



Saving Bonnie and Her Pack

Bonnie, a sweet 7-year-old miniature poodle, was living in a home littered with feces, urine and garbage, along with another dog, 11 cats and their owner. All were suffering from their poor environment, but Bonnie was in particularly bad shape. Her knotted and matted fur tugged so tightly against her legs and face that she had trouble walking, eating and even seeing. Beneath her soiled coat, her skin was raw and irritated. Her overgrown nails curled inward toward her paw pads. She also suffered from severe dental disease and had a growing mass on her neck.

At MHHS, she and the others finally knew the comfort of a clean bed, fresh food and air that wasn't permeated with ammonia. Still, a better future was not guaranteed.

As cases like this slowly make their way through the courts, we anxiously await appearances, hoping for a decision that will transfer legal ownership of the pets



After nearly a year of treatment and care, Bonnie is happy, healthy and loved by her new family.

to us and ensure their suffering ends. We're often frustrated by no-shows and other delays and this year COVID slowed things down even more.

Even while the animals are safe with us, we are not permitted to provide all the care we typically would, such as spaying and neutering, unless there is a compelling medical reason to do so. Bonnie's tennis ball-sized mass was growing near important blood vessels at her jawline. With permission, our veterinary team operated and removed it successfully.

After just under a year, all of the animals were signed over to us. As part of an agreement to not own more animals, no charges were pressed and the owner was released from all financial responsibility for the case. We assumed the cost of care – over \$100,000 – for Bonnie and the others.

Though our investment is great both financially and emotionally, we commit to these cases for as long as it takes. Thanks to our generous donors, Bonnie and her pack have found happy new homes.

Humane Law Enforcement: Bringing Justice Through Peace

As the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) for Albany and Rensselaer Counties, Mohawk Hudson Humane Society has supported law enforcement in the investigation of cruelty and neglect cases for many years. This past year, our commitment to Humane Law Enforcement deepened when Nancy Haynes, Gail Hughes-Morey and Jillian Leibach became certified New York State Peace Officers.

As Humane Law Enforcement Officers, they hold those who neglect or abuse animals accountable under New York State's Agriculture and Markets Law, also

advocating for animals and the people who love them. This can provide a lifeline for people and pets who have slipped through the cracks of society. Our cases typically involve well-intentioned people in crisis, including those with physical or mental illnesses. While they may have been on the radar of local law enforcement for a while, there is little that can be done unless the person is open to help. We are often the first ones to gain entry to a home through reports of animal abuse or neglect from concerned neighbors. Establishing trust and providing reassurance that their animals will be well cared for is critical, as the relationship we build can pave the way for access to other needed social services.

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A Message from CEO Ashley Jeffrey Bouck



CEO Ashley Jeffrey Bouck and Hobbs

During this season of giving thanks, we are beyond grateful to each and every one of you who supports our mission of enriching the lives of animals and the people who love them. It was clear to me seven years ago, when we adopted our cat Lennox from MHHS, that every staff member and volunteer had a

genuine love for the welfare of our animals. The past six months as CEO have shown me how truly extraordinary our team is. They have shown up every day to care for the animals during COVID – without hesitation and willing to make many necessary adjustments for safety.

We talk about the benefits of having pets, especially during hard times, and I know that we need them just as much as they need us right now. We hope you have enjoyed the pictures we've shared on social media of some of our amazing team with our animals and the joy they bring each other every day at the shelter. As you read the stories about Bonnie and Delicata you will get a view of the work that goes on behind the scenes.

Many people know us as the place where they adopted their furry family member, but at MHHS we provide so many other incredible services. During COVID, we have had over 1,600 animals in our care. Some of them were from cruelty or neglect cases, which led to them staying

with us even longer than anticipated due to court closures during the pandemic. Without the **time** our staff and volunteers gave to care for them, the **talent** of our veterinary team to tend to their medical needs, and the **treasure** we received from generous supporters, we could not share these happy "tails."

We are proud to be an essential part of our Capital Region community, which has come together to make sure we all – two-legged and four-legged alike – can weather this pandemic. We have even increased some of our most-needed services during this time, including providing pet food for those struggling financially.

In partnership with Greater Good, we became a hub for pet food donations. Through our Furry Friends Pet Food Pantry, sponsored by Goldstein Auto Group, we have worked with other animal welfare organizations, as well as human food pantries, in the distribution of over 230,000 pet meals (and counting) this year so far! It's a tremendous increase over 2019's distribution of 53,700 meals for the entire year. We will continue to offer ways help keep pets in their loving homes.

