

November 2015

Dear Friends:

What a fantastic year this has been for the cats and dogs of Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties! Due to your donations and grant funding, this has been our best year ever, and we have neutered 2254 cats and dogs to date in 2015. Understandably, this level of activity has depleted our funds, but that hasn't stopped the calls from coming in. If you know us at Animal's Best Friend, you know we don't like to stay idle. Therefore, we urgently need to raise at least \$20,000 before the end of the year to keep our current momentum going. Recently we have had to turn away people that call us for help because the only funding we have available is for cats through the PetSmart Charities® grant for Paw Paw and Lawton residents.

Examples of the situations we have been unable to help with due to a lack of funding are:

- A Kalamazoo resident looking for free spay/neuter services for a multiple cat situation. This caretaker is unemployed, money is tight, and she is falling behind on getting them all spayed and neutered. One of her females is already pregnant.
- A single mom wanting to help out a stray cat by getting her spayed, but lacking funds.
- Multiple callers from impoverished areas of Van Buren county who have seen our signs and ads pertaining to our free cat spay/neuter program sponsored by PetSmart Charities® and hoped their cats could be included.
- A pair of pit bulls in the Edison neighborhood keep getting loose and ending up on the Kalamazoo lost/found facebook site. The owners have reached out for neutering assistance to reduce the tendency to wander but there are no dog funds available.

Our neutering programs are making a difference in the cat and dog overpopulation in our community. I have heard comments from several businesses in the Paw Paw/Lawton area that they are not seeing many feral or free roaming cats roaming the streets like they used to. Our volunteers have also been going door to door in area trailer parks offering our neutering services to needy cat and dog owners and we need to be able to continue this program.

As you start planning for your holiday and year end donations I hope you will consider making a life-saving donation to Animal's Best Friend. Your donation will help cut down on the number of litters of unwanted kittens and puppies that are born in your community. Help us be there when the animals need us by sending a tax-deductible donation today and by asking your friends to do the same. It is our policy to use 10% or less of the donations we receive on administrative expenses and because we are an all-volunteer group at least 90% of the donations we receive is used for spay/neuter surgeries.

Thank you for all you do to help us in our quest to reduce cat and dog overpopulation in Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. Wishing you and your families a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Karen King

PETSMART CHARITIES® GRANT UPDATE

All summer and fall, we have been working hard on completing the PetSmart Charities® grant, which we received in May. We are pleased to report that we expect to finish this grant by the end of the December. The good news is we will have spayed or neutered approximately **680 cats** from Paw Paw and Lawton under this grant, and we will have successfully completed our first major targeted spay/neuter project, on time and on budget! Your year-end donation will help us become eligible to apply for this grant again in the spring. We need to be able to show PetSmart Charities® that we have donors committed to our organization, and an income stream independent of grant income.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

November 14- We will have a booth at the Holiday Extravaganza at the Antwerp Township Hall in Mattawan, MI from 9:00-2:00. We will be selling catnip toys, dichroic necklaces and ABF t-shirts. Santa will be there for photos with all proceeds going to support ABF. Thanks to Dr. Kathy from Family Pet Health Center for sponsoring our booth.

December 12- Christmas bake sale at Pet Supplies Plus on S. Westnedge. 9:00-3:00. We need lots of bakers and buyers for this event. Please let us know if you're baking by leaving a message at 269/624-1090. If you can bake please have your baked goods to us by 10:00 the morning of the sale. Please label the baked goods you are donating as to whether or not they have nuts in them because of food allergies.

Peggy Spencer and Jeanne Vroegindewey each sent a donation to neuter one cat. Kim Dimock, Christine McGrew, Debbie Norton; Donna Ramesh; Ben & Claudia Johnson; Michele Mullen and Jerre & Ray Ihrcke sent donations to help neuter feral cats. Kelly Ross sent a donation for the feral program in honor of Gail Ross' birthday. Nancy Brookins sent a donation to help with the neutering costs of the Comstock and Osterhout cats. Thanks to Ben & Claudia Johnson for donating postage stamps. To Christine Ballard for donating a beautiful quilted cat throw.

Thanks to Mary Johnson, Marcie Parker-Bremmer and Sarah Gerstner for working our booth at the Paw Paw Wine & Harvest Festival. To Bethany Mayuiers, Kasey and Charlie Murphy, Kallie Franks, Kristen and Ashley Taylor for getting into the live trap for the \$40 "bail a kitty out." To Taylor's Florist and Gifts for providing the location for our booth. We made \$667.82 at this sale. Thanks to Beth Burdo for designing and printing our ABF envelopes. To Kalamazoo Cat Hospital for selling catnip toys and necklaces for us. To MVPets for selling our necklaces and t-shirts. To Judy Vanderslik for donating dish towels. To Laurie White, Princess and Thor Grubb for donating sheets.

