

CATS AND DOGS

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO COMPANION ANIMAL



Furry Philosophy – Page 9



Totter, left, Tippy and Marnie need homes.
Kittens in the Mitten – Page 12



Sally needs a home. – Page 11



Jules, left, and Gerald are ready to greet visitors at the new home of Big Sid's Sanctuary and Crash's Landing.
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A FERAL HAVEN
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BE THEIR VOICE
PAGE 10

CATS AND DOGS

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From the Editor

Janet Vormittag



Change is hard but often inevitable. With this issue we're saying goodbye to longtime columnist Tricia McDonald, but we're welcoming Kristina VanOss who is going to share her *Mewsings* with us.

Tricia McDonald has written a column for every issue since the magazine started in 2006. For most of those years she wrote about her beloved bull terrier, Sally. When Sally died, Tricia shared her heartbreak and grief. She then wrote about her other pets Eli, Millie and Ernie. She shared her excitement of getting a bull terrier puppy, Willow, and had us laughing at the joys and frustrations of being a puppy parent. Last month Tricia told us she ran out of things to write about—not a surprise after writing a column for close to 15 years. We wish Tricia happiness and success in her new endeavor of writing fiction about Sally.

If you wish to say goodbye in person to Tricia, she'll be at the West Michigan Pet Expo March 26-27 at the DeltaPlex. For details about the Expo see their ad on page 2. I'll be there, too.

Kristina VanOss is an animal lover and artist. She has a dog, multiple cats and has been knee-deep in cat rescue for most of her life. You can read her first *Mewsings* on page 19.

As you may know, I have a passion for all animals, not just cats and dogs. The plot of my first novel, *Dog 281*, focused on dogs being stolen and sold for research. Additional books in the Save Five Series explored other animal rights topics including factory farming, dog fighting, canned hunts and more. There's no end to the way humans use and mistreat animals. Needless to say, I'm thrilled with the outpouring of anger at City of Muskegon officials for approving the sale of land to a research company that uses animals. Northern Biomedical Research, according to their website, uses primates, dogs, pigs, sheep and rodents. They currently have a facility in Norton Shores but want to expand. My heart aches for animals who are forced to endure who-knows-what in the name of science. Northern Biomedical's plans include an incinerator—no animal comes out alive. On page 10 learn more about it.

This issue of *Cats and Dogs* provides several opportunities to volunteer. Just about every rescue needs help, they especially need foster homes. If you prefer wildlife, the Wildlife Rehab Center also needs you.

Thanks for all you do to make this planet a kinder place for animals.

On the Wild Side

with Allyson Swanson



If you follow us, you know our story. Peg and Roger Markle founded Wildlife Rehab Center Ltd more than 30 years ago with the desire to help injured and orphaned wildlife. At the time, they were averaging 60-100 animals a year. Every year since then, Peg and Roger have sacrificed so much for the lives of these amazing animals. From opening more of their home and land to the animals, to donating their own money when times were tough and literally providing around the clock care to those who needed it. They have given so much.

Fast-forward to the WRC of today, and we have grown exponentially. With an average of 4,000 animals a year, we are finding we have outgrown our current location at their home. We need to begin the search for land and in turn, give a wonderful and much deserved retirement to our founders.

We are seeking anyone with local land they might be interested in donating or selling or anyone with connections who may be interested in helping us expand our capabilities and save even more animals. Anyone with input can reach out to us at allyson@wildlife-rehab-center.org or make a donation towards our endeavor at wildlife-rehab-center.org/donate.

Want to lend a helping hand in another way? We need volunteers! Without our volunteers, none of what we do would be possible. Our volunteers put in the time, getting their hands dirty, to make sure every animal has the environment and diet it needs to thrive. Even more essential are our sub-permittees. Sub-permittees are specially trained individuals who are licensed under one of our rehabilitators so they may take babies home for foster care. This task, though highly rewarding, is also highly involved. These extra-amazing and selfless people give up their free time to tend to these helpless orphans. As more animals make their way into our care, we find ourselves in need of more fosters. If you have a passion for wildlife and a flexible schedule, we want you! Sub-permittee applications can be requested by emailing us at volunteer@wildlife-rehab-center.org. Thank you to everyone who makes WRC a possum-bility!

Allyson Swanson is a Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator with Wildlife Rehab Center Ltd, 1504 Union Ave NE, Grand Rapids. She has been licensed since 2013, but started as a volunteer over twenty years ago. Since then she has worked with countless species of birds and mammals and has become one of the main local resources for Virginia Opossums. She is also the Center's Education Coordinator and does presentations with their Educational Ambassador animals. allyson@wildlife-rehab-center.org – 616-606-5805.



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Crash's Landing and Big Sid's have a new home

By Janet Vormittag

Who would have thought a hair salon would be the perfect home for a cat rescue?

When Dr. Jen Gillum, founder of Crash's Landing and Big Sid's Sanctuary, decided she needed more space for her twin rescues, she searched the greater Grand Rapids area for months. She landed in Tallmadge Township, just west of Standale.

A 2,000-square-foot building, that had been designed to house two small businesses, had potential. Formerly used as a hair salon, it had several things going for it including an affordable price. It had plenty of parking, large windows, several rooms, a fenced backyard and a huge side yard that could be used for events. There were also two large bathrooms, a laundry room, and an open floor plan with a high ceiling. "Cats love vertical space," said Shelter Manager Robin Weber.

One concern was the location—it wasn't in Grand Rapids. Located on the northwest corner of Linden Drive and River Hill, it was about 14 miles from Crash's existing location.

One positive about the locale was its proximity to Grand Valley State University, which was less than three miles to the west. Pre-vet students could participate in mentorship programs to learn about felines.

A capital campaign for the new building raised \$60,000 more than the goal. Tallmadge Township granted Dr. Jen a special-use permit and the paperwork was finalized.

The move was made in May, 2021.

The laundry room separates Crash's from Big Sid's. A disinfection must be sprayed on the bottom of everyone's shoes who goes from one area to the other.

Big Sid's caters to cats who test positive for FIV or FeLV viruses. FIV, feline immunodeficiency virus, is comparable to HIV in humans. It's a slow virus that affects a cat's immune system over a period of years. FIV is a cats-only disease and cats that have it can often live long healthy and relatively normal lives. FeLV, feline leukemia, can cause anemia, cancer and other illnesses. Cats with FeLV can live many years in a healthy state.

Some of the Big Sid's cats are permanent residents, but others are available for adoption. All of the Crash cats are available for adoption.

The new facility has room for 25 Crash cats and 50 Sid's kids. Neither rescue takes in owner-surrendered pets—their primary goal is to rescue sick and injured stray cats.

Building renovations were done by Dr. Jen's dad. A plaque with his photo hangs on the wall and is engraved, *Dreamed and Designed by Dr. Jen Gillum, Created and Constructed by Dave 'Dad' Denyes.*

The stylists' stations were left in place—just modified.



Above: Jules, left and Gerald are ready to greet visitors to Big Sid's Sanctuary and Crash's Landing.

Sinks, with the plumbing removed, are now for cat napping, complete with beanbag beds. The basins are skirted to hide litter boxes.

The reception desk is now manned by any cats in the mood to greet visitors. Where computers and telephones once stood, there are now cat beds. The floor space below the desk is home to more kitty bathrooms. "It's the perfect hiding place for litter boxes," Robin said.

Windows have shelves for birdwatching. There are plenty of cubbies for private snoozing including a pyramid of apple crates stacked against one wall.

Crijo feline towers provide numerous places for cats to hang out and also have sisal scratch pads. Crijo products are designed for shelters, rescues and other multi-cat situations.

"We try not to use cages," Robin said. Cages are only used for newcomers and aggressive cats who need time to get used to their new surroundings.

Robin said the neighbors at the new location are wonderful. They welcomed the rescues to the neighborhood with a huge basket of goodies.

"We do love it out here," she said.

Dr. Jen, who had worked at Clyde Park Veterinary Clinic for 27 years, opened her own practice in Crash's former home on Diamond Avenue. The Feline Wellness Center opened in early January.

For more information visit www.crashslanding.org.

Both rescues are open by appointment only.

Meet & Greets are the first and third Sunday of every month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., 3433 River Drive NW, Grand Rapids, 49534.

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Furry Philosophy



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

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
~Benjamin Franklin

April is Pet First Aid Awareness month. As a Pet First Aid CPR Instructor, I encourage you to educate yourself and be prepared with a plan of action.

Did you know only one out of every ten pets won't have some sort of minor or major emergency in their lifetime? I want to help change those odds by education.

Do you know by doing one first aid procedure 25% more animals can be saved?

Do you have a pet first aid kit?

Do you even have a first aid kit for yourself?

Having a dog or a cat is like having a toddler. We need to baby or pet proof the house and the yard.

I encourage you to get down on all fours and see what your pet can get into. What is poisonous and dangerous? Do you know one lick of automatic dishwashing powder can poison your pet? Do you know if they lick that dishwashing powder are you supposed to make them vomit or dilute? Do you know how to make them vomit if necessary? Do you know how you would transport your pet if they were unconscious in an emergency? Do you have an emergency vet's number handy? If you are prepared and think about these things before they happen, you will stay calm during that emergency and be able to handle whatever happens more efficiently.

I always knew fertilizer and sidewalk salt were dangerous to our pets, but I did not know how dangerous until I became a first aid instructor.

According to Dr. Karen Becker, "A recently published study conducted over a six year period by the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University showed that exposure to lawn pesticides, specifically those applied by professional lawn care companies, raised the risk of canine malignant lymphoma, a progressive, fatal disease, by as much as 70 percent."

An ounce of prevention; find out what is used in your community for sidewalks to prevent ice, better yet get booties.

If we feel our pet was exposed to any chemical, sidewalk salt etc., we wash our dog's feet and rinse and rinse. If they lick their feet, they can become very ill. Take the proper precautions and use pet safe products in your home and yard.

Why not make April (or even better, right now) your month to childproof or pet proof the house.

Have you taken an obedience class and taught your dog or cat to "leave it" so they don't swallow something poisonous like a pill or raisins that were dropped?

Write down a plan of action. Have your tools ready. Start purchasing items on sale for your first aid kit so you are prepared.

During these times of limited veterinary care, I know of one dog that had to wait six hours to be seen at an emergency vet while the owner tried to keep bleeding under control. Another, the nearest emergency vet was too far and she did not know how to slow down the bleeding. She sadly lost her pet's life. I tell you these accounts, not to scare you but to encourage you to be proactive.

If you would like to get a one step further, we will be having ongoing CPR First Aid Zoom and in-person classes or obedience classes. Keep posted at www.dogblessllc.com. I can also schedule privately for your group. CPR first aid is a 4.5-hour course. We learn what to do to stop or slow down bleeding. Also what to do if our pet stops breathing, suffers heat stroke or swallows something they weren't supposed to and so much more. I would love to help empower you to be even more prepared.

As Confucius said, "A journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step."

Regardless of what steps you take, just take the first step. You can prevent accidents and be prepared to save a life.



NEW: For more furry tips see Dog Blessed show with Andy O'Reily weekly at The Muskegon Channel <https://muskegonchannel.com/> also on Roku and Firestick TV.

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Be Their Voice

Muskegon residents angry about animals used in research

Courtesy of Muskegon Humane Society

As many of you are aware, the City of Muskegon sold 20 acres of land to Northern BioMedical Research. This company plans to test and euthanize animals at this location.

We've been getting a lot of calls from citizens, understandably angry and confused about how this happened and what can be done. We've been deep diving into the animal testing laws and advances so we can give you some answers. We put together this infographic to answer some of the most asked questions and give insight into the history and hopefully future of this cruel practice.

Yes, the land has been sold, but there is still work that can be done to stop this treatment of animals **BECAUSE THE ANIMALS DO NOT HAVE A VOICE.**

If you want to stay up to date on planned protests and connect with community members as they rally against this motion you can request to join the private facebook group: @ Saynotosuffering

Want to voice your opinion?

Contact Muskegon officials.

Contact your State Senators and Representatives to get them to vote to end unnecessary animal testing in Muskegon and beyond by passing a federal law against it.

Debbie Stabanow, Michigan US Senator, 202-224-4822 email at: www.stabanow.senate.gov

Gary Peters, Michigan US Senator, 202-224-6221 or 313-226-6020 email at: www.peters.senate.gov

Bill Huizenga, US Representative, 202-225-4401 or 616-414-5516 email at: huizenga.house.gov

Get involved in your community! Perhaps, run for office!

Infographic Sources:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/12/20/the-fda-modernization-act-can-leverage-technology-to-accelerate-drug-discovery-and-save-millions-of-animals/?sh=21c7074f1cco&fbclid=IwAR3cPgNuiSOTdX8zGoCFUPQKKw6a87IJDm9Y41hqDz3Z94kL8-lbHzjJ9Q>

<https://nbrlab.com/>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/dogs-used-experiments-faq#where>

<https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/575794-paul-booker-introduce-bill-to-end-fda-animal-testing-mandates?r=1>

ANIMAL TESTING INFORMATION FOR MUSKEGON

THE MUSKEGON CITY COMMISSION VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO SELL 20 ACRES AT 2725 OLTHOFF DRIVE TO NORTHERN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FOR \$40 MILLION SO THEY CAN EXPAND.

CURRENT INFORMATION ON
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- FROM THEIR WEBSITE -

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- RABBIT - 100
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ANIMAL TESTING HISTORY AND LAWS

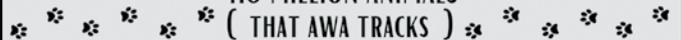
IN 1938.

Congress passed the U.S. Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. This act mandates that new drugs and cosmetics be tested on animals before entering clinical trials and approved for use in humans. Since then, billions of dogs, primates, rabbits and mice have been unnecessarily experimented on, tortured and killed.

AWA.

The Animal Welfare Act, is a federal law that addresses the standard of care animals receive at research facilities. **This law excludes roughly 95 percent of the animals tested upon**—such as rats, mice, birds, fish, and reptiles

115 MILLION ANIMALS



(THAT AWA TRACKS)

ARE USED ANNUALLY IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

CHANGE IS COMING...

Worldwide, other countries are beginning to change the way they test. The European Union outlawed animal testing for cosmetics in 2013 and is implementing measures for pharmaceuticals. This year, Mexico did the same for cosmetics and banned imports of products tested on animals worldwide.



THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR ADVANCING TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCES HAS FOUND THAT MORE THAN 95% OF DRUGS THAT PASS ANIMAL TESTING FAIL IN HUMAN TRIALS FOR EITHER BEING INEFFECTIVE OR UNSAFE.

New advancements in computer modeling, tissue engineering and other bio-convergence technologies have made the need to test on animals obsolete. Recently, the bipartisan FDA Modernization Act was introduced to congress, which would remove the mandate on animal testing. The legislation would give drug and cosmetic developers the choice on whether or not they want to test on animals.

BE THEIR VOICE

Contact Muskegon Decision Makers:

Mayor, Ken Johnson - ken.johnson@shorelinecity.com

City Manager, Frank Peterson (RESIGNED)

Vice Mayor, Eric Hood - eric.hood@shorelinecity.com

Teresa Emory - teresa.emory@shorelinecity.com

Michael Ramsey - michael.ramsey@shorelinecity.com

Rebecca St. Clair - rebecca.stclair@shorelinecity.com

Rachel Gorman - rachel.gorman@shorelinecity.com

Wille German Jr - willie.germanjr@shorelinecity.com

IF YOU WANT TO STAY UPDATED AND CONNECT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS THAT OPPOSE THIS NEW EXPANSION JOIN THE FACEBOOK GROUP: SAYNOTOSUFFERING

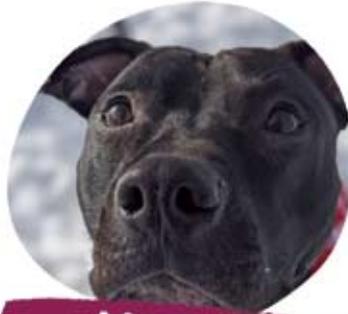
Join the Fight. Community members have been protesting the sale of the land to Northern Bio-medical Research. They have demonstrated outside city hall and have voiced their objections at City of Muskegon Commission meetings. For more information join their Facebook group: Muskegon Against Northern Biomedical Research Animal Testing Site. (saynotosuffering)



**Until there
are none, rescue one**



Sally



Merle



Max



Lola



Holly

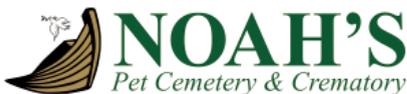
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Kittens in the Mitten

By Janet Vormittag

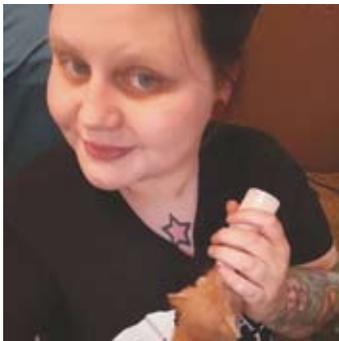
Chalsey Schmidt rescued her first cat when she was five years old. “She always asked for cans of food to feed strays,” her mom Kim Schmidt recalled.

Chalsey caught one of the young homeless cats and brought it home. She named the orange kitten Tiger and had him for 15 years. Her second rescue happened when, at the age of 8, she found an abandoned newborn in the yard. “Its eyes were still closed,” she said. With the help of her mom, Chalsey bottle-fed the youngster.

Chalsey fell in love with helping orphaned newborns, and bottle-feeding became her specialty. For a time she rescued cats on her own, but soon volunteered for other groups. Last summer she decided to venture out on her own and founded Kittens in the Mitten, a nonprofit organization that relies on donations and volunteers.

“I want to do more with special-needs cats,” Chalsey explained. “I like the difficult cases that other rescues don’t want to take on.”

Special-need cats require extra care and can incur higher veterinarian expenses. Finding them homes can take more time too. “You need to find that special person for them,” she said.



Chalsey Schmidt, founder of Kittens in the Mitten.

Chalsey has taken in a blind cat, a cat who was shot and had bleach dumped on it, and a cat with a broken jaw.

One of the special-needs kittens the group took in is Marnie, a black little bundle of energy and love. A woman contacted Chalsey about a newborn who wasn’t acting right. The kitten came from a large litter and it was

determined her back legs and tail had been paralyzed *in vitro*. Chalsey took the kitten, which had to be bottle-fed.

“She’s buff,” Chalsey said. At five months, Marnie drags herself around and can climb most anything.

Chalsey also takes in CH kittens and has two litters with the congenital condition.

CH—cerebellar hypoplasia, is sometimes called wobbly cat syndrome. It occurs most commonly when a pregnant cat becomes infected with feline panleukopenia virus and passes it to her unborn kittens. CH affects the cerebellum of the kittens, which is the area of the brain that controls fine motor movement, balance and coordination. Affected cats often have noticeable symptoms from birth, which range from mild signs of head bobbing and high stepping to more severe signs like tremors and the inability to walk. CH cats and kittens can lead happy and healthy lives.



CH kittens, Totter, left, and Topsy. Marnie, right, has paralyzed back legs.

Kittens in the Mitten also helps adult cats, including ferals, through TNR (trap-neuter-return). Any kittens who are trapped are socialized and adopted out.

Chalsey recently took in two 12-year-old cats, Cuddles and Fluffies, whose elderly owner had died. They had been abandoned in the woman’s house for a month—her son was going to have them euthanized.

Chalsey gets quite a few cats from Flint and Detroit. She recently took in ten cats from a hoarding case in Livonia where an elderly man collected orange cats and had close to 40 in his care. None were spayed or neutered. “It was completely out of control,” she said. She regretted she could only take ten, but she didn’t have foster homes for more.

Veterinarian care is Chalsey’s biggest expense. She uses Hamilton Veterinary Clinic. “They’re my life saver,” she said. Every cat she takes in gets a checkup at the clinic. They also get spayed or neutered, vaccinated and microchipped.

Chalsey’s mother, her husband (The Cat Man), and their two young children help with the rescue. Since opening, the group has taken in 127 cats. Close to half of them have been adopted.

The group has eight foster families including Chalsey’s parents.

Chalsey caught Covid-19 in December and was quite sick. “I’m tired, but there’s such an overpopulation of cats—we have to do more,” she said. “This is what I was meant to do.”

