

Mother Gives Life to Save Kittens

On a cold winter morning heading into the Humane Society's animal care center in Menands, one of the Society's employees noticed a cat that appeared to be sleeping or injured. There was a cardboard box nearby that was taped shut, but it appeared the cat had escaped to the side of the road. The employee stopped and, to her dismay, found a mother cat had passed away during the freezing night while keeping five kittens covered with her body. The kittens were cold and near death, but were still alive.



The five kittens, all female, were rushed to the Society's veterinary staff, where emergency warming procedures began. Later that day, a staff member went back to where the cats were found to retrieve the box for identifying information and saw a sixth kitten running nearby. He had left his mother and sisters but somehow also survived. He was caught and brought to our veterinarians to be warmed and fed.

It is hard to imagine why someone would abandon a mother and her kittens only a quarter mile from the Humane Society, where they could have been kept safe and warm. The carelessness of an individual cost a mother cat her life, but this mother cared so deeply for her kittens that she literally gave everything she had to save her babies.

Thanks to the quick work of the Humane Society's staff and the generosity of supporters like you, our veterinarians were able to save all six kittens and send them to warm, loving homes.



3 Oakland Avenue Menands, NY 12204-2718

Hours

Monday – Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

www.mohawkhumane.org

518.434.8128 (p) 518.434.0217 (f)

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From the Director

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. I can tell you, for a fact, that old saying just isn't true. With good positive reinforcement training, you can teach any dog, no matter the age.

But what about cats? Some people tend to get a little smirk on their faces when I mention training cats. Other people just laugh out loud. The truth is any animal can be trained if they have the right positive motivation. With that motivation, they will want to continue participating in an activity that is fun and rewarding for them.

My own cat, Sweetpea, was originally a foster kitten who came to Mohawk Hudson Humane Society without her mother or any siblings. My wife and I brought her into our home for a few weeks, and she decided to stay for five years.

"My first thought when we started training our cat was, 'How could we use this skill to save more cats?' "

A few years ago, our friend and Humane Society dog trainer Chris Danker wanted to try training a cat. Sweetpea was volunteered. Sweetpea is very focused on people and extremely food motivated, so she stood out as the best cat from our brood to try to train.

Just like we trained our dogs, Sweetpea was trained using a marker for reinforcement (a click) and a treat.

Sweetpea took to the training quickly. Before we knew it, she was sitting. Later, she could "shake hands" on command. Today, years later, she will still do it without a click or a treat – although she still gets her fair share of rewards.

My first thought when we started training our cat was, "How could we use this skill to save more cats?" At the Humane Society we have begun teaching staff and volunteers the basic skills needed to train cats. The training has two clear benefits: It mentally stimulates the cats, and it makes them more adoptable.

Granted, not many people are looking for a cat that sits and shakes, but that's not necessarily the first thing we'll train shelter cats to do. We work with the cats to help them engage more with people visiting the Society's adoption center. We work with shy cats to come to the front of the kennel and, yes, reach out like they're shaking hands to let people know how engaging and friendly they can be.

At the Humane Society our focus is always on saving more lives. Like our

S.T.A.R. program for training dogs at the Albany County Correctional Facility, our new cat training program helps animals get ready for adoption and be successful in their new homes. Don't you want a cat that's been trained? I have one, and I can tell you: Shelter cats are the best, and trained shelter cats are even better. Thanks to the support of donors like you, we have the opportunity to experiment with new and innovative programs that find homes for more animals than ever before.



Executive Director
Brad Shear and Bastian, his cat

Bul Sheer

Pittie-Palooza Does it Again

Twelve dogs found new forever homes and more than \$1,300 was raised during our fourth annual Pittie-Palooza October 24–27. Each adopted dog had a free microchip and went home with a free collar, leash and goodie bag. Festival Day on Saturday was fun-filled with music by What She Said, a cookout courtesy of 3BQ, a kissing booth, pet-themed vendors, a bake sale, raffle baskets and more. "Railroad Puppies" Hudson and Pearl made an appearance and joined in the festivities with Halloween costumes. Trainer Chris Danker conducted a Therapy Dog International test for prospective certified therapy dogs.

Thanks to the Save-a-Bull Program and the MHHS staff, volunteers, vendors and visitors who made it happen. A good time was had by all!





