

Capital Pet



125
years
for ANIMALS



3 Oakland Avenue, Menands NY 12204 • (518) 434-8128

www.mohawkhumane.org
Winter 2012



Orphaned Kittens Thrive on TLC

There was a time when we saw a huge number of kittens come in to the Humane Society for a few months in the summer and

then breeding would slow down for the remainder of the year. Those days seem to be gone.

At the beginning of December, three newborn kittens were brought to us. Someone had just found them but could not find the mother, who must have just recently given birth.

Life is difficult for newborn kittens. They are fragile and need the almost constant feeding, cleaning and warmth that their mother normally provides. Without a mother, these defenseless creatures may live only hours.

These three kittens were lucky. They had been brought to the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, where our foster families cared for more than 1,100 orphaned animals last year. While we have many foster homes willing to take in kittens until they are old enough to be adopted, we seldom have enough for all of the animals in need. And newborn kittens are a special situation: they need feeding around the clock and can quickly take a turn for the worse if not carefully monitored.

Veterinary Technician Jean Kaur volunteered to take the newborns home. She was committed to get them through the most critical stage of development until they were big enough and healthy enough to eat on their own. Once they had grown a bit, the kittens moved on to one of our other volunteer foster homes until they were ready to be adopted.

Thanks to our caring staff and volunteers, three orphaned kittens beat the odds and have new lives with loving families of their own.



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Save the Date...

PUCKS & PAWS BENEFIT WITH THE ALBANY DEVILS
Saturday, March, 31, 2012

AROUND THE WORLD FOR 80 STRAYS 125TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
Saturday, April, 21, 2012
Hilton Garden Inn, Troy

3RD ANNUAL PAWS IN THE PARK WALK AND COMMUNITY DAY
Saturday, June, 9, 2012
Siena College, Loudonville

Going Green?

If you would prefer to receive our quarterly newsletters via email, please send an email request to newsletter@mohawkhumane.org.

Hours:

Monday-Friday 10am-6pm

Saturday 10am-5pm

Sunday 1-4pm

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Executive Director Brad Shear and Bastian, his cat

From the Director

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. I'm pretty sure I'm not the first person to say that, but it does describe 2011 for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society. Like it was for many of you, 2011 was a year of uncertainty, struggle and change at MHHS. But out of those challenges, our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters came together to do more for animals than ever before.

The financial crisis has affected everyone. At the Society, we depend primarily on donations from private individuals to keep our doors open. As I have told many people, the state hasn't cut any of our funding...because they never gave us any funding. It has always been about regular people giving whatever they can. When times are tough and the economy uncertain, people are more cautious about giving, but many of you made sure the animals would still be cared for.

While finances were tight, we were also experiencing a huge increase in the number of animals coming in. We took in 15 percent more animals in 2011 than we did the year before. Those animals included multiple hoarding and cruelty cases, but most were just people who couldn't afford their pets or were downsizing their homes and didn't have space for as many animals. The Humane Society was here for all of them.

Then Irene hit and our already crowded shelter was called upon to find room for even more animals in need. The storm devastated neighboring communities. In addition to Society staff going to Schoharie County to help with animal rescue, people were coming to us from throughout the affected region to hold or find new homes for their pets.

There were a lot of serious challenges that came to us all at once, and every day we struggled to find space for animals, treat the sick, recruit and train foster parents and other volunteers, and care for every animal like they were our own. Through all of these challenges, the Society achieved a new level of lifesaving: 80 percent of the animals leaving the Humane Society went safely to homes. How did we achieve this benchmark when the national average hovers around 55 percent?

All year we pulled out all the stops to find any venue or promotion to find more homes for animals. Our volunteers stepped up by finding new space in their hearts and homes for animals in need. Our medical staff found new and better treatments to keep animals healthy and to return sick animals to health faster. Although our intake of animals was up, our adoptions rose by more than 20 percent.

Another key to our success is partnerships with other groups in the community who find homes for animals. The number of animals transferred from the Society to other groups doubled in 2011. Groups like AnimaLovers, Rottie Empire Rescue, Whiskers, The Rabbit Resource, Noah's Kingdom, CAPP, Peppertree Rescue, Animal Support Project, and many more than I have space to list took animals from us to find them homes.

While we made huge strides in 2011, by no means is our job done. We are now celebrating our 125th year and everyone at the Humane Society is committed to continuing to push the envelope, to save more animals' lives, and to make our 125th year the best yet for animals. We can only do it with your help and support. Thank you.



The Society is grateful for the steadfast support of many thousands of donors each year, all of whom allow MHHS to maintain its position as the Capital Region's leader in animal sheltering and adoption, humane education, advocacy and collaborative programming. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the community as we celebrate our 125th anniversary. With your help, we will continue to fulfill our mission of improving the lives of homeless and abused animals through sheltering, adoption, education and advocacy, and the prevention of animal cruelty. Our Board of Directors, staff and volunteers – and the animals we care for – thank you for your past and continued support.

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Chris Danker, CPDT, has over four decades of showing and handling her own dogs as well as dogs for clients. Participating in many venues, Chris has handled dogs to multiple National and Regional Specialty wins, and over 70 titles in obedience, agility and conformation. She is active in pet therapy with her own dogs. Chris is a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) and Therapy Dog International (TDI) evaluator.

Chris is now teaching classes and workshops at the Humane Society. Check our website www.mohawkhumane.org for the latest dates and times.

Pet Therapy

Therapy dogs provide comfort and companionship to residents of hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities. They can increase the confidence of a child who reads to them and help teach responsible pet ownership. Dogs are not critical of us; they accept us just as we are.

