

The Companion

May 2025

Enrichment: Fun with Big Benefits

We're not saying life's a party at MHHS ... but sometimes, it is! One-year-old Banzai was all smiles at his birthday bash. We celebrated with squeaky toys, flavored bubbles, and a good romp with friends. More than just fun, this was enrichment.

Inside, learn more about how Mohawk Hudson Humane Society is using enrichment activities to ensure every animal is given opportunities to thrive in our care.



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A Message from the President



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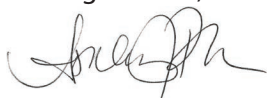
Every animal deserves love, comfort, and a chance to heal. At MHHS, we go beyond basic care — we make shelter life less stressful and more enriching, helping animals find joy, confidence, and hope on their journey to adoption.

What sets us apart is our Behavior and Enrichment team, which creates daily plans tailored to the needs of each animal. With the support of staff and volunteers, they ensure every animal experiences play, mental stimulation, and personalized care that meets their unique needs. But as our commitment grows, so does our need for space.

That's why I'm thrilled to share our vision for the Behavioral Rehabilitation and Outreach Center — The BROC. Named for Brock, a beloved dog who suffered unthinkable abuse, this new facility will provide specialized rehabilitation spaces where animals can heal, trust, and thrive. It will also be a vital resource for our community, expanding dog training and humane education programs to create brighter futures for pets and people alike.

Your support makes all of this possible. Whether you volunteer, donate, or simply share our mission, you are changing lives. Together, we can give animals the second chance they deserve.

With gratitude,



Ashley Jeffrey Bouck
President & CEO

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- **will provide**
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**Olaf enjoys some
gentle grooming.**



**Oakley gets buckled in on
the way to a field trip.**



**Scented bubbles are fun
for Tater to watch and sniff.**

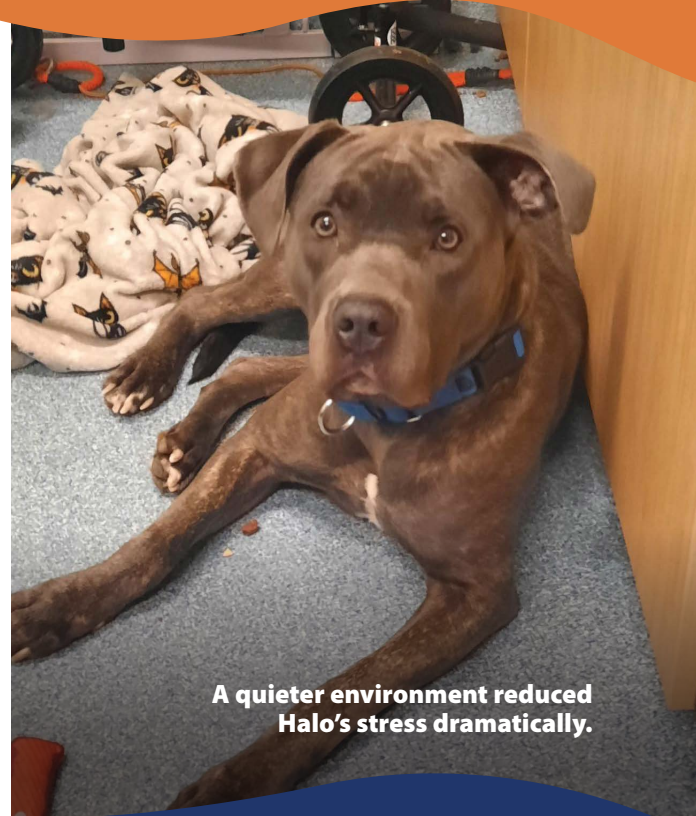
Creating Calm: Why the Right Space Matters

Sometimes animals arrive so shut down they need a different level of support before they can even begin enrichment activities. When two-year-old Halo arrived as a stray, she clung to the back of her kennel, trembling and wide-eyed. MHHS Animal Behavior Manager Dana Polsinelli knew just what to do.