Ninth Art Saves Animals a Record Breaker

Our ninth annual *Art Saves Animals*, held October 3 at The Arts Center in Troy, was a huge success and a record-breaking event with a net income of nearly \$36,000. We were delighted to have WNYT meteorologist Jason Gough serve as our emcee and auctioneer again this year. We are grateful to Sara Ayers, Greg Haymes, Jill Rafferty-Weinisch, Lillie Ruby and the rest of the Planning Committee; to all the artists who donated their treasured pieces for the silent auction; and to featured artists Jon Gernon, Robert Gullie, Nick Patten, Laura Von Rosk and Deborah Zlotsky, who generously donated the wonderful art featured in the live auction.



A big thank you to our sponsors for their generosity and ongoing support: Excelsior College, BBL Family of Companies, Exit 9 Wine & Liquor, Metroland, CSEA, Karen & Chet Opalka, Arlene's Artist Materials, TD Bank, Camelot Print & Copy Center, GoToGuide.net, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, Goldstein Auto Group, Curtis Lumber, CDPHP,



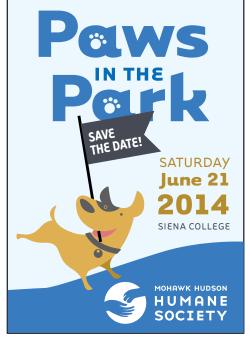
Operation Snip, Spotlight Newspapers, Pioneer Bank, Capitaland Motors and The Pit Bull Princess.

In addition, the night's festivities would not have been as special if not for the Balloon Gals, Peg & Bill Delaney, Dave Glatz and the moving crew, Janice Kucskar, Morgan Linen Service, Nicole's Special Event & Catering Company, The Arts Center of the Capital Region, The Charles F. Lucas Confectionery & Wine Bar, The Desmond Hotel and The Great Escape.

We cannot forget to extend a very special *thank you* to the volunteers who gave their time and talent to make the evening a huge success. It is because of them — and all who attended the event, our sponsors and other special friends — that *Art Saves Animals* continues to be great fun and raised a record amount of money for the animals in our care.







Pets Find Homes for the Holidays at Off-site Events

The newest Petco store in the Capital Region, located in the Fresh Market Plaza in Latham at Routes 9 and 155, celebrated its grand opening November 16, and we were on hand with pets looking for new homes. Goldstein Subaru on Central Avenue in Colonie hosted two "Share the Love" adoption events in November and December, with more than a dozen cats and dogs finding their "furever" homes.

We are grateful to all the businesses and organizations who host special adoption events and to all the MHHS volunteers who transport animals, give out information and help our pets find loving new homes. Spring will be here soon, so watch the Event Calendar on our website for upcoming adoption clinics.





Tonko Visit

Congressman Paul Tonko came to visit the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society to learn about the Society's programs and the needs of homeless animals. Congressman Tonko was very supportive of and impressed by the work of the Society.



London's Story

On a cool fall day in Albany, Animal Control was called to the basement of an apartment building. A resident was concerned that a dog had been left there without food, water or care. When the officer arrived, things were worse than he could have expected. The basement was so covered with



urine and feces that the dog trying to survive there had burns on her feet; she had no clean place to stand. Her coat was so matted that it formed a solid shell instead of the soft hair it probably once was.

The officer immediately removed the dog and rushed her to the care of the Humane Society. Our veterinary staff started treating her burns and shaved off her matted coat, revealing an emaciated little Lhasa Apso underneath. They would name her London. On a scale of 1 to 5, London's weight was rated as a 1, meaning she was emaciated. The matted hair that was shaved from her weighed almost as much as London herself. Through it all, London just wanted the attention someone was finally willing to give her.

London would need time and treatment, but she began recovering while police searched for her abuser. With medication, treatment, regular feeding and loving care, London became a different dog, ready for a new home. Her rescue and recovery were possible only because of the supporters who donate to the Society, ensuring animals like London get the care they deserve.

Tributes

In Memory Of . . .

Abode Above, Jack & Annie

John Coffey

Agnes & George Maureen Smith

Anna Altman Beth Kaplan

Frances Anderson

Mary Comley Elaine Gruener Eric Hannay Bill & Judy Kahn

Ellen & Larry Kotlow Richard Kotlow

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Blaine Ryan-Lynch

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