Thanks to Sarah Gerstner and Stephanie Faulkner for doing a nail trim event at MVPets' Howl-o-ween Pawty. We made \$146.00 at this event.

Thanks to Diane Karlis; Sue Florian; Justine Abel; Sherry Quinn; Ginnie Bowling; Mary Johnson; Sarah Gerstner; Sandy Ormanovich; Phyllis Martens; Jennifer Chudy; Karen Macklom; Carolyn Woodward; Teresa Rakowsky; Gene & Vivian Wood; Carol Passage; Claudia Johnson; Faith Haley-Caro; Kelly Ross; Betsy & Melinda Ryba; Cherie Robinson and Kathy Slocum for baking for our Halloween bake sale at Pet Supplies Plus. To Michele Mullen; Mike Williams; Sarah Gerstner; Sandy Ormanovich for working at this event. We made \$1,087.00 at this sale. To Pet Supplies Plus Westnedge for providing the location for this sale.

Thanks to our sewing team (Tina Spencer, Joyce Barton, Jennifer Cohen, Mike & Vivian Spiech & Angie Thacker) for their on-going work on our catnip toy project.

Thanks to Four Black Paws for raising \$328.94 for us during the month of September through the sale of their awesome collars and leashes. You can check them out on line at www.4blackpaws.com.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS RECEIVED

From

Irene Kallio
John & Phyllis Martens
Gene & Vivian Wood
Ann Smith
Debbie Roach
Gene & Vivian Wood
Betsy Ryba

In Memory Of

Kirby
Sue Heikes
Cozette
Wayne Anderson
Maddie
Shawn Douglas
Maya

Maire & Ron Allison donated cat food in memory of Tomcat.

Joyce Barton sent a donation in honor of her cat Petey.

HOW YOU CAN HELP ANIMALS

The Spartan UPC program has been discontinued. If you have any Spartan UPC's that you were collecting for us we need to have them by December 1st so we can send in one last submission.

We are still in desperate need of barn homes before winter for cats that have been trapped and fixed. If you can help, please contact Marcie if you are in Van Buren county 269/906-5852 or 269/655-1813. Contact Sarah at 269/998-1787 if you are in Kalamazoo county.

Winter weather is quickly approaching. We need materials to make community cat shelters: dog houses, dog igloos, Rubbermaid totes/tubs, Styrofoam coolers, straw. Please contact Sarah at 269/998-1787 if you can help.

DOGGY CORNER

Since taking over as the new director of Van Buren County Animal Control, Kasey Murphy has been working diligently to increase their live release rate. In addition to working with our trappers to decrease the amount of cats needing placement by spaying and neutering, she has been working with local rescue groups and fosters. Meet Sir Winston. He was brought into VBCAC carrying an additional eight pounds of mats on his tiny little body. One of our board members is a sucker for small scruffies and arranged for her groomer to come out and get him shaved down. What emerged was a senior dog that was ready for love. She scooped him up and took him to be vetted and spoiled rotten. Through our partnership with Animal Rescue Project and your donations, Sir Winston was completely vetted and recently adopted into a wonderful forever home. It is amazing transformations such as this that is why we need your continued support.



PAWS FUR EDUCATION



Animal's Best Friend Fund, Van Buren County Animal Control, KRESA EFE (Education For Employment) Veterinary Science and Vicksburg High School EFE have all partnered together to change lives, both two and four legged. In September, semi-feral kittens from VBCAC were rescued and placed in the care of a KRESA EFE Veterinary Science class and instructor. With supervision of a licensed veterinarian and an experienced ABF board member, the kittens began to be socialized with the intention of being used as rodent control in meantime. The effects of "fluff therapy" began to spread from the Vet Science class into all of the classes in the Vicksburg High School Agriculture Building. Students who were formerly unengaged in class began completing assignments early so that they could go get a kitten out to hold. Soon, kittens were being used as motivation in all of the EFE classes as well as a traditional biology class. The kittens were handled all 7 hours of the school day. The kittens have evolved into an entire program of their own now named "Paws Fur Learning." Snuffleupagus, Bob and Penelope are an unmistakable part of the classroom environment.

Using Animal's Best Friend donations, the kittens were FIV and Feline Leukemia tested as well as spayed and neutered. The Vet Science students learned to deworm, vaccinate, run fecal samples and do nail trims. All of the students had a difficult life lesson when one of the kittens in this litter tested a light positive for Feline Leukemia. Thankfully with further testing, using the students' own funding, it was found to be negative. Since the start of the school year, this litter of three has gone from barely being able to be touched to being ready to be placed in forever homes. This will be an ongoing project throughout the school year. This litter of kittens will soon be adopted into loving homes and we will be moving onto the next litter(s) of kittens, saving more lives that would have otherwise been euthanized from VBCAC.

Michelle Guthrie, EFE instructor and Dr. Noreen Heikes, EFE Vet Science Instructor have also researched and purchased a large cat enclosure to house more kