



Open arms, and hearts, for all



Some animals require more time and care before being available for adoption. For example, Paisley had a slew of medical concerns and was with us for 144 days before going home in November.

By Riann Hadley

Director of Animal Services

Some animals seem to fly in and out of our Adoption Center. We consider them fast-tracked, which means they are prioritized for movement through the adoption process because they will be in their new home in no time. These animals are typically those that only require the basics when coming in: a physical exam, vaccines, microchip, and possibly spay/neuter. They seem to be snatched up by adopters in the blink of an eye.

But what about those animals that cannot be fast-tracked?

The slow-tracked animals can be with us for quite some time — sometimes even years if they are part of protective custody cases — so they require an abundance of staff time to keep them comfortable during their stay. Slow-tracked animals might require extensive medical evaluations, or they could be healthy and ready to go, but haven't caught the attention of their forever family quite yet.

These animals usually require a deeper commit-

ment by an adopter, so finding them the perfect match just takes more time.

Do not let the term “slow-tracked” fool you into thinking these animals are waiting longer until we get to them. Slow-tracked animals generally have an underlying condition or behavior that requires extensive attention before we can clear them for adoption.

These animals get the same level of care — and in most cases, much more care — than fast-tracked animals. Once a medical or behavioral issue is established, we prepare for a long-term plan which includes scheduled vet checks, lots of daily enrichment, out-of-kennel time and usually foster care.

Keeping these animals engaged during this longer time of kenneling is so important to their mental health. Staff and volunteers always go the extra miles for these animals to ensure their time with us is the best it can be.

Due to COVID-19, the procedures in the Adoption Center have changed significantly.

Back in March, the agency made the decision to

See **OPEN ARMS AND HEARTS**, Page 11

The struggle ends where gratitude begins

By Courtney Vavra

Annual Fund & Digital Marketing Manager

I was going to write about COVID-19 and our construction project and what a crazy year it has been. But when I sat down to reflect, I realized that at the very heart of our work, 2020 was no different than all the other years this agency has been helping vulnerable animals in our community.

Don't get me wrong, 2020 was a tough year. Like everyone else, we needed to adapt quickly to a situation that seemed to be changing daily. To keep our essential staff safe, we closed to

See **GRATITUDE**, Page 10



2020 really was no different than other years in terms of helping animals that needed us. We were able to continue doing so thanks to your support.

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Editor: Sheila Ryan | **Graphic Designer:** Melissa Mower

Dear Friends and Supporters,

A year like no other is an understatement in terms of outside forces impacting our work. Yet the New Hampshire SPCA has a very long history, and it has survived world wars and other harrowing times. What is consistent, is the love and compassion we, and our community exhibit toward the animals.

Fred Rogers tells the story of his mother in challenging times reminding him to look for the helpers and I have only to look around me to see so many who have risen in these times of crises to help...

The day of the pandemic's shutdown, we continued to care for animals in need. The next week our investigator and animal care staff left the campus to rescue young very scared dogs from inhumane conditions. Each and every day, because of your support, we have continued to care for those without someone to love and care for them.

As the months continued, so did we. Though the campus remains partially closed, so many of our programs and services continued. We do it a bit differently, but we are here...

Just this week, four horses arrived in need of a new future. Dogs arrived as well from difficult circumstances to be healed and to find new loving homes. Cats with transmissible diseases found solace in our care with treatments that will relieve them of their symptoms and heal them so they too will have new homes in the future.

As the new year progresses, we look towards the future enthusiastically ready to plan for all that was envisioned when we began [the Campaign for Changing Times](#). Construction has progressed and we eagerly await the time when we will transition into some of our new spaces and long to engage you in the process.

During the design phase, the word that was at the center of our planning was "flexible". We needed flexible spaces for the myriad of species we would be asked to care for at any time, both ours and the community's. We wanted



flexible rooms to accommodate programs we only dream of. We envisioned a flexible campus where we could welcome the community with their animals for classes, adoptions, learning and medical wellness care.

As we shift and continually redesign, I keep looking for the silver lining — and there are many. Perhaps, the one that I am most grateful for is how we have learned to connect with you without you stepping foot on our campus. Being flexible and open to doing our work a bit differently has allowed us to reach more people and therefore help more animals than our geography would have allowed. That you have remained committed to helping us further our work and been flexible along with us — participating virtually in ways we could never have imagined, has been deeply encouraging. For this, I am truly grateful.

Thank you for your ongoing support and know that we very much look forward to the time when we can welcome you here once again.

On behalf of the animals,

Lisa Dennison
Executive Director

New Hampshire Society For the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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Rescue work continues in a pandemic

By Kelly Marinel
Manager of Animal Care

The whole world has been affected by the pandemic, and the New Hampshire SPCA has not been excluded. From closing our doors to the public and volunteers to switching adoptions and surrenders to a virtual model to temporarily stopping all community programs including training classes, spay & neuter clinics, kids' programs, and events... we had to completely rearrange the way we operate.

One thing that has not changed has been the need and our ability to help animals. We routinely receive calls for the surrender of many animals at once, or requests to assist local law enforcement with animals that need care and a safe place to go.