A dog walking into a medical facility brings smiles to the residents. The enhanced social interaction helps mental stimulation. Clinical studies show talking to and touching a dog lowers blood pressure, decreases stress and helps relieve depression.

Do you and your dog have what it takes to be a part of a therapy team? When being evaluated for certification, you are both being observed.

Therapy Dog International evaluators must follow the organization's guidelines. Dogs are required to walk on a loose lead and to maneuver around medical equipment such as a wheelchair, a walker, someone with a cane or an unsteady gait. Evaluators may wear hats or sunglasses and will lift paws, look inside ears and hold the dog's tail. The purpose is to recreate real-life situations. In addition, your dog will be required to sit, go down on cue and remain in position while you walk 20 feet away. Will she come directly to you when called from 10 feet away? Is the dog comfortable being left with a stranger while you are out of sight for three minutes?

During educational programs, children are taught to ask permission to pet a dog and to always approach from the front. In real life, this doesn't always happen. Recently I was with a patient in the waiting room at a local hospital when a young child came running and put her face directly into my dog's face and kissed her on the cheek as she put her arms around her! Lab Lucy remained comfortable and reciprocated by licking the little girl's face. At the same time, a visitor patted Lucy on the back from behind. Therapy dogs must have stable temperaments and not bolt or startle, but rather exhibit self-control and greet politely by sitting quietly.

Your dog must also be able to walk at your side and meet a handler walking toward you with a dog. While their owners shake hands and chat, the dogs must remain at their owner's side, showing only a casual interest in each other.

The most challenging section of the test is the "leave it" exercise. This is where many dogs fail. A recent rule change now requires dogs to walk over a piece of food on the ground. "Leave it" is useful when your dog sees something icky on the road while out for a walk or if something falls from the kitchen counter. For a therapy dog, it is essential to "leave it" upon cue.

Everyone smiles when watching a therapy dog interact with patients or seeing a child's reading skills improve as a dog patiently listens. For more details on Therapy Dogs International, please visit www.tdi-dog.org or call 973-252-9800.

Mohawk Hudson Humane Society will be hosting another Therapy Dog test on June 9, 2012, in conjunction with the third annual Paws in the Park walk and community day. Please check the shelter's website in the coming months to find out more details or contact me at hemlock@nycap.rr.com for more information.



In Memory Of...

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thank you!

PLEASE NOTE

Due to space constraints, only tribute gifts of \$25 or higher are listed in our print newsletters. Tribute gifts of all amounts are listed on our web site, www.mohawkhumane.org.



Abigail Rescues

Her Firefighter Owner

Jeff Riker adopted Abigail from the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society in 2009, and they've been together ever since. Jeff has worked with the fire department for seven years and knows the importance of fire safety. In early October 2011, he made sure the fire in his fireplace was out before retiring for the night.

At 1:30 a.m., Abigail woke Jeff. He immediately smelled smoke and discovered light smoke on the first floor. He called the fire department and placed Abigail in his truck before walking around the outside of the house. As he reached the side, he was shocked to see flames had breached the exterior wall around the fireplace/chimney and were licking up that side of the house toward the second floor where the bedrooms are located.

Jeff always has at least two fire extinguishers in the house. Just as he was emptying the second one, the fire department pulled up and was able to keep the fire contained to one room.

According to Jeff, "There is no doubt in my mind that if Abi had not awakened me, by the time the interior smoke detectors would have gone off, there would have been much heavier fire load and damage. Another two minutes and the house would have been totally involved. She's such a good girl, and she may just have saved my life!"

A Bunny Tail

By Dr. Sarah Madaio

Recently a distraught woman came to us because she needed to find a new home for her rabbit. Coco the bunny had been a gift for her daughter, now grown and living away from home. Coco had been sick for three months with a respiratory infection and had been to a veterinarian for treatment. Sadly, Coco's owner became seriously ill and could not provide the care the veterinarian had prescribed.

When Coco arrived, her eyes were barely open because they had become crusted from discharge. The MHHS admitting staff immediately brought Coco to the attention of the veterinary staff as they were seriously concerned about her health. Her chest rattled under the stethoscope and her heavy breathing could be heard from across the room. Coco also hadn't been eating and had become dangerously underweight.

I immediately called Dr. Joy Lucas of Upstate Animal Medical Center, who frequently helps us with our rabbit problems and offers MHHS a discount on procedures that can't be performed at the shelter, such as rabbit dentistry. A chronic respiratory disease in a rabbit is a significant issue, but combined with Coco's gastrointestinal distress, her condition could have been fatal.

As sick as she was, Coco sought out affection by cuddling in my lap and brushing her head on my hand to make me pet her.

We started intensive therapy and every day was "touch and go." Coco continued to improve, but still wasn't eating well on her own. Our staff and one of our rabbit volunteers, Jude Raphael, had to force-feed Coco a critical care diet four to six times a day to prevent her intestines from shutting down completely.

After about a week of intensive care, Coco started eating on her own. While this was a turning point, she still had some medical issues that needed attention. Coco was admitted to Upstate Animal Medical Center for a dental issue that was also impacting her health.

We're pleased to report that Coco is now fully healed and looking for a new home.

Rabbits are a frequently misunderstood pet. They should be kept as indoor pets and are easily litterbox-trained. They can live up to 12 years, so serious thought should be put into adopting a rabbit as a child's pet. Like other animals, rabbits need time to interact and play; a budget for food that includes not only pellets but hay, fresh fruits and vegetables; and a budget for veterinary care.