Thank you for giving us the gift of being able to provide these life-saving services, to rescue neglected and homeless pets, and for allowing us to complete families since 1887. The animals needed us before the pandemic, during COVID, and will continue to need us after – and with you by our side, we will be here.

With gratitude,



You can help save animals like Bonnie and Delicata.

Give a gift today that will go toward the care of animals who have been neglected or abused. Your gift will save lives!
Donate at mohawkhumane.org/bonnie.

Delicata's Two-Year Journey to Happiness

Our reputation for adoption success, especially with special needs pets, is getting around. This is how we met Delicata.

In May of 2018 the ASPCA received complaints about a hoarding case in Queens. The home was filled with trash and many breeding cats. Delicata, a 3-year-old tortie, was found wandering the streets. She had severe neck wounds, and though her owner refused to surrender her, she did allow the ASPCA to take her into their care for treatment. Sadly, Delicata was later returned and it wasn't until city agencies got involved sixteen months later, due to an increasingly dire situation, that Delicata could be truly saved.



Delicata was found in desperate need of care.

Delicata was in need of urgent care and now she was pregnant. At the ASPCA's Animal Recovery Center (ARC), she was diagnosed with ulcerative dermatitis, a rare condition in cats that can produce large lesions on the back and neck. Delicata's case was further complicated by a flea infestation and a food allergy.

Soon Delicata, affectionately known as Deli, gave birth. Once her kitten was weaned, her doctors tried half a

dozen therapies until they found one to reduce her severe inflammation. Feeling so much better, her loving personality began to shine and with her condition finally stable, she was ready to go home.

The ASPCA reached out to our team to help with finding her a home. Now it was our job to find an adopter willing to take on lifelong management of her condition, which would include medication and a specific diet.

Meanwhile, Ashley Putz had been seeking a certain type of companion. "I had my heart set on a cat with special needs or one who had been passed over," said Ashley, "I've always had a soft spot for things that are imperfect."



When they met in September, Ashley knew she had found her perfectly imperfect new friend. After just a few days of shyness, Deli felt right at home with Ashley and her two young daughters.

Ashley is grateful for this collaboration. "Both organizations took a lot of time to figure out how to manage her case," she said. "Others may not have given her that chance."

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As the number and urgency of these cases grew, we committed to providing our staff with specialized training to intervene safely, effectively and legally where it is most needed. Over the course of the month-long Peace Officer Certification at Zone 5 in Schenectady, the trio studied criminal procedure law and penal code, scene documentation and learned to defend themselves in tactical training. Of all of the new tools on their duty belts, they say that de-escalation techniques are by far the most important.

In the best-case scenario, the pet owner signs the animals over to us on the scene and we can immediately provide veterinary care and placement in new homes. In the worst-case scenario, the owner is unable or unwilling to sign them over and their futures remain on hold for months or longer as we wait for a resolution from the court. This is more costly for MHHS, and more importantly, it costs the pets precious moments of their already too-short lives that could be spent in a loving home. This is why it is so important that our officers be masters of de-escalation and peaceful intervention. It is in the



MHHS Peace Officers: Director of Behavior and Enrichment Nancy Haynes, Senior Vice President for Operations Gail Hughes-Morey and Animal Care Manager Jillian Leibach

best interest of the animals that they are signed over quickly and willingly.

With our expert and well-trained staff by their side, we are hopeful that more law enforcement officers will be willing to tackle animal cruelty cases.

Happy Tails

Send to: happytails@mohawkhumane.org



Zero

He loves my children, car rides and walks, and is the most laid back and cuddly dog a family could ask for.
- Elyse P.



Mollie

Mollie is the sweetest baby ever. She's always trying to cuddle and she plays fetch.
- Brooke and Joe



Ivy

She's always up for an adventure, but at the end of the day she's the biggest cuddle bug.
- Danielle B.



Kitsi

With lots of love, she has come out of her shell and taken her place as queen of the home.
- Sean T.



Fiona

We are incredibly grateful to have her and for the great work of MHHS!
- Kathleen, Sarah and Elizabeth M.



Rex and Milo

If it were not for you guys, we would have never met our best friends.
- Andrea and Alex B.



Mr. Pickles

He has gone from a quiet, shy kitty to a rambunctious, playful, snuggly boy.
- Grace P.



Kevin

Kevin is a clown and loves swimming and kayaking.
- Paula P.



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