

# Capital Pet



3 Oakland Avenue, Menands, NY 12204-2718  
518.434.8128 | [www.mohawkhumane.org](http://www.mohawkhumane.org)



## Molly's Angels

Molly is the kind of dog everyone loves to be around: happy, gentle, affectionate. We'll never know how this sweet 8-year-old shepherd mix became homeless, but since coming into our care, she has had many guardian angels on her side.

Upon examination, we found both of her ears were very diseased, probably due to chronic, untreated ear infections. Her ear canals were sealed shut and thickened with dead tissue, and her hearing was very limited. She must have been in quite a bit of discomfort due to the inflammation and itchiness.

We knew she would need both ear canals removed, a procedure that would require a specialist. Dr. Tom Bowersox has been our go-to for delicate surgeries such as this, and he kindly agreed to help Molly at a greatly reduced fee. Still, it was going to cost our humane society more than \$1,000, but that's where our Guardian Angel Fund came in.

This fund is used specifically for treatment of animals with conditions beyond the scope of what our own veterinary staff can do in the shelter. Eligible cases require a high potential for adoption and an excellent quality of life following treatment. Molly was the perfect candidate.

Following her first successful surgery, Molly went into foster care with MHHS volunteer Kathleen Donohue. At first, Molly



Thanks to our Guardian Angel Fund, Molly had the ear surgeries she needed.

struggled a bit with her balance. But within just a few weeks, she fully adapted and settled in. While Molly was awaiting her second surgery, Kathleen began researching ways to train deaf dogs. She has since taken Molly through a basic obedience class that we provide just for our shelter dogs and is teaching Molly sign language.

Kathleen also saw Molly through her second surgery, and now she's more than Molly's foster mom — she's her forever mom!

We are fortunate to have so many angels surrounding our shelter pets. You can support our care of pets like Molly at [mohawkhumane.org/donate](http://mohawkhumane.org/donate).





**MOHAWK HUDSON  
HUMANE  
SOCIETY**

**ANIMAL CARE CENTER**

**3 Oakland Ave.**

**Menands, NY 12204-2718**

**www.mohawkhumane.org**

518.434.8128 P

518.434.0217 F

**HOURS**

Open Every Day Noon – 6:00 pm

**MHHS SARATOGA Clinic**

**4255 Route 50, Saratoga Springs**

518.886.9645

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## From the President and CEO

Dear Friends,

It has been just over a year since we celebrated the grand opening of our new Animal Care Center, and the new facility has vastly improved the quality of life for the pets in our care. Overall, our pets are healthier and happier thanks to your generous contributions.

All housing areas are made of disinfectant-friendly materials, and the building is equipped with state-of-the-art veterinary facilities and ventilation. The kennels are larger, quieter and have more natural lighting, all of which help reduce stress in the animals. Upper respiratory infections, a common problem in shelters, are fewer because of these strategic design elements. Healthy pets spend less time in the shelter and move more quickly into forever homes, which is the ultimate goal.

Adding to facility improvements are new programs and more volunteers. In the past year our corps of active volunteers has increased by 40 percent, with exciting new opportunities for everyone. For example, our volunteer-driven Behavior and Enrichment



team works to ensure that pets stay active and stimulated during their stay. This contributes to physical wellness. This team, led by the Director for Behavior and Enrichment, is also trained to work on behavior modification for pets who need a little extra help before going home. The work of the B&E team and our close relationships with rescue groups near and far have allowed us to find placements for animals best served by a non-shelter environment.

With the environmental improvements and enrichment efforts, we have reduced our already very limited need for euthanasia due to illness and behavior issues by 40 percent.

There is still much work to be done, and there are ample opportunities — large and small — to continue your support of our mission. Please join us for our Paws in the Park Walk for Animals on September 29. It's a fun way to help the animals. Or honor someone special by naming a space in the facility after them. For more information, please reach out to me directly at 518-434-8128, ext. 202.

Our pets are happier and healthier thanks to your generous support.

Todd Cramer



Get social with us. We're on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

# Helping Veterans, Saving Dogs, Changing Lives

Since his return to civilian life, night terrors had become part of life for Stephen Onley, a seven-year Army Airborne veteran. These episodes inevitably set his days on a bad path — that is, until Lou came along.

“Recently I had a night terror, and Lou was actually in my dream,” Stephen says. “He woke me by licking my face, and I was able to go back to sleep.”

Lou is Stephen’s service dog, matched with him through Operation At Ease. This mellow, 100+ pound mastiff mix came to MHHS as a stray.

In December, Operation At Ease founder Joni Bonilla visited the humane society and noticed Lou as he popped his big head over a kennel barrier. Instantly, she thought he’d be a good match for Stephen, who was looking for a big dog. Soon, Stephen and Lou were training together, and the results have been life-changing.

Stephen had all but given up on finding a service dog, as other programs had wait lists of a year or more for trained service dogs. But not only are dogs more readily available through Operation At Ease, this unique program makes the veteran the trainer of his or her own dog, building a powerful bond and a supportive community in the process.

When Joni’s friend, a veteran with PTSD, suddenly lost his service dog, he was devastated. Joni, a longtime shelter worker and dog trainer, tried every avenue she knew to help him find a new dog, but also learned that waiting time could be years long. Out of her frustration and desire to do better, not only for veterans in need, but for the dogs who she knew were crowding shelters for lack of homes, Operation At Ease was born.

“PTSD lies,” Joni says. “It’s a voice in your head that says, ‘You’re broken. You’re not going to make it.’ These are brave people who have been traumatized and find themselves in constant conflict over the moment.”

The military trains troops to be hyperaware of their surroundings at all times, always anticipating the worst-case scenario. It can become an obsession, making it hard to relax and enjoy anything. But Lou has changed that.

“Now my focus is on him,” Stephen says. “In the military, you establish trust in those in your unit because you are putting your lives in each other’s hands.”

Not only do he and Lou always watch out for one another, but he is grateful for the friendship of other vets in the program who share similar pasts and challenges in the present.

MHHS has now helped Operation At Ease place five dogs with veterans, and not all have been easy dogs. The training is intensive, says Director of Behavior and Enrichment Nancy Haynes, “and that is exactly what some of our more challenging dogs need. Having a job is great for them and the transformations, for both the dogs and their soldiers, have been incredible.”

To learn more about this program, visit [operationatease.org](http://operationatease.org).



**Once homeless, Lou is now a trusted service dog.**

# Please Don't Give Kittens Away

It all started with one pregnant stray. One became six. Some of them had litters, and before long, “John” was dealing with over 40 cats and needed help. He reached out to our Saratoga Clinic, and we took in over 20 cats and kittens, altered them, and found good homes for them. We also spayed and neutered all the others, and John continues to care for them.

It’s not uncommon for people with good intentions to get in over their heads.

Though we’re headed into fall, kittens are still being born. Those cuddly furballs are pretty easy to give away, and that’s a big part of the problem.

We urge anyone with unwanted litters to please bring them to us instead so we can ensure they are spayed or neutered and vaccinated before entering a new home. We cannot overstate the importance of getting cats altered by 4 months of age. That’s the only way we can stop the cycle of unwanted births. Once the moms are fixed, not only will they be healthier and happier, but their loving owners will never have to deal with this issue again.

If you need help spaying or neutering your pets, please call 518-886-9645. We are here to help.



**Kittens can reproduce as early as 4 months of age.**