2020 was no different.

We had barely received the shelter-in-place order when we got our first call to take in five dogs. They were surrendered to us, which is always helpful, but we were just starting to figure out what virtual adoptions were going to be like.

These dogs were nervous and needed help learning how to trust people and build their confidence. A couple of the dogs went into foster care with staff members, and we spent lots of time getting to know the others. Our virtual adoption program started off as a success when each of these sweet pups found loving homes to call their own.

A few months later, we got another call: 20 small dogs would be coming into our care. With proper protocols in place to keep our staff safe, we assisted with removing and transporting the animals to our facility. We banded together even though our animal care staff had been split into two separate teams to limit interaction. We communicated with each other and did what we always do: gave the animals the best care we could.

We made playgroups — there were the “golden girls” and the “glamour girls.” Luckily, the weather was nice for these dainty dogs, and we spent lots of time and lunch breaks hanging out in the outdoor pens getting to know these shy little pups.

Adopters were able to finalize adoptions virtually — information, photos and videos were sent to them via e-mail. Then they came to the Adoption Center to meet their new friend, outside and socially distanced from staff. We could relay important information, were there to answer questions, and they could then decide if the dog was the right match for them.

The next call would prove to be our most challenging. At the end of October, we were called to



assist a police department with 18 medium-sized dogs that needed to be surrendered.

These dogs had never been on leash before, so they were understandably nervous. Again, with proper protocols in place, the dogs were safely brought back to the NHSPCA to settle in with a nice meal and comfy bedding.

Very quickly, we realized we would not be able to accommodate this many challenging dogs. Along with staffing restrictions, our building was also being renovated; we simply did not have as many kennels available as we normally would.

We reached out to other agencies and immediately got responses for help. Thanks to Monadnock Humane Society, Animal Rescue League of NH, Conway Area Humane Society, Pope Memorial SPCAs of Concord and Cocheco Valley, we

Bonnie and Sam (above) and Mason (left) were just three of the dogs our team was able to rescue during the pandemic. All three of them have luckily found their forever homes since arriving at the NHSPCA in rough shape.

were able to keep a more manageable number and focus on the long socialization process for four of these dogs.

Our staff was very invested in these dogs. We would quietly sit in the kennel area with them and slowly earned their trust. Once we had their trust, boy did they blossom into sweet, affectionate dogs! It was clear that they felt more comfortable in pairs.

Bonnie and Sam were bonded and were much more comfortable sharing a kennel. They were often found snuggling with their heads and paws wrapped tight around each other.

We knew finding a home willing to adopt two fearful dogs would be challenging. Our community's love for the underdog never ceases to amaze us, though! Not only did we find a home willing to give both dogs the love they deserve, but one that was thrilled to do so.

Over time, we learned that Crinkle and Rudy were also happier together. Again, we turned to our community with a big ask, searching for a home that had enough room and love for both of them. When it comes to finding perfect matches, it's always worth the wait.

One of the brightest days of this past year was the day both pairs were no longer waiting and were finally valued family members.



The NHSPCA established Emergency Programs for Horse Owners to help those affected by COVID-19.

Working to keep horses with their families

By Michelle Murch

Equine & Farm Program Manager

We understand that the effects of the pandemic, as well as, the 2020 drought, a cold winter, and rising hay prices have challenged many typically capable horse owners. At the NHSPCA, it is of the utmost importance to us that we assist those in need when unexpected circumstances threaten our community's animals.

If you would like to help by supporting this program, financial contributions are welcome. We also accept donations of first cut hay. Contact mmurch@nhspca.org for more information.

Since the start of the pandemic, we were certain there would be families that would struggle to bridge the gap from unexpected quarantines, lay-offs or other financial challenges. Horse care is expensive, even in better times, and we want to be sure we are prepared to be a resource for our community when the calls came.

The NHSPCA has several programs to assist farm animal owners. In each program, there is an qualification application to receive assistance.

Hay Bank: The NHSPCA will provide up to 10 bales of first cut hay (at a time) to those in critical need.

Grain Voucher Program: In partnership with our local feed distributor, the NHSPCA offers vouchers for up to \$75.00 worth of grain. The voucher can be used for specific grain and feed

to maintain the health of their horses.

Emergency & Routine Veterinary Care: The NHSPCA has partnered with the ASPCA to offer medical care — whether routine or emergency for horses. The program can provide up to \$600.00 worth of veterinarian services per visit through Veterinarian Dr. Rachel Roemer of Great Bay Equine. Services can include but are not limited to routine medical care, dental work, vaccines, emergency care or euthanasia and removal services.

New England Equine Relief Network: In addition to our own equine programs and to proactively respond to the COVID-19 crisis, we have partnered with our friends at MSPCA Nevin's Farm, the Rhode Island SPCA, and the Maine State Society for the Protection of Animals in forming the New England Equine Relief Network.

Together, we have formed a broader, stronger safety net for farm animals across New England, in the hope of keeping horses and farm animals with their people, who may be experiencing a temporary period of financial insecurity or family crisis.

If you have questions regarding any of our Emergency Assistance Programs or are in need of assistance, please contact our Equine and Farm Program at mmurch@nhspca.org or visit us online by clicking [here](#).

