferrets were legalized to own in Michigan in December 1994. (The West Michigan Ferret Connection was created in October 2001.)



Pet Tales Rescue: Miss Cairo is such a happy-go-lucky girl you would never know that she has overcome so much. She came into the rescue positive for heartworm, but has been through a long treatment and is now fully recovered. However, she does have chronic kidney disease that will require a special dog

food for the rest of her life. All Cairo wants is to be loved, near you and to share your couch—even better if you are willing to share treats with her. Do you have a place in your heart for this blue-eyed beauty? pettalesrescueboard@gmail.com — www.pettalesrescue.com

Bunnies-R-Us Rescue: Spring is here! Hop on over and



adopt a bunny. We have several that need your forever love. We also have supplies you can purchase to make sure your new bunny has everything they need from the second they walk out of the rescue. So many bunnies that have a heart of gold are just waiting for you to adopt them so they can call you mom and dad. Don't miss this chance of saving their lives by choosing a rescue bunny instead of getting one from a breeder. Check us out today: bunniesrusrabbitry.com

CSNIP: Warmer days and shorter nights are just around the corner, and CSNIP wants to remind everyone that now is the time to schedule your pets for their vaccinations and wellness visits. Make sure your furry friends are up to date on their vaccines, heartworm tests, and preventatives. And don't forget to spay/neuter your dogs and cats too! Get all the info you need about CSNIP services at our website, www.csnip.org, where you can also request your pet's appointment online. Call CSNIP at 616-455-8220 for assistance. CSNIP's mission is to prevent overpopulation and increase pet families' access to affordable veterinary care.

Fig and Friends Pet Rescue: Stormie has been in



rescue since November of 2022. While she doesn't get along with other cats, she will ignore dogs if they leave her alone. We have also discovered that Stormie is GREAT with children! She will roll over on her back for them and allow belly pats! Her fosters have declared that she should be a therapy cat. She seems to know when her humans are feeling deep emotions. She will come and cuddle on their lap and comfort them. This girl was adopted from another organization and abandoned once already. She is overdue for her forever home. Go to www.figandfriendspetrescue.org for information on how to adopt Stormie.

Faithful to Felines: Looking to add a feline companion to your home? Look no further. We have them in all color varieties and personalities. Are you looking for a cat that minds its own business or one that is up in your business? Shy, outgoing, or somewhere in between, your new best friend is here waiting for you. www.faithful2felines.com Info@faithful2felines.com — 231-773-3030.

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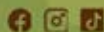
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At Fig and Friends Pet Rescue, we believe that every furry friend deserves a loving forever home.

Our mission is to connect abandoned and homeless animals with compassionate individuals and families who are ready to open their hearts and homes to a wonderful new companion.

How You Can Help!

1. Follow us on social media and share our posts

Facebook: Figandfriendspetrescue

Instagram: Figandfriendspetrescue

TikTok: @fig.and.friends.p

2. Donate supplies from our Amazon and Chewy wishlists, or pet supplies you no longer need
3. Donate your returnable cans and bottles to one of our dropoff locations or arrange pickup
4. Contact us about volunteering! We especially need people to help our adoptable cats at the Happy Cat Café!
5. Monetary donations toward veterinary care and everyday needs are always appreciated
6. Welcome a furry friend into your family!

Contact us at 616-320-2400 or figandfriendspetrescue@gmail.com
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BIG LAKE

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2023 IMPACT REPORT

In 2023, Big Lake Humane Society provided a safe haven for **415** homeless pets, offering them the medical care, training and support they needed until they found their forever homes. Our pet food pantry distributed over **7,000** pounds of pet food to support **900** families. Our Big Lake Community Animal Clinic, which completed its first full year of operation in 2023, achieved remarkable milestones of its own: We were able to spay and neuter **1,001** animals, vaccinate **2,458** pets, and maintain the wellness care of over **4,000** community and shelter pets. The care offered at both of our nonprofit facilities is vital in addressing the challenges of pet overpopulation; pet surrender and abandonment rates; and unnecessary pet euthanasia rates in our county. With your support, we look forward to further growing our impact!

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Furry Philosophy

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



Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.

~Dr Suess

Oh...those memories of angels at the Rainbow Bridge. They tug at our hearts and make our eyes leak, but also can be so joyous. I think it took me two years after my soul

dog, Odin J., died before I could speak his name or look at a photo without busting into tears. Now four years later, I still get the occasional eye leak, but now I can look at those memories with such joy and gratitude.

Occasionally, I see different dog activities now or photo opts that I think, "I wish I would have...." When I look back at the adventures we had, the photos we did take, I am grateful. I am grateful for the rally completions I took time for, the blue ribbon pictures, and giant chair photos and when we celebrated those little moments by going out for doggy ice cream.

Every morning one of my habits is to snuggle in bed with my furries and look at my memories that Facebook sends from prior years. I am so grateful for every single one of those memories, the laughs, beauty and fun we shared. I believe, the only fault of our furry friends is that their sweet wonderful life is never long enough.

I have a local show on the MuskegonChannel called "Dog Blessed". I invite you to watch. We release a new show every Sunday, which can be viewed on the MuskegonChannel app on Roku and Firestick, or you can also view online directly at the MuskegonChannel and search

the library for past Dog Blessed shows. I strive to educate, entertain, share recipes, dog crafts, safety and training tips and more. Coming soon is my one hundredth episode. I was trying to think of ways to celebrate and decided I needed to challenge my viewers. So, now I'm going to also challenge you.

I challenge you to make a hundred new memories this year with your dog. That may seem like a lot, but in the grand scheme, it's only less than a third of the year. It doesn't mean you have to go out all day, just an hour here and there. My wish is that after your dear pet goes to the Rainbow Bridge to not say, "I wish I would have..."

Make a commitment and mark it on the calendar or make a conscious note. It can be something as simple as taking your dog to the beach or taking a walk that also includes finding smells or toys. Blow some bubbles with your dog! Do you know how happy it makes my heart to look back at the videos of my grand puppy chasing bubbles? I miss her every day but those memories are something I will hold in my heart forever.

What have you always wanted to try with your dog? What dog sport or event have you seen that you keep saying, "I wish or I should?" You only get one trip around this earth. Sadly our furry friends get a shorter trip. Let's celebrate these wonderful lives. Reach out to me. I am more than happy to help you, train your dog in person or virtually to reach the goals that you want. I never thought my fearful, slightly reactive Odin J. could have become a champion trick dog. By believing in him one day at a time, one trick at a time, one happy special amazing memory at a time and we did it. Put on those wings, go find that giant chair, take that paw print in clay, paint, and craft with your dog. I wish I took time to do so many more of these things and strive to do more now with my dog Olaf and kitty Raven. Remember, as a wise Ol' bear named Winnie the Pooh said, "Sometime the smallest things take up the most room in your heart." Please take the time to make those memories that you will hold in your heart forever.



Mewsings

Making Your Donations Count

By Kristina VanOss



It's tax time and some of us are gathering our receipts in the hopes they will lessen what we might owe Uncle Sam. But the tax deduction is just the side benefit of giving our hard-earned dollars to charity. What we really want is to make a tangible difference for the causes we care about, right? If you are reading this, chances are that like me you are donating to animal-related causes. There are so many national and local organizations. How do you choose the ones that will do their best with what you have to give?

A donation is legally tax deductible if the recipient qualifies for what the IRS calls 501(c)(3) status, or "nonprofit" in simple terms. This status is the hallmark of legitimacy and credibility. It demonstrates to potential donors, grantors, and the public that the organization has met rigorous requirements. Among the most important requirements are: Having a clearly defined mission statement and maintaining a governing body (Board of Directors) of which the majority is not related by blood, marriage, or outside business connection.

When the organization is an animal rescue, regular inspections by the Department of Agriculture will be necessary to ensure the shelter is a safe environment for housing animals. They set the maximum number of animals allowable and impose standards of wellness care and environmental care such as ventilation, sanitation, and the disposal of waste. An animal rescue must have a designated, licensed veterinarian and make annual reports demonstrating intake, deaths, and adoptions. Promoting the breeding of animals is strictly prohibited.

On the financial side of things, the IRS demands careful documentation of both donations and expenses. Collected funds can ONLY be used for the specified purpose of the organization. Failure to report finances or misuse of these funds for personal endeavors by

individuals within the organization is cause for losing 501 (c)(3) status.

The paperwork to apply for 501 (c)(3) status is lengthy but does not require the mind of a brain surgeon... or even a lawyer. (If you are already a part of the rescue community, many seasoned veterans are quite eager to offer their wisdom in exchange for increasing the rescue network.) There is a fee to apply and a wait for approval that may take a few months. But the payoff is huge.

Benefits to the rescue include Federal tax exemption, grant eligibility, limited liability, limited personal liability, ability to fund-raise, and discounted postal rates.

We donors get the peace of mind that there is structure, oversight, accountability...and best of all...financial transparency because every charitable organization is required to make their finances available for public inspection. By doing so, you get to decide if your money goes to an organization such as the ASPCA which in 2023 paid their CEO a base salary of \$750,000, \$276,000 in bonuses, and benefits of \$47.859.

I recommend putting your money behind small rescues in West Michigan that are powered by volunteers who often include the director or CEO. The people rescuing cats from trees, looking for lost dogs, and trapping cats for TNR, who buy bags of kibble from their own pockets for fosters, use their gas to transport animals to and from vet care and spend their precious weekends doing fund-raisers and adoption events. These are the people who need your dollars the most. They have proven themselves by sheer passion.

But if sending your money to the big guys so you can get that free T-shirt or tote bag with the cute graphic proclaiming your generosity, go ahead. It will help animals, though probably not as much as you might hope.

The bottom line is that 501 (c)(3) status MATTERS for everyone's sake. There are worthy small rescues in West Michigan, and unfortunately, a few that have not made the effort to achieve "legitimacy." You should ask yourself, "Why not?" before you hand them your money. There is something to be said for accountability. Being 501 (c)(3) does exactly that. Without it, even people who "mean well" can fall short...and even people who seem like friends might be frauds. For the sake of our animals, please choose wisely.

Continued from page 4

Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry: Join us for our 5th Annual Pets Are Family Fundraiser on March 22 at 6:30 p.m. We're excited to be holding this event at The Golden Age at Creston Brewery. We will have entertainment by Beauty Beyond Drag, a silent auction, wine pull, dessert bar, as well as a cash bar & appetizers provided by Creston Brewery. Check our Facebook event or message us for a link to get tickets! www.pleasantheartspetfoodpantry.org

BestPals Animal Rescue Center is excited to announce that we will be the recipient of Crazy Horse Steakhouse's non-profit fundraiser on April 30, 2024, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. The legendary dollar bill posts on the restaurant's walls and a portion of the sales during that time will be donated to our rescue. Invite your family and friends! Meet our Executive Director, Michelle, and some of our volunteers. Learn about our current adoptable pets. We hope to see you there! Crazy Horse Steakhouse is at 2027 N. Park Drive, Holland. www.crazyhorsesteakhouse.com/contact/



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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.



Cannonsville Critters Newsletter



Walker Michigan - A man accused of stealing a cat from a Walker pet store in December was caught on camera. Authorities identified the accused thief and he told detectives the cat got away from him in the 700 block of Monroe near 6th Street Park. He no longer has the cat, and your've asked to keep an eye out for the cat.

Cannonsville Critters Pet adoption is an act of LOVE !
Cannonsville Critters is a 501(c) (3) non-profit cat rescue, serving Montcalm County, Michigan

Cole the cat still missing could be anywhere in the area of Walker.

STOLEN



Cole

last seen in 700 block of Monroe near 6th Street Park. Cole is a microchipped neutred male . Help us bring him home !! Call: 989-287-2553 For any leads. Thank you !!

Cannonsville Critters for neglected cats & kittens. We got started out in a garage and have constructed a kitty cabin. We take in unwanted cats and kittens treat them for fleas/ticks and for worms and any other issues they may have, such as dentals, eyes etc.

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<http://tinyurl.com/TransportReleaseForm0124>

#spayneutersaveslives #neuteriscuter #SnipSnipHooray



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Your donations help us save the the lifes of innocent kitties and place them in FURR-EVER homes! Please help us help them !!

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**Address: PO Box 94 Stanton MI 48888
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Cannonsville Critters Newsletter

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Just a few of the sweet and wonderful cats waiting for new forever homes.



Boots – 8 yr. old boy

This laid-back boy is super cuddly and friendly. If you're looking for a companion that loves sitting next to you and being petted while you're watching a favorite movie or reading a good book, Boots is the boy for you!



Ucey-12 yr. old girl

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Lily-2.5 yr old girl



Baby-3 yr. old girl

These two beautiful sisters are loving and playful. They can be adopted separately or together for the family who is looking for a pair of sweet, young girls.

Our Readers Write

A Dog Named Cody

an older dog's rescue

By Lisa (Clark) Lamancusa

I was looking for a companion for Duncan, my 10-year-old sheltie who had been adopted nine years earlier. Luckily, a rescue group in Grand Rapids informed me of a 10-year-old intact male sheltie in need of a home. However, he happened to be with the sheltie rescue group in Detroit.

I learned that prior to rescue he'd been housed in someone's basement in Detroit and used for "stud" service his whole adult life. Duncan had lost his adopted sister Bailey, also a sheltie, to leukemia. Duncan was adopted from the Humane Society in Grand Rapids after being found running loose on Leonard and Plainfield.

We enjoyed Bailey for 14 years, and she was one of the most loyal dogs I'd ever had, albeit even resembling the highly acclaimed "Lassie" I'd become enamored with as a child having watched the series obsessively.

So in my quest to fill the void of Bailey as his sidekick I was determined to adopt, number one, a rescue dog, meaning a shelter dog from a pound or a group that did rescues. Number two, was that he or she would be a compatible playmate with Duncan.

I was able to get in touch with the woman who was Cody's foster mom, and we agreed to meet in Lansing with Duncan along to meet his new potential brother.

Cody had an endearing face and for some reason a rather crooked half smile. We never knew what happened to cause this slight anomaly. It could have been congenital, from an accident, or as was suggested, an act of cruelty.

However, from the get-go Cody was a happy and very friendly dog. I agreed to give him a trial run and the two dogs rode home together in the car. Cody was a bit nervous and almost sat on top of Duncan who was laying in the back seat. Both gazed out the window as we drove the almost hour and a half drive.

Upon arriving home they both enjoyed some play time in the backyard. It was September/October and so there were lots of leaves. Cody was quite rambunctious but Duncan didn't seem to mind. In fact, I think he was amazed that his new buddy wanted to play as much as he did. It was a joy watching them interact.

I couldn't believe the energy Cody had. He now had a large fenced back yard in a wooded setting to run in. Duncan taught him that running along the fence line when a deer was near was great fun.

Upon his examination at the vet's office I was told that for a 10-year-old dog he was still quite *vital*. Of course, he



Lisa (Clark) Lamancusa with Duncan and Cody.

was neutered at the time the rescue took him in, but he never seemed to lose his zest for life and playing.

I'd always believed in adopting an older dog as they were often house trained and grateful for another chance. This was so true for Cody. He seemed to appreciate a home and his own pack and he was my *handsome devil*.

I'd heard that the average lifespan for a sheltie was about 14 years. So I thought Cody probably had a good four more years left.

I know some people hesitate to adopt an older dog because of health concerns, but Cody was healthy from the start, even at his mature age.

Senior dogs are often overlooked for adoption and not someone's first choice. There's the fear of added health concerns and extra vet bills. I can attest that the gratitude and loyalty they give back are immeasurable. Cody lived to just shy of his 18th birthday. His health did not decline until just a few weeks prior to his passing from a stroke. On his last day he ate pancakes and enjoyed a walk. I've never known a more spirited dog. So, if you've thought about adopting a senior dog but weren't sure, please consider doing so. It may be one of the best choices you'll ever make.

Lisa (Clark) Lamancusa, MA, LLP, has been an animal advocate for more than three decades. She is a licensed psychotherapist in the Grand Rapids area and has been working in the therapy field for more than 20 years. She specializes in working with adults who have suffered from childhood trauma. She can be reached at llamancusa@pivotalgr.com.

Our Readers Write

Good Grief

By Amy Venlos

I am 61 and have had pets since I was at least seven years old. As an adult, I have grieved the loss of more than 20 cats, as well as gerbils and a dog. Some have died naturally and others through euthanasia. Cancers, malignant tumors, heart attacks, old age have all visited our pets over the years. I have been very lucky that my partner, my husband Russ, has shared the losses with me every time. You could say we've learned how to grieve.

Don't get me wrong; losing a pet can be devastating. I've called in sick to work when I've lost a pet. Many people will not relate to your pain until they've experienced the loss of their pet themselves. And sometimes you don't get to say goodbye. Heart attacks while we were sleeping took the lives of a couple of our cats.

We have learned that choosing euthanasia when our pets have been suffering is the most humane decision. It can feel like you're playing God; however, allowing the animal to die naturally can be just plain cruel. Ask yourself if your pet is in pain. Are you force-feeding it? Are you just keeping it alive? If you're treating your pet for an illness or condition, ask your vet to tell you how to determine whether your pet is suffering. We have these creatures with us until they no longer have quality of life; then it is up to us as their caregivers to ease their suffering.

The choice to euthanize is sometimes relatively easy: we took Bumble to the vet when we noticed one morning that his right eye was suddenly bulging out. It turned out he had cancer in his jaw and up behind his eye. He hadn't previously complained or shown any signs of that. Euthanizing him that day was the only way to end his misery.

Some pet owners put off euthanizing, or even taking their pet to the vet. When you adopt a pet, you need to be able to care for it beyond just food and shelter. Your vet is an integral part of your pet's welfare. When you have a pet long term, it's very easy to lose your objective view of them. Their wellbeing is important, but you don't necessarily realize when they're suffering. Also, animals cannot usually tell us that they're hurting. This is another reason it's so important for your pets to regularly see their vet. We cannot wait until we are ready to let go of the animal; we have to keep their welfare uppermost because we are their guardians. Don't make it traumatic for you as well as for your pet.

If you have to make the decision to euthanize your pet, I encourage you to be with them during the procedure. They



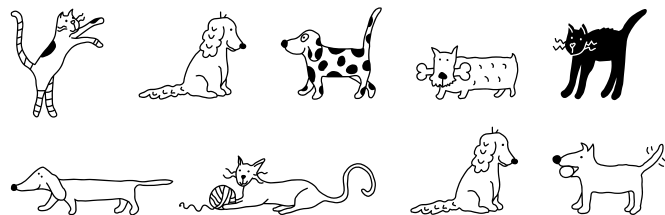
Amy Venlos's cat Beeker who she recently lost.

look to you for comfort, and that's exactly what they need at that moment. It can be difficult or even horrendous for you to be there, but they need to know you're with them.

Many people, after experiencing the loss of their pet, have told me that they'll never get another one. Realize that you're saving a life when you adopt a pet. Do it for them. You don't need to adopt another pet right away; take the time to grieve and get through the challenges of not having them in your life anymore. Then remember all the good times and memories you've made and take another chance.

Be prepared—if you own an animal to say goodbye one day. After all, isn't that part of everything in our lives?

Amy Venlos is a professional jewelry maker and a full time pet parent to more than the legal limit of cats for her community.



Wheatgrass is for cats, too

By Janet Vormittag

A 2017 experiment with grow lights for a customer had unintended results for LED lighting salesman Chris Huntoon. While he didn't sell any light bulbs to the man with questions, Chris did get an introduction to micro greens. When he went to the grocery store to buy some of the high nutritional greens, there weren't any. His next stop was a health food store. What Chris found there were half dead micro greens in a plastic container.

"They were dead plants," he said. "What we call fresh produce is dead. It's either green and growing or ripe and rotting."

That's when he took it upon himself to grow his own fresh, healthy snacks. He turned a spare bedroom into a greenhouse and started growing baby plants—micro greens.

Chris bought organic seeds, planted them in hemp fiber instead of soil, and coaxed them to sprout with LED grow lights.

He eventually quit selling light bulbs and turned micro greens into a business, which he named 1st Micro Greenery.

"It's a super food. It's like eating vitamins," he said. At the micro green stage the plant has its highest nutritional value because the nutrients are concentrated.

"I'm only growing them to the first set of leaves," he explained. From planting to harvest takes six to twelve days, depend on the type of plant.

Chris's micro greens include arugula, broccoli, cilantro, peas, sunflowers, a radish mix and wheatgrass. The plants are grown in cups so they're still living when sold.

The greens can be eaten as a snack or used in smoothies and salads—the options for serving them are numerous.

Production soon outgrew the bedroom and expanded to include the living room. Then the greens crept into the dining room and kitchen. Next Chris's basement and garage became part of the new endeavor.

Located on the Northwest side of Grand Rapids at 433 Broadway NW, 1st Micro Greenery is a MAEAP (Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program) verified urban farm.

When the Covid pandemic began, people didn't buy micro greens for themselves; they bought wheatgrass for their cats, Guinea pigs, bearded dragons and other animals.

"People with pets that I've never heard of are buying it," he said.

Wheatgrass, aka Pet Grass, is organic wheat, the same plant they make flour out of. It is one of the healthiest things you can feed your pet, Chris said. Animals instinctively eat living food when they can and the trays allow them to do that all year long. The tray system will not tip over and will keep the grass fresh for weeks.



Gracie enjoys a snack of Pet Grass.

Pet Grass now represents a large part of his business.

Chris's micro greens can be found at Bridge Street Market, Ken's Fruit Market, Kingma's Market, and at local farmer's markets at Fulton Street, Grandville, Muskegon, Ada and East Grand Rapids. He also grows greens to order. Clients include restaurants, private chefs, caterers, foodies and customers with medical needs.

For more information visit www.1stmicrogreenery.com or follow 1st Micro Greenery on Facebook or Instagram.

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**1st Micro Greenery is West Michigan
premier supplier of organic wheatgrass.**



433 Broadway NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504

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.



Admin@CommunityCatCrew.Org

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616-885-0831



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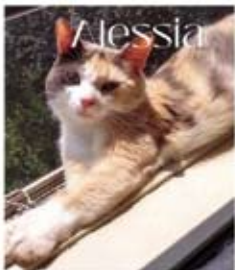
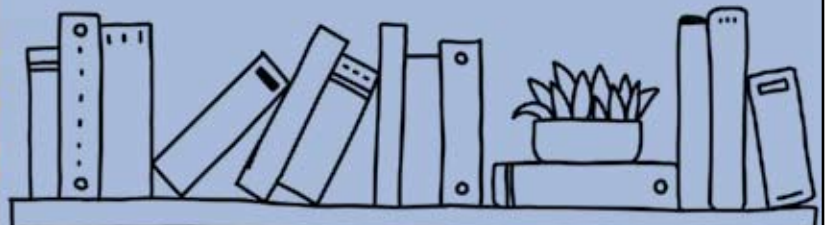
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- ✦ Leave a book-Take a book library for kids
- ✦ Events with cats (Once our adoption room is complete)



KITTENS IN BLOOM



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.

Gift benefits pets

When Kelley's Animal Clinic in Walker remodeled, they donated excess equipment to Amy Pietras DVM. Pietras recently started Michigan Pet Surgery & Dentistry Clinic and is the founder of Quick Fix Veterinary Clinic.

The donation included a surgery table, a dental x-ray unit, an anesthesia machine and surgery lights. Pietras didn't need the items in the clinic she runs out of her Alto home, so she is using them at the Ionia County Animal Shelter where she has been helping with spay/neuter surgeries. Pietras said with the donation will enable her to do more surgeries and to offer low-cost dentals.

"They gave exactly the pieces we were missing. It was fate," she said. In 2023, Pietras performed 1,135 spay/neuter surgeries at the shelter.

"There's such a need for low-cost spay/neuter in this community," said Carly Quinn, the director of the Ionia shelter.

Last year the Ionia shelter received an anonymous grant for \$20,000 to convert an attached garage into a surgical suite. Another \$10,000 grant was used to build a storage shed.

The shelter started holding weekly spay/neuter clinics for the public, averaging 50 cats and a few dogs each week. Quinn said it was awesome to see the parking lot full with people bringing their pets to be spayed/neutered.

In 2023, the Ionia shelter took in close to 1,000 cats. Their overall intake was 400 percent higher than in 2022. Quinn added that 45 percent of the stray dogs brought to the shelter were never claimed by their owners.

Quinn attributes the high numbers to the economy. "People can't afford to keep their pets," she said. Plus, during the Covid shutdown veterinarians weren't able to do spay/neuter surgeries for several weeks resulting in numerous litters of unwanted kittens and puppies.

Quinn said the problem is daunting but she's hoping with the high volume spay/neuter surgeries the intake numbers will decline.



Dr. Amy Pietras getting ready to spay a cat at the Ionia County Animal Shelter.

The donated equipment will increase the number of surgeries. Pietras can spay six females an hour when she has one table. With the additional table from Dr. Kelley, she'll increase that to eight or nine per hour. She explained that staff will prep the second table while she's operating on the first table.

Pietras has a heart for homeless animals and is a huge believer in spay/neuter to control the population of cats and dogs. Years ago she started a cat rescue, Jandy's Home, but soon realized another rescue wasn't needed. What was needed was a veterinarian to do low-cost spay/neuter surgeries. She was accepted at the College of Veterinary Medicine at MSU and started classes in the fall of 2013. She graduated in the summer of 2017.

Pietras also does spay/neuter surgeries for Heaven Can Wait of Muskegon, Kitten Aid of Centreville, The Cat Connection in Okemos and other rescues.

For more info visit www.icas.pet, www.quickfixvet.com or www.michiganpetsurgery.com.



Quick Fix Veterinary Clinic

www.quickfixvet.com

Schedule your appointment online

We are a team of professionals dedicated to providing quality affordable vet care for those who are under served or need it the most.

Our mission continues to evolve and our services continue to expand as the needs of the community change.

Overall we spend the most time on spay/neuter for cats and affordable dental care for cats and dogs.

Due to escalating costs of urgent veterinary care, we have opened Michigan Pet Surgery and Dentistry Clinic to address the needs of urgent surgical procedures.

www.michiganpetsurgery.com

Training Tips

Bite Inhibition in dogs

By Robert Crough

What is bite inhibition and what does it mean for your puppy?

The word inhibition is defined in the dictionary as; *An inner impediment to free activity, expression, or functioning. Such a mental process imposing restraint upon behavior or another mental process.*

When speaking of inhibition the behavior of biting, aka “bite inhibition” or “soft mouth” means a learned behavior in dogs to voluntarily control its bite to appropriate levels of force depending on the social situation. For example, when a dog is playing tug-o-war with another dog friend, the dog will have to bite hard to grip the toy. Conversely, when interacting and playing with a human the puppy has to use soft mouth on human skin.

Your puppy should learn bite inhibition in the first few months of life. As puppies, they first grow sharp milk teeth and are accompanied with low jaw strength (maybe 50 pounds per square inch). During this time, it is the most efficient way to learn bite inhibition with others quickly. Sharp and painful, but no tearing pressure available for damage. This is the time you should address any issues with bite inhibition.

At 6-7 months the dog has full grown, dense adult teeth and newly acquired jaw strength to accompany them. Anywhere between 200psi with small dogs and approximately 400psi in large breeds dogs.

Dogs have the best chance of learning bite inhibition properly by staying with litter mates until at least eight weeks of age. Dogs removed from the litter earlier than eight weeks risk not learning their mouth is a weapon and will often times need time spent with them to show them proper bite inhibition.

Various adult animals can produce quite significant bite forces. In comparison to the companion dogs average bite force of around 350 pounds per square inch of force, Wolves regularly produce over 800psi! Nearly double that of the domestic dog. Let's compare the domestic dogs 350psi to a few other animals.

The spotted hyena can produce 1000psi. Grizzly bears and silver back gorillas can produce 1000 to 1300psi. The hippopotamus 2000lbs. Alligator 2100psi. Crocodile 4000psi. Orcas 10,000psi. T-rex 40,000psi.

Humans are only capable of a mere 150psi on average in comparison.

If you think your pup is having a hard time learning bite inhibition, always seek a professional trainer to help you reach your goals safely.

Robert Crough, Owner/Paradigm Dog School
(616) 796 BARK — Paradigmds@gmail.com
www.paradigmdogschool.com

What Not to Say to a Grieving Friend

By Rev. Ginny Mikita, JD (she/her)

We've all been there. A friend posts on-line that her beloved dog has died. Another calls to let you know they had to make one of the most difficult and loving decisions to put their cat down to relieve suffering.

Our minds spin trying to think of comforting words to say in the moment. If we're being honest, we want to fix it. It is difficult to walk alongside someone who is grieving. We want our friends to be happy again. We remember how much we hurt when our own animal companions died.

And, yet, in the moment, while well-intentioned, we can unintentionally utter words that are not helpful...and even hurtful.

“I know exactly how you feel.” Each of us experiences loss and grief differently. We may have similar experiences, but we can never know exactly what another feels.

“Your cat's in a better place.” Most believe having their animal still alive in their arms is a better place.

“God needed another angel.” Religious understandings about why things happen and the *What's Next* can be vastly different, even within the same tradition. The idea that God made your friend's animal die because of God's own needs can be an affront.

“Do you think you'll get another dog.” Suggesting an animal companion is replaceable is offensive to many.

Instead, keep it simple. “I am so sorry.” “My heart aches with yours.” “Trust your own process of grief.” If a friend tells you she cannot bear to let go of her beloved's bed, affirm the decision. “Listen to your heart. It knows the way.”

Ask about their beloved by name. When did your lives become intertwined? How did you discover her name? Did he ever do something that made you laugh? Tell me about her death (sharing about a companion's death allows the reality to sink in and healing to begin).

Saint Francis, patron saint of animals, once said, “Preach the Gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words.” Likewise, when companioning a friend, be present and, if necessary, use words.



Rev. Ginny Mikita, JD (she/her)

www.animalblessings.love

ginny@animalblessings.love

Facilitator

West Michigan Companion Animal
Loss Grief Support Group

2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Heaven at Home

1530 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids, MI

Please RSVP, text or call 616.460.0737

before noon on the day of the gathering.

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@pleasanthearspetfoodpantry.org
www.pleasanthearspetfoodpantry.org
Distribution is every other Saturday, email with any questions

Pet Training

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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

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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or call 616-455-8220

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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

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www.quickfixvet.com
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Wildlife

West Michigan Wildlife Center

Call 616-361-6109 or text 616-606-5805
www.westmichiganwildlife.org
westmichiganwildlifecenter@gmail.com

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Cats and Bonding



Sometimes, it takes just the right person (or cat) to help heal a kitty that's had a rough life. ❤️ It doesn't always happen overnight, but our mission is to give cats a Second Chance, at their own pace, no matter how long it takes!



Callie Mae and Sable



Claudia and Paris

Often, this helping hand comes in the form of a bond with one of their roommates. These bonded pairs lend each other support, comfort, and confidence. As a result, cats who are bonded together are more socially adjusted and live longer, happier lives than they might if they were separated.

Although having two cats in your home instead of just one is a little bit more work, there are benefits that make it worthwhile- your cats having very similar sleeping, eating, and playing schedule, having built-in playmates, less worry about your cat feeling lonely when you aren't around. If you are thinking about adopting a cat, just take into consideration adopting a bonded pair.



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