Ways to help Kittens in the Mitten www.kittensinthemitten.org

1. Become a foster home. Especially needed are foster homes with cat-friendly dogs so cats become familiar with dogs and can be adopted to families with dogs.
2. Donate supplies from the group’s Amazon or Chewy wish lists that can be found on their website.
3. Sponsor a kitty from their website.
4. Adopt a cat or kitten. They have cats at Pet Supplies Plus in Holland and do in-store adoption events.
5. Donate pet supplies in the donation barrel at Pet Supplies Plus in Holland.
6. Help pay the group’s veterinarian bills. Donations can be mailed directly to Hamilton Veterinary Clinic, 3372 Lincoln Road, Hamilton, MI 49419. Tag the donation for Kittens in the Mitten.
7. Follow Kittens in the Mitten on social media.

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THE MUSKEGON HUMANE SOCIETY

WE ARE REMAINING APPOINTMENT ONLY

Since changing our process to limit COVID exposure, we've seen a drastic decrease in the stress of our animals. We have also found with our small staff, we can better assist adopters and surrenders when we have scheduled time dedicated. We recommend visiting our website to see available pets, processes and FAQ's. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to giving you the best service whenever you need us!

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This page paid for by Clock Timeless Pets!

Reuben's Room Cat Rescue

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

www.reubensroom.org

catrescuereubensroom@gmail.com

PO Box 140201, Grand Rapids, MI 49514-0201

VOLUNTEERS, FOSTERS, & SPONSORS NEEDED

There are many ways you can help cats in need! If you have some time to spare, a home to share or some money to donate, please email us today! We'd love to hear from you!

Are you looking for two bonded cats to join your family? If so, we have the pair waiting for you – they are both playful and loving.

Meet 9 yr. old Desi & Luci:



Or if you can only make room for one new family member, please check out this handsome guy with beautiful green eyes!

Meet 7 yr. old Hudson:



Senior cats are often overlooked and that's a true shame. Ask anyone who has adopted a senior & they will tell you how much joy & love they provide. Check these two out:

Meet 13 yr. old Diamond:



Meet 12 yr. old Akorn:



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unless my *pets*
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Companion Animal After-Death Communications

by Ginny Mikita

Have you ever sensed the presence of a deceased companion animal? If so, you are not alone. These experiences are quite common—though not universal. They are a frequent topic of conversation in grief support groups I have the privilege of facilitating each month. Many discount these experiences, believing they are figments of their imagination. Most have never shared their experiences with someone else.

After-Death Communications (ADCs) are spontaneous communications that may occur anytime, anywhere. They are distinctive from those that may occur with the aid of a third person, e.g., a psychic. While there are no statistics with companion animals yet, one organization interviewed 2,000 people from all fifty states and ten Canadian provinces, ranging in age from children to the elderly, and representing diverse social, educational, economic, occupational, and religious backgrounds, over the course of seven years. They estimated at least 50 million Americans have had one or more ADC experiences with a beloved human who has died.

The following are the most frequent types of ADCs people report having had with and from their deceased companion animals:

Sensing a Presence: This is most common. It is a distinct feeling your beloved animal is nearby, even though they cannot be seen or heard. Though most often felt during the days and weeks immediately after the death, it may occur months and even years later.

Hearing a Sound: Some hear a bark or meow or, more commonly, their animal's footsteps or nails clicking across the kitchen floor.

Physical Phenomena: Some feel their animal jump on the bed, leaving a warm imprint in the bedding, or feel a cold nose.

Visual Experiences: Some see an aura of light or a clear image of their animal.

Dreams: Some report having vivid dreams in which their animals make appearances.

Symbolic ADCs: Many ask the universe or their companion for a sign they are nearby and at peace. Often signs are so subtle they are missed, or they may be discounted as coincidence. Common signs include: butterflies, rainbows, many species of birds and animals, flowers and a variety of inanimate objects such as coins and pictures. After our beloved Kadie, a black lab/

retriever, died in 2018, I began seeing monarchs in the most unusual places—inside a restaurant and lighting on my back as I emerged from the Dead Sea in Israel. Another participant reported seeing a fox sitting in her back yard in exactly the same place and position as her golden retriever who had recently died.

Matthew Fox, PhD, theologian, activist priest and author of *Dog Body, Dog Mind* and *Cat Body, Cat Mind* documents numbers of ADCs, characterizing them as “surely an affirmation of love’s blessing.” The gifts of companion animals—both great and small—are “subtle and profound, enriching our lives from life to life, and sharing with us part of the Great Mystery beyond our worldly realm of comprehension.”

ADCs point to other realities beyond this mortal plane, suggesting there’s more to the states of life and death than we can fully comprehend. There is some form of being some might term spirit or soul. Nearly all ADCs are positive, joyful, and uplifting encounters that reduce grief, provide lasting comfort and hope and accelerate emotional and spiritual healing. ADCs communicate an essential spiritual message: “Love is eternal.”

In many parts of the world, ADCs can be discussed openly and freely; however, in our culture, most are reluctant to share their experiences. I encourage you to trust your own experiences, accept them as real for you and, if you are able, normalize them by sharing with others. Next month, I will be hosting a gathering at The Mortals Cafe and Confection in Grand Rapids to do just that. Please consider joining me to share your sacred experiences with a companion animal materializing or communicating after death.

Part of my ministry as an animal interfaith/ interspiritual chaplain includes sending empathy cards to those whose companion animals have died. For years, I’ve included these words, “Praying you sense the eternal spirit of your beloved companion when you most need and least expect it in the coming days.”

May it be so.

Ginny Mikita, JD, MDiv Candidate

www.animalblessings.love

ginny@animalblessings.love

616.460.0373



Facilitator

Companion Animal Loss Grief Support Group
2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 - 8:00pm
1530 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids, MI

Ways you can help

A Feral Haven

Our partnering caregivers/trappers and TNR (trap-neuter-return) service providers have been very successful. They TNR'd 320 cats in 2021! Great job on their part but our fundraising has not kept pace. We have already received invoices for 20 cats and over 40 cats are scheduled for surgery dates soon. Cats receive a minimum of sterilization surgery, rabies vaccination, and ear tip through our voucher program.

Kitten Season will be huge this year if we suspend our voucher program due to lack of funds.

Funds donated will be used to support our voucher program in 2022 to reduce the number of kittens born in the outdoors. Please help with a financial donation of any size.

Donate directly to A Feral Haven, 16635 Blair St., West Olive, MI 49460 or at our Giving Grid link <https://www.givinggrid.com/zjosal/>.

Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry

While setting up for one of the Pantry's microchip clinics last September, a couple and their dog arrived early and noticed we were struggling to get our tent up for the event. They offered to help and also inquired about the "Pets Are Family" shirts that many of our volunteers were wearing. After purchasing one, we thanked them, we microchipped their pup, and that was that...or so we thought!

A few weeks passed, and we received an email from one of the dog's owners that said, "My fiancé and I came to your pantry a couple weeks ago and had our dog Lexi microchipped. I would like to give back. I work at the Amazon sort facility in Caledonia. We have skids of pet stuff that come available for donation. Can someone give me a call back and answer a few questions to see if your organization qualifies?"

We responded right away, and he put us in contact with other folks at Amazon who had us fill out paperwork. After a couple of months, we received an email telling us that a pallet was ready for pick-up!

We were truly unprepared to see this enormous pallet in the back of our volunteer's truck—boxes piled on top of boxes! All hands were on-deck at our next distribution day to unpack the donations. It was simply amazing—like Christmas morning! The boxes were FULL of goodies: canned and dry dog and cat food, treats, cat litter, dog and cat toys, cleaning supplies, and even a box that was full of candy (for us humans). This generosity certainly filled our shelves, but after just two distribution Saturdays we had practically gone through all these items.

All because a family brought their dog to get her

microchipped, we were able to help so many more families keep their pets in their homes. What gift could be more valuable?

We hold distributions every other Saturday from Noon to 2 PM, helping provide pet parents with food and supplies for their beloved family members—dogs, cats, birds, you name it. If we get it donated, we will make sure it connects with those who need it.

Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry helps keep about 100 dogs and 100 cats in their homes and out of shelters every month, and that number keeps growing. We are only able to do this with the help and support of our amazing community.

There are several ways that YOU can help us help our community, such as making a monetary donation on our website or through social media, shopping our Amazon or Chewy wish lists, or dropping physical donations off in our donation barrels at several locations throughout the greater Grand Rapids area.

To learn more about these options and more, check out the donate page of our website at www.pleasantheartspetfoodpantry.org/donate.

Hearts of Hope Dog Rescue

Attention people in the Grand Rapids and Midland areas, we need your help Hear us out ... it's kind of a long one.

A little background, first. People often tell us they could never foster because it would be too hard to let them go, they would get too attached. We wish they could be there on adoption day. Yes, it can be sad to say goodbye because you've loved the dog like your own (and some goodbyes are definitely harder than others) but the feeling of knowing you helped them find a life where they will be so loved and where they were the missing link ... well, it makes it worth every goodbye. Seriously, there is no feeling like the joy of sharing a new family member with someone.

And here's the ask. We have these adorable fluff balls coming and some of them still need foster homes. Puppies aren't your jam? Well, we get messages (dozens daily) from our shelter partners here in Michigan and across the country begging us to find room for one more because they are all filled beyond capacity. Seniors, playful adult dogs, small, medium, large, healthy, injured, short hair, long hair ... you name it and there is a dog that meets that description in a shelter just waiting for a chance at a foster home. We cover all the costs and provide all of the supplies, you just provide the love, a ride or two to one of our awesome vet partners, and a safe, warm, temporary place to crash.

If you've ever considered fostering, you should take the plunge. It will change your life in some amazing ways you didn't even know were possible. Now that you are in, here's where you fill out the application to get started!

<https://rescueofhope.com/foster-application/>
See Hearts of Hope's ad on page 11.



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The Benefits of Water Cremation

According to Rev. Desmond Tutu, Anglican archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the peril of climate change is one of the "greatest moral challenges of our time." That's why Rev. Tutu left instructions requesting a water cremation instead of flame cremation after his death Dec. 26, 2021, drawing attention to this emerging green alternative.

While water cremation, known as Aquamation, is not available to humans in Michigan at this time, it is available for your loyal companion animal thanks to Heaven at Home Pet Hospice and Aftercare Center.