Responding to surge in pet ownership

By Kate Young

Community Programs Coordinator

As a result of the pandemic, in the spring of 2020, the New Hampshire SPCA had to cancel all upcoming [Spay and Neuter Clinics](#) for cats. New appointment days and bookings remained on hiatus while we determined the best way to move forward given this new landscape, lack of PPE and changes in staffing structure.

Meanwhile, many people who began working and learning from home full time, sought out new pets for their household. This surge of pet ownership during a time when incomes were being reduced or even eliminated, resulted in unprecedented demand for low-cost services, with more than 1,000 calls received to the spay/neuter line since April.

After much consideration, planning and effort to mitigate risk to staff and clients, we were able to resume operation of the Low Cost Spay and Neuter clinic for cats in July. Since that time and despite more limited staff and resources than we have ever had in the past, we have operated a weekly clinic and have been able to alter more than 140 publicly owned cats in 2020. Many of these surgeries were offered at further reduced rates to help those with financial hardship.

We implemented curbside and limited contact drop off and pick up and utilized secure online formats for collecting paperwork, payment and surgical consent. Cat carriers were methodically disinfected and administrative and medical staff took care to protect themselves while still providing this essential service to grateful owners who had this to say:

"It was great. Everyone very professional. Literature easy to read and understand. Thanks for being there."

"The kittens' care was excellent. I really appreciated the special care of including a blanket and carriers to send them home. The recovery was smooth, and both kittens are thriving. Thank you so much for your kind assistance!"

"Super helpful. Superb service."

We are thrilled that we were able to adapt to the circumstances and excited that we will soon be able to operate out of a new space in 2021! Stay tuned!

Spotlight on our Food Share Program

By **Dianna Currier**

Manager of Adoption Programs

The Food Share Program is a community outreach service created by the New Hampshire SPCA that supports over 30 towns. It was created to lessen the financial burden of families in need, which has understandably become more of a necessity throughout the pandemic.

Greater Good Charities generously donated pallets of cat and dog food to allow us to accommodate this growing need. Our staff works with local food pantry volunteers to distribute food to those who need a little help feeding their pets.

Newmarket Food Pantry volunteer John Lavoie is one of our partners who makes this distribution possible.

“I got involved with the Newmarket Food Pantry two years ago by agreeing to pick up donated food given to the pantry by different grocery stores and local businesses,” John said. “Once I started delivering the food, I realized how many people needed a helping hand because of food insecurity.”



John Lavoie, a volunteer at the Newmarket Food Pantry, has helped distribute pet food to families in need through our Food Share Program, which supports over 30 towns.

We teamed up with John because he saw that his clients also needed pet food.

“There are generous, caring people who work at the NHSPCA and our clients with pets are very grateful for the pet food donations,” he said.

You can find John working hard at the food pantry, helping clients and community members feed their families — now including, of course, their beloved pets. We are so honored to be able to assist John and the Newmarket Food Pantry

Need help?

If you or someone you know may need food assistance, please contact your local food bank or call us at (603) 773-5747.

with pet food donations.

We know this is helping to keep pets and families together during these trying times.

“The single most gratifying feeling I have while working at the Newmarket Food Pantry has been the heartfelt thanks and appreciation that many of the clients express as they pick up their food,” John said. “It’s a wonderful feeling helping people in need feed themselves and their pets.”

The NHSPCA is pleased to hear that the Food Share Program is really making a difference to so many in Newmarket during this challenging time — and it’s just one of the 30+ towns we have had the honor of supporting.

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Notes From The Barn

Grabbing the reins: NHSPCA welcomes new farm manager

By Riann Hadley
Director of Animal Services

We are pleased to announce the recent hiring of Michelle Murch to the position of Equine and Farm Program Manager. Michelle earned her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Westfield State College in 1995 and comes to us with over 24 years of experience in law enforcement (14 years being with the Dover Mounted Unit).

During her time with the Mounted Unit, Michelle was both an officer and Mounted Unit Coordinator. Most recently, Michelle was the Executive Director of a local non-profit, the Triangle Club. Her years of equine experience coupled with her background in non-profit leadership make her a perfect fit for her new role as Equine and Farm Program Manager.



We recently welcomed Michelle Murch as our new Equine and Farm Program Manager.

With the upcoming expansion of the farm program, including the introduction of a riding arena, Michelle's experience is a welcome addition to the NHSPCA team!

HAPPY TAILS



Gunther

We adopted Gunther from the NHSPCA in March 2013 at 3 years old. He's been my sidekick ever since. His paperwork described him as a "big, goofy lug" ... and it's the BEST description of him! He's slowing down now at almost 11 years old... my sweet old man.

— Mary

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Training leads to incredible transformation

By Salomé Barrot

Enrichment Coordinator/Vet Tech Assistant

In October 2020, a 12-year-old cat named Rebecca was surrendered to the New Hampshire SPCA due to her owners' desire to travel.

As soon as she entered our care, Rebecca became extremely fractious — lunging at the front of her enclosure/vocalizing (growling, screaming, hissing) and trying to bite. She lashed out at any human who tried to get near her. In her previous home, Rebecca was very comfortable with her owners but always struggled meeting strangers.

More online!

Click here to visit our Instagram for a feature on Rebecca's transformation.

After a few days in our care, Rebecca had not made any progress. Rebecca's aggressive behaviors reflected all the fear and sadness that came with her abandonment. Rebecca was an emotional wreck.

With help, we believed Rebecca would eventually open up. A managed care plan was created and included multiple components.

Medical

It was important to rule out any health issues. Many medical causes can increase irritability. The New Hampshire SPCA Animal Care and Medical Teams were unable to handle Rebecca without sedation.

Blood work, urinary analysis, and physical



Rebecca's fear and sadness of being surrendered manifested as aggression. It took over a month of training in her foster home for her to blossom into the sweet cat we knew she was.

exam were performed and were within normal limits. However, Rebecca did require treatment for severely ingrown, infected nails while she was sedated.

Rebecca was started on an anti-anxiety medication and a prescription diet for stress reduction.

Behavioral

Rebecca was then transferred to a foster home where her behavior modification plan was put in place. This included Desensitization/Counterconditioning techniques.

Desensitization refers to exposing Rebecca to scary stimulus (me, a stranger) gradually in ways that would not cause her to display the unwanted behavior: being aggressive.

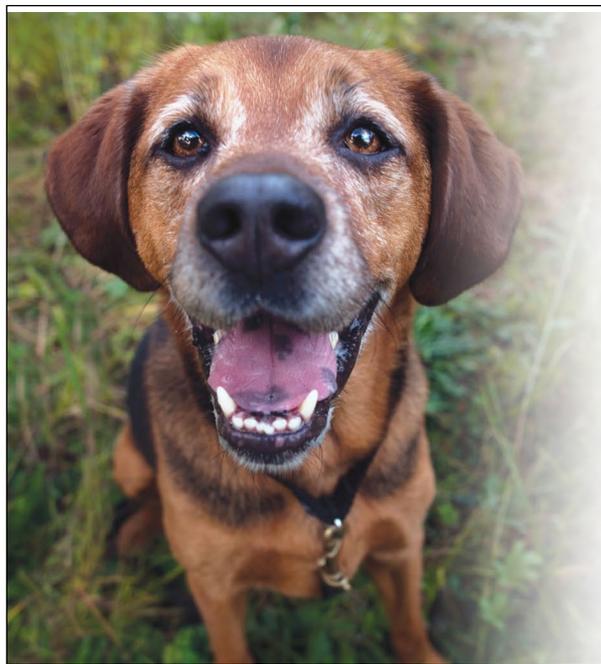
Counterconditioning means providing something good — we were very lucky that Rebecca LOVED Temptations treats — to help her associate me (the scary stimulus) with a positive experience.

Rebecca was housed in a spare bedroom with multiple sources of environmental enrichment: elevated perches such as shelf space and small boxes to hide, make cats feel more secure.

Desensitization/Counterconditioning takes time, and the process must be gradual for it to be successful. Rebecca's training sessions occurred twice daily with three gradual steps: accepting my presence a few feet away from her first (lasted about two weeks), then letting me touch her with a wand, and finally accepting pats from my bare hand.

The whole training process took over a month for Rebecca before she began to flourish. Rebecca was a very sweet cat inside and loved having conversations while lounging on the couch, bird-watching or sunbathing: she was finally ready for adoption.

Rebecca did require a very patient, calm and loving home that would respect her need to settle in and we feel very grateful that her adopter, Sally, was willing to open her heart to Rebecca in mid-January.



Commemorative Gifts

We are so grateful for every gift received in support of the animals. Commemorative Gifts are especially touching. Gifts to remember or honor a beloved family member, friend or pet or in celebration of a special life event, a birthday, wedding or promotion, are all very special to us. We are honored to be a part of your lives in this way.

All Commemorative Gifts are posted quarterly on our website and are honored there for a year or more.

Thank you for all you do for the animals.

[View Commemoratives](#)



1872 Society

The 1872 Society was developed as a way of recognizing and thanking our incredibly generous donors who are so important to the animals and our mission. The category names were chosen to further demonstrate that each plays a significant role. We sincerely appreciate each one of you for your commitment to our work.



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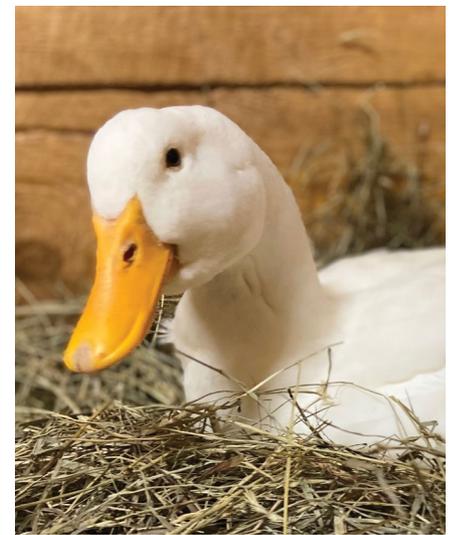
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Although the 1872 Society recognizes our top donors, we would also like to express our gratitude to each and every person who contributes. Each gift has a positive impact and helps care for the animals. Thank you.



GRATITUDE...

Continued from Page 1

public visitors, suspended our volunteer program, and shifted to a virtual adoption method. Many of our programs remained shut down due to safety precautions.

But even as we shifted and sometimes turned in circles — one thing anchored us. We never stopped taking in animals that needed help, not for a single day.

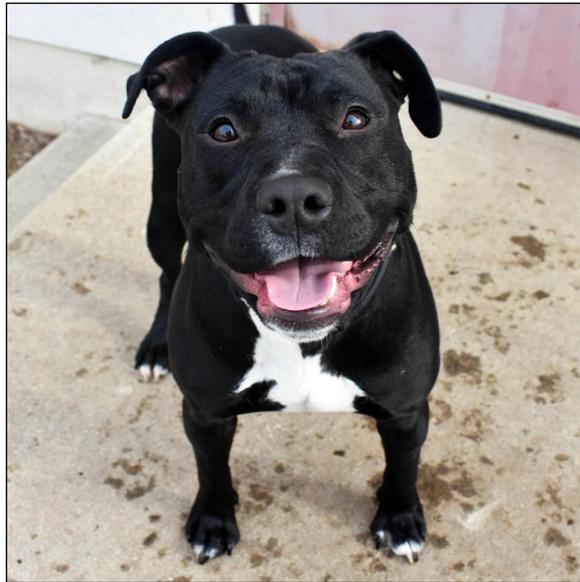
When you work with animals, change is constant. Animals come in and out of our care daily. Every circumstance is different, every animal unique. You must learn to adjust, or else you can quickly become overwhelmed.

I've worked at the NHSPCA for many years and through many challenging situations. Like all my coworkers, I came to work at the New Hampshire SPCA because I love animals and want to help as many as I can. But in my time here, I've been witness to the things that make this work so difficult and draining.

I've seen unspeakable cruelty, animals who have suffered at the hands of humans.

I've held cats and dogs in my arms that are critically ill or injured.

I've comforted animals while they took their



Our passionate community's support allowed us to continue rescuing animals like Zonee, who finally found the loving home she deserved in April 2020.

last breath.

I've felt deep despair as our legal system failed to protect animals over and over again.

I've watched owners hand us a leash and not look back.

And I've seen heart-wrenching surrenders where

pets are hugged goodbye so thoroughly their fur is soaked by human tears.

And now, I've worked through a global pandemic and watched my coworkers come to work on the front lines each day and put themselves at risk so that animals have a place to turn when needed.

Animal rescue is emotional work. There are many days that are difficult to bear, and weeks that are harder than others — and years that seem so challenging, we do not know how we've managed to accomplish all we do for the animals that need us.

But ultimately, it's the hard stuff that matters the most. Instead of turning away, we lean right into it. The struggle is real, but so is the gratitude. For every desperate animal that turns to us, I am profoundly grateful that they have a safe place to go. They will receive the love and care all animals deserve and a fresh start.

I practice yoga, and one thing I've learned is that to remain flexible, you must have a strong foundation. At the core of this agency is the generosity of our donors. Your support allows us to stay flexible and adapt to the immense challenges that happen every day in this work. We are only able to lean into the hard days, months, or years — because of your dedication and your kindness.

I speak for every staff member here when I say thank you. Your support means everything.



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Thanks to all the staff and volunteers who have worked so hard this year, under trying conditions, to help animals in need.



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OPEN ARMS AND HEARTS...

Continued from Page 1

close to the public and resume adoptions/surrenders in a virtual manner. This meant moving our documents online, doing adoption counseling via email and phone, and even collecting payments over the phone as well.

The adoption staff pivoted quickly to be able to continue to service the community's animals without the use of our normal die-hard volunteers that are as valuable as staff, but there were concerns. Could we still provide the same level of care with fewer hands to help? Could we provide the same level of service virtually when we have always prided ourselves on our connections with adopters? How was this model going to affect these harder-to-place animals that used to rely on adopters coming in, seeing them, and falling in love? We were determined to make the model work for all the animals in care, whether they were destined to fly out our doors quickly or if they needed to spend more time with us.



Foxy was in our care for 922 days and found her perfect family in July 2020.

Foxy the German Shepherd

Foxy was a dog that staff knew would be difficult to place in this new virtual model. She was part of the protective custody case that landed her in our care for one year and ten months while her case was heard in court and before we could even begin to find her a home. In the end, she and 27 other German Shepherds were surrendered to us, making way for each of them to find a loving home.

Foxy was personable with people she knew but being kenneled for so long had taken a toll on her ability to quickly connect with new people. She had staff and volunteers at the NHSPCA who she adored but didn't feel the need to connect with anyone new right away. Ultimately, a fast connection is what most adopters are looking for.

Some things that she enjoyed, like playing with a tennis ball, became almost an obsession to her. When she met new people, she would initially just see them as a means of throwing her ball... over and over. Her preference was also to be the only pet in the household, which added additional challenges for finding a new home.

People that knew her well, knew that she was affectionate, personable and could be a real goofball, but we needed to find one family to see that side of her, too. Eight months after becoming available for adoption, which was 2½ years in our care, Foxy finally found her dream home. Her adopters visited her a few times and were able to envision all the wonderful qualities that we saw in her every day. They took a leap of faith and decided to adopt her. We are happy to report that her new family checks in regularly and all is going really well.



Paisley had 19 vet exams over his 144 day stay with us. He was adopted in November 2020.

Paisley the Stray Cat

Paisley's story is the perfect example of the time and love that goes into getting a hard-to-place animal adopted. Paisley came to us as a stray back in June. We could immediately tell he was a senior cat, but what was most concerning was his difficulty walking, his dilated pupils and slight head tilt.

Even with his struggle to coordinate his movements, it was evident that Paisley was an absolute love. After his vet exam, he was prescribed medication for hyperthyroid disease, hypertension, a urinary tract infection, a heart murmur and kidney disease. Over the next four months, Paisley was closely monitored by our medical team and medications were adjusted as needed to keep him comfortable.

There were some setbacks along the way, such as a retinal hemorrhage, which we were able to resolve. Despite the repeated vet exams and stream of daily medications, Paisley was loving life in the Adoption Center. He was moved into an office and was able to roam freely and had a constant string of admirers that would visit him regularly. He had a lap to sleep on daily and all the love he could ask for.

Finally, after four long months in medical holding, he was finally ready for a new home. Despite his age and medical issues, Paisley was adopted quickly to the most perfect home. It touched all the staff's hearts that someone was able to see past his challenges and open their home to him to give him the retirement home he deserved.

Paisley, Theodore and Foxy are just three of the animals we have cared for this year. However, just for these three animals, we prescribed 14 long-term daily medications, had a whopping 42 vet exams, and cared for them for a total of 1,131 days until we were able to clear them for adoption.

In a perfect world, all our animals would be fast-track candidates but since that can't be the case, we will continue to accept the ones that need that little extra care with open arms.



Theodore was with us for 65 days while we treated him for dermatitis. He was cleared for adoption and went home in October 2020.

Theodore the Guinea Pig

Our care extends to more than just cats and dogs. Theodore was a two-year-old guinea pig who was surrendered with his best friend, Rebel. Theodore came in with significant case of dermatitis.

Because the hair loss was from an unknown cause, a battery of vet exams and tests ensued to get him back on the road to health.

After a two-month hold in vet care, numerous exams, multiple oral medications, supplements, medicated baths, topical treatments and finally a medical waiver for his heart murmur, Theodore was finally ready for adoption.

Looking Back: 20 Years at the NHSPCA

By Paula Parisi

Manager of Humane Education Programs

My association with the New Hampshire SPCA started way before my employment began in 2000. From adopting many family pets over the years and fostering countless needy animals to volunteering, taking training classes and always supporting the agency, it seems the NHSPCA has been a big part of my life since I moved here in 1977.

But, the real adventures didn't start until I became the Humane Education Coordinator in September 2000!

I had been happily teaching at a local public school and was planning to return there in the fall of 2000 when I heard that the Humane Education position at the NHSPCA would be opening soon. I already knew Diane O'Callahan, who had been in said position and she was excited to hand the reins over to me. I was hired to grow the programs as the agency itself grew and so I dove right in.

Recently, I prepared a list of my responsibilities to pass on to my successor in preparation for my retirement. I was shocked at how much we had been doing all those years! Since the programs grew slowly but steadily, I had not realized just how much we were offering our community in Humane Education programs and opportunities!

While coming up with this list, I reflected on all the wonderful memories over the years.

When I first began to expand programming, one of the things that worked in my favor were the wonderful new spaces we had to work in! In 2004, instead of the basement of the house out in the back, we had a bright clean new classroom with amazing functionality. When other Humane Educators see our space, they are always envious! So long as the room could hold the number of people expected, there were endless possibilities to explore!

From there, my goal was to develop programs for every age from preschoolers to high school and even college students. From this vision, we offered StoryTime With Animals to the little ones, after-school clubs catered to elementary-age children, and a Junior Volunteer program for middle and high school students, which expanded from 16 volunteers each month in 2000 to over 100 youth volunteers presently.

I am very fortunate that the administration at the NHSPCA has been very supportive over



the years. Their commitment to Humane Education has been apparent as they have always responded favorably to every crazy idea I've ever come up with!

The local community has also been very supportive of our programs, both through participation and donations. I have worked with many amazing teachers and school administrators over the past 20 years who have welcomed the NHSPCA's Humane Education programs with open arms. The example they set for their students that they value the NHSPCA and what we contribute to the community is extraordinary.

My dearest memories are of all the young people I've met in my tenure here and the joy in watching them grow up! It started to come full circle when past Junior Volunteers would eventually bring their own children here for StoryTime... and when some of our StoryTime listeners turned into Junior Volunteers! Several of the children in our various programs have become veterinarians and veterinary technicians. One of our former Junior Volunteers has even gone on to co-found a non-profit animal rescue in Nicaragua!

I expect that all our program participants

have continued to spread kindness and respect for all the living creatures in their lives.