Dana moved Halo to the Real-Life Room — a space that feels more like home. Away from confusing sounds and scents, Halo immediately began to relax. That same day, she accepted treats and started seeking Dana's attention.

This simple change — a quieter, more soothing space — made all the difference. Halo was now ready for enrichment — the cherry on top of every shelter dog's life! Halo began to warm up to new people and experiences, including meeting other dogs. Reserved at first, she made friends and started to enjoy playgroups and morning Kong toys filled with frozen treats. After three months of support from Dana and the other members of our expert Behavior and Enrichment team, Halo found her perfect match: a loving family with two dogs.

Halo's story shows how important the right environment and level of stimulation is for animals to heal and grow. For our little angel, a quiet room, personalized enrichment activities, and a compassionate canine expert were the keys to unlocking her sweet personality.



A quieter environment reduced Halo's stress dramatically.

What is enrichment?
Enrichment keeps shelter animals stimulated and happy through play, training, and activities that ease stress.

Play, Grow, Thrive: Enrichment at MHHS

Many animals arrive at MHHS feeling scared and uncertain, but enrichment helps them explore, grow, and find joy. While they may seem basic, simple acts like tossing a ball or dangling a ribbon can make a world of difference — building confidence, easing anxiety, and preparing pets for loving homes.

Tailored enrichment meets each animal's unique needs, helping a nervous dog feel secure enough to connect with adopters or a shy cat gain the confidence to seek affection. With 150 to 300 animals in our care daily, this commitment requires a strong program supported by dedicated staff and passionate volunteers.

For dogs, enrichment can include outdoor walks, playgroups, puzzle feeders, and field trips with volunteers, all of which provide mental and physical engagement. Cats thrive with climbing spaces, cozy hideouts, and a variety of toys to keep them engaged. Even the shyest felines benefit from gentle, patient interactions — like listening to a volunteer read aloud from a distance — helping them grow comfortable with people.

Toys for all animals are rotated throughout the week to keep our smart kitties, bunnies, pups, and piggies on their toe-beans in anticipation of the next play session.

At MHHS, thoughtful enrichment transforms lives, one playful moment at a time.

A Tale of Enrichment Success

The work of our Behavior and Enrichment team paves the way for some incredible transformations. Feline bad boy Danny Zuko wasn't looking to make friends. But Cat Care and Enrichment Associate Jason Cudemo was not deterred by Danny's cold shoulder.

Over eight months, Jason and others patiently worked with Danny. Jason discovered that quiet coexistence, Churu treats, and soothing ocean sounds were the key to chipping away at Danny's tough-guy exterior. In time, Danny began to trust, rewarding Jason with "slow blinks" — the ultimate sign of feline contentment.

Then one day, we placed Quinn, a shy and gentle kitty rescued from a neglect case, in Danny's room. Both were on journeys of healing, and together, they found comfort and companionship. Soon, Danny and Quinn were inseparable best friends.

When Danny's adopters came to visit him, they couldn't resist the pair's charm and decided to give both cats a loving home. Now these best buddies are happy and thriving together.

Danny and Quinn's transformation wouldn't have been possible without your support. Thank you for helping us give animals the time and care they need to shine.

From untouchable and independent to making friends, feline and humane alike, Danny Zuko thrived with enrichment.

You Can Help

Enrichment truly transforms lives. Together, we can ensure that every shelter day is a good one.

- 🐾 Become a touch-free enrichment volunteer. There are many ways to add variety to life while animals are still in their kennels. No handling skills are required.
- 🐾 Donate enrichment supplies. Visit our website for items we always need at mohawkhumane.org/wishlist.
- 🐾 Help pets like Halo and Danny Zuko trust again. Your gift brings healing, confidence, and joy to animals in need.



mission

Transforming the lives of animals and people through partnerships, protection, and hope

contact us

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To learn more about MHHS and ways to help, please visit

mohawkhumane.org