"Aquamation is part of a growing green burial movement that avoids non-biodegradable materials and promotes natural decomposition. It has no emissions, it's greener, it's a clean technology to work with," said Dr. Laurie Brush, Founder of Heaven at Home Pet Hospice and Heaven at Home's Aftercare Center.

Mirroring trends in the human funeral industry, cremation has become the most common method of body disposal for pets. The problem is, a single cremation can emit as much carbon dioxide as a 1,000-mile car trip. Dr. Brush has worked closely with BioResponse Solutions, the company that manufactures Aquamation equipment for funeral homes and

crematories throughout North America. The company says its process has 1/10th of the carbon footprint compared with flame creation.

Dr. Brush describes the process as more like natural decomposition than any other method of disposition, using gentle water flow, temperature and alkalinity to accelerate the ecosystem's natural method of breaking down and decomposing organic matter. A process that would naturally take months or years is reduced to a day. During that time, a combination of 95% warm water and 5% alkali gently rushes over the body. At the end of the Aquamation process, your companion's physical components have been returned to their natural elements, dispersed in water—with only the solid bone remaining, pathogen and disease free. Viruses and chemicals such as chemotherapy drugs are broken down into basic nutrient elements, rendering them non-toxic. The mineral bone ash is returned in an urn to those who request take home remains. The water byproduct is not only benign, but also beneficial. Returned to the environment, effluent may be used as a natural, chemical-free fertilizer.

"It's an eco-friendly and gentle way to return your companion to Mother earth," Dr. Brush said.



SPRING NEWSLETTER



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Mewsings

Love In the time of Covid

By Kristina VanOss



Doing good work in the world is not for the faint of heart, but for the full of heart. ~Rick Tamlyn.

Here we are, two years into a pandemic we never saw coming. There is no need to detail the drastic changes to our normal life. No person has been exempted from sickness, loss, and grief or by frustration and worries. Life as we knew it has been turned upside down...and we find ourselves in a constant state of improvisation with no clear end in sight.

Before we lose our cool over how we have been inconvenienced, we need to remember that despite everything, we are still among the more fortunate ones. Most of us still have homes and access to essential resources, not to mention technology at our fingertips with which we can communicate to get help when we need it.

Humans are not the only ones struggling. The impact of Covid has also hit our community's animals and the people who care about them. Pets have been displaced when their owners died, went into care or were forced to move. Others lost their homes when panic set in about how they too may transmit *the new C word*.

With so much illness floating around the environment, access to veterinary care has been limited at times. Many clinics have been so short-staffed that they are not accepting new clients and struggling to meet the needs of established clients. Most notably spay/neuter clinics went on hiatus for so long that what little progress we thought had made in TNR of community cats has literally been undone, leaving us with a record increase in the numbers of cats.

Yes, for a brief window during the Covid lockdown in 2020, adoptions from shelters soared and some of us had hope for our furred friends. Sadly, that was short-lived for many who were returned when their owners resumed work outside the home. The current state of shelters is once again overflowing and in crisis mode.

The system for cats, dogs and other vulnerable animals is strained beyond the usual strain. It's time for the community at large to do more, and I don't just mean more donations of supplies. Yes, those items you often see listed by rescues; cleaning supplies, food, litter, etc. are still needed, still appreciated.

But extra space does not manifest because we wish it.

And supplies can't implement themselves. Please read that again.

Your gifts of time, energy, and space to temporarily house animals are even more valuable right now. The



Charlotte, a pregnant stray, was saved from the cold because her finder was willing to drive three hours to someone who would foster her and her babies. Great homes were found for Charlotte and her kittens through social networking.

temporary inconvenience of fostering a dog for a few days until transport can be arranged to a shelter with space will mean more to a dog on death row than that bag of kibble will. Sharing your spare bedroom, your second bathroom, a warm corner of your garage with a mama cat and her litter for a few weeks while a rescue advocates for them will teach you and your family more about the cycle of life, compassion, and empathy than any check you could write. And knowing it was your effort that saved an animal is a lasting satisfaction. Although, do still write that check and buy that bag of kibble too if you can.

Heartwarming stories abound on social media. Yet too many animals still fall through the cracks when it is assumed that someone else will save them. Be that someone. It is so easy to make an excuse not to be involved. Be involved anyway. The smallest gesture can make a difference. It may be as simple as taking a picture and posting it to social media or making a few phone calls to resources *other* than rescues...*before you call a rescue*. There are a hundred ways to be of use, and some of them are very simple. Just ask. Be a cog in the new system, the system of Love in the time of Covid. When the world is full of uncertainty, frustration, and so much that we have no control over...doing what you can, when you can, with whatever you have at hand for an animal, just might do you as much good as it does them.

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.



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Community Resource Guide

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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

Sleepy Hollow Pet Cemetery

2755 64th St. SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
616-538-6050 - www.sleepyhollowpc.com
info@sleepyhollowpc.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 Boarding/Sitters

Canine Country Club

In-home pet sitting and dog walking
231-755-3230

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

Helping keep pets and families together since 2016
info@pleasantheartspetfoodpantry.org
www.pleasantheartspetfoodpantry.org
1539 Taylor Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Pet Training

Paradigm Dog School, LLC

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

Wolf Song Enterprises, LLC

Animal behavior consulting, Animal training, Animal talent
Wolfsongenterprises@gmail.com - 231-744-7141

Rescue Groups

BestPals Animal Rescue Center

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

Cannonsville Critters

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

Headin' Home Pet Rescue, Inc.

185 Panther Dr., Holland, MI 49424
616-886-1474 - headinhomerescue@sbcglobal.net
www.headinhomerescue.org

Hearts of Hope Dog Rescue

Until there are none, rescue one
616-366-8455 - rescueofhope@gmail.com
www.rescueofhope.com

Mackenzie's Animal Sanctuary

'A home along the way' for dogs in need.
Adopt - Volunteer - Donate
8935 Thompson Rd. Lake Odessa, MI 48849
www.mackenzies.info

Muskegon Humane Society - a no kill, non-profit shelter

2640 Marquette Ave., Muskegon, MI 49442
231-773-8689 - www.muskegonhumanesociety.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

Community Resource Guide

Reuben's Room Cat Rescue

Jeanine Buckner

A no-kill, non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization

www.reubensroom.org

catrescuereubensroom@gmail.com

The Next Chapter Pet Rescue

Where pets find their happily ever after

www.facebook.com/nextchapterpetrescue

616-606-0911 - nextchapterpetrescue@gmail.com

www.nextchapterpetrescue.rescuegroups.org

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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(269)455-5056 mail@laketowncathospital.com

www.laketowncathospital.com

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www.quickfixvet.com

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Wildlife

Wildlife Rehab Center

1504 Union Ave. NE, Grand Rapids

616-361-6109 - www.wildlife-rehab-center.org

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www.noahspetcemetery.com

noahspc@comcast.net



Pound Buddies
January Intakes

89 dogs were taken into the shelter

OF WHICH:

76 dogs had NO collar or ID

9 dogs had a collar but no ID

4 dogs were microchipped

84 dogs were NOT ALTERED!

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catsanddogsmagazine@comcast.net or 616-777-0645



Noah News!

- Building Expansion
- Adoptable Pets!

KIT KAT & SULLIVAN

These two cats have been with us for a year--way too long to be without a forever home! Kit Kat is a beautiful black 9-year-old female who's been with us since her previous owner passed away. While she isn't a huge fan of playing, she is a huge fan of cuddling!



Sullivan is a year-and-a-half old male who, unlike Kit Kat, LOVES to play. His favorite toys are ping pong balls and springs. He also loves taking naps on people's laps! Stop by and fall in love with these wonderful cats! If you aren't looking to add any cats to your family right now, please spread the word about Kit Kat and Sullivan!



Kit Kat (left)
Sullivan (above)

ISOLATION WING BUILDING FUND UPDATE

Due to rise in material cost, we need an additional \$20,000 to finish our isolation addition. If you would like to donate, please mail donation to Noah Project with a memo that it's for the isolation addition, or go to our website and use the donate button there. Or if you'd like to drop it off, we can give you a tour!



(231) 865-1264

NoahProjectMuskegon.org

Noah Project
5205 Airline Road
Muskegon, MI 49444

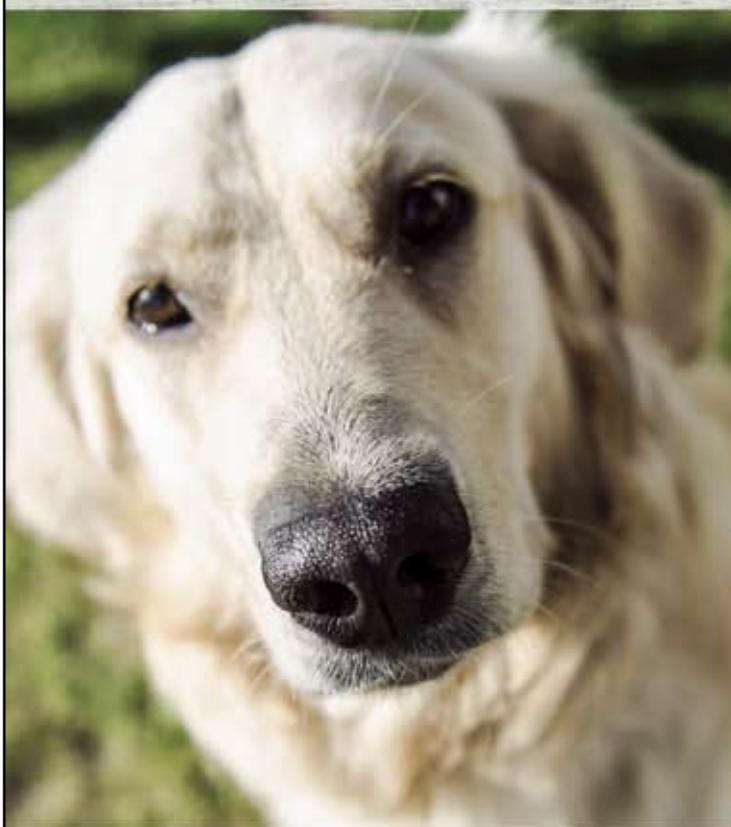
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*You left paw prints
on my heart...*



- Chapel
- Cemetery
- Cremation
- Equine Services
- Urns
- Keepsakes
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