I also have wonderful memories of the amazing Humane Educators I have worked with in the classroom over the years. When we realized that I couldn't do everything by myself, we brought on staff to help facilitate some of the programs we have offered. My profound thanks to Gail, Lisa, Mary B., Courtney, Kristi, Diane, Megan, Danielle, Mary C. and Elizabeth. We have cried together, laughed (a lot!), supported each other and they have always been there to assist me with all the programs to help children and animals connect and learn. It's been an honor and a joy to work with you all!

And possibly my favorite and most valuable co-workers have been the animals — my own personal pets, classroom pets and former foster animals. They have taught so much to so many children! Their tolerance and sweet nature (most of them, anyway!) have been the best way to reach all the kids who have come to our classroom. In exchange, we have tried to give them the very best care while they have been living with us. I have loved each and every one of them.

And then there was Nellie, my precious little

Reading with Animals, 2015 ↘



Camp kittens, 2015 ↘



↙ Junior Volunteers, 2016



Starfish Club, 2016 ↘



↙ Starfish Club, 2017



Learning Skills Class at Cooperative Middle School, Stratham, 2018 ↗



Zoom teaching, 2021 ↘

Chihuahua adopted by my family in 2002. For fifteen years, she came to work with me every day and never failed to brighten up everyone's day. She has been gone for three years now and it makes me sad when I meet someone who doesn't remember her. But I take comfort in the fact that there are still plenty of people out there who do remember her and what a wonderful little dog she was. She was the best little sidekick ever.

Every day at work has been an adventure, new children and families to meet and catching up with old friends who would drop by to say hello. I love that I've been able to make the classroom a warm and welcoming place for kids, their families and classmates to learn, experience and bond with animals. I can't say that I ever didn't want to come to work!

There were the special events that we hosted, too, like a young girl whose Make-A-Wish was to help animals from down south get adopted. We made it happen on her special day. So many birthdays celebrated, so many milestones achieved. All the Eagle Scouts and Girl Scouts Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards that honor the Scouts' commitment to homeless animals in their community.

It's very hard to walk away from my job here as Manager of Humane Education Programs, but I think it's time. I have books to read, crafts to make, flowers to plant and grandchildren to love.

I hope the foundation I've tried to build over these last 20 years continues to grow and expand to be the best it can be.

I'll still be close by to help whenever I can.

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How 2020 became the Year of the Dog

By Linda R. Haley, KPA CTP, CPDT-KA
Manager of Behavior & Training

For some 2020 was the Year of the Rat. But thanks to COVID-19 and all that it brought, many would agree that 2020 became the Year of the Dog, or Cat.

Thanks to stay-at-home orders and social distancing, we had time on our hands and space in our hearts. We invited furry creatures into our homes for comfort, companionship and healing. We had postponed far too long the entry of four-legged friends into our lives. Now was the time.

The NHSPCA Behavior & Training Department had its own challenges in the Year of the Rat. Volunteers and staff were sent home, classes were finished virtually online, puppy play groups and small dog get-togethers were halted and all private lessons were cancelled. With no classes, no private consultations, no puppies and limited intakes, our department was temporarily laid off.

In May, I was called back for a work-from-home position with the task of getting the department up and running and determining our future in the new normal. I had tried my hand at online behavior consultations, but to me, Zoom was a children's television program from the '70's not a platform for communicating with students. With the increased number of new dog parents and an increase in new dog adoptions, I needed to find a way to safely offer classes the traditional way.

With an inherent social distance at the end of a six-foot leash, it was easy to envision the return to in-person classes. With warm June weather on the horizon, outdoor classes were the perfect option. A pre-class video was produced to take the place of the prior 'human only' first class. This video reviewed what to bring to class, suggested training equipment, described our training philosophy, in-



Training classes definitely looked a bit different this year, but we were glad to be able to continue offering these services to our community.

roduced marker training and included homework.

Additional attachments described our sanitation, social distancing and mask wearing policies. Pups' vaccine information was collected via email and entered into a master spreadsheet. This eliminated the need for paper handling and for returning students to repeatedly bring their pup's vaccination record to future classes.

Students were met at their vehicles and were asked the standard COVID screening questions. With masks in place, we moved as a group, appropriately distanced to the outdoor training pen. Students were directed to their numbered station where they had plenty of safe space to work with their dog and socialize from a distance with other students.

In keeping with NH state guidelines, we reduced the number of attendees to one person per dog. This was disappointing for some but was resolved with the creation of training videos which were emailed to students each week to be shared with their household members. The feedback was

encouraging. Many students reported their pups would bark with excitement at the sound of the instructor's voice when they watched the videos with their families.

As we entered summer, the weather got hotter and we moved our initial training area to a shadier spot and adjusted our class times to take advantage of the slightly cooler temperatures both earlier and later in the day. Tents were set up for shade and we even added a small wading pool.

As socialization was desperately needed for the new breed of COVID pups, two outdoor play groups for pups aged 6-months and under were added to our currently running puppy and manners classes.

By the end of July, we added outdoor agility classes and brought back small dog play group. By August, the demand for classes was overwhelming. Dogs, dogs and more dogs! Outdoor private training sessions became a regular occurrence on our already full schedules. Leave no dog behind became our mantra.

In September, we again tightened our COVID protocols to safely bring our classes and students inside. Our popular Reactive Dog class was added to the course offerings and easily filled two sessions. By November, all our contract trainers had returned to teaching and everyone had safely moved indoors.

The year ended in success and we continue to safely offer multiple [classes in 2021](#). Looking back at The Year of the Rat vs The Year of the Dog it is best summed up by paraphrasing a song made popular by the Clash "the rats fought the dogs and the dogs won".

Sorry, rats.

**Disclaimer: We at the NHSPCA are still fond of rats, the furry kind.*



Our community includes our animals, too.

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Planning for your pet's care after you're gone

By Sheila Ryan

Director of Development & Marketing

Have you ever considered what will become of your pet after you're gone? Have you asked others to care for your pet, planned for the costs associated with food, veterinary care and more? Your pet, your best friend, needs you to create a plan that reflects the love you have for them now, even after you can no longer provide that love yourself.

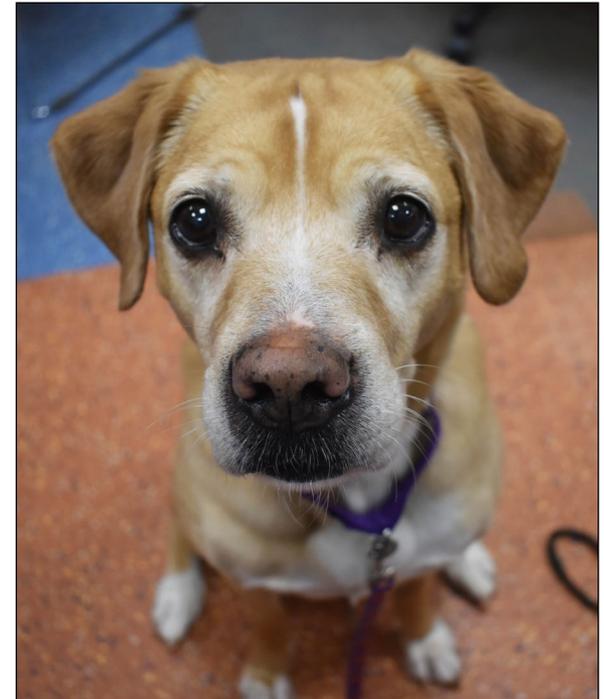
Tragically, we frequently receive calls from grieving family members who, following a recent loss, must also make arrangements for their loved one's pet who is now left behind without a place to go. They are unprepared, and likely unable to take on the responsibilities of adding a pet to their home. Their own housing situation may not allow pets or the pet in need may not get along with the animals currently in their home. There are many reasons why a once cherished pet may end up at our door.

Most pet owners consider their animal as part of the family, but all too often it doesn't occur to them that their pet may outlive them, becoming totally helpless and alone. It is critical to consider your beloved pet when you are making plans for your family, home and how assets will be handled.

For hundreds of years, animal lovers have included their pets in their estate plans, but the question remains, have you?

When considering making a plan for your pet, consider:

- Will you create a simple bequest or a pet trust?
- What pet or pets are included and how are they identified?
- Who will be the caregiver and who is the successor if needed?



Make sure your pet is not left in limbo once you pass by creating a plan that guarantees they are cared for by your standards.

- Is there a standard of care for your pet?
- Who will pay and will there be funds designated from your estate for their care?
- How long will the care last and what happens to the pet when they pass?
- Will your pet be surrendered to the NHSPCA to re-home if possible?

There are many legal options to consider and the life of your pet and the unconditional love and bond that you have with them is invaluable. Don't forget to plan for their future. They are relying on you.

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Sept. 1, 2020 - Jan. 31, 2021

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Methuen, MA

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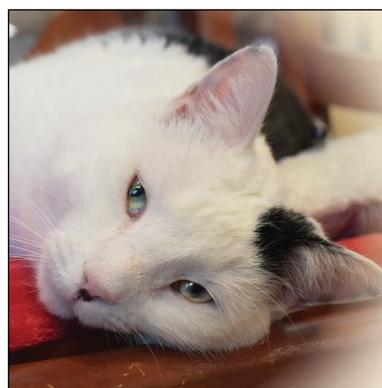
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There's No Place Like Home

By Julie Halama

Special Events & Sponsorship Manager

Animal lovers from near and far followed the Yellow Brick Road to the merry old land of Oz at this year's *Auction for the Animals*. The NHSPCA's annual gala was held virtually and fully embraced the theme, *There's No Place Like Home*, with special appearances from Dorothy, Glinda, and of course, Lisa Dennison, who served as master of ceremonies.

It was a festive and interactive affair with bid-

ding, toasts, and more, all taking place through Zoom.

The highlight was by far the evening's Special Fund, introduced by the Great and Powerful Oz, which asked for emergency relief so we can continue saving animal lives throughout the pandemic.

The generosity was overwhelming. Thanks to your heartfelt support, we'll be able to help many more animals tap their ruby slippers together and find for themselves that there truly is no place like home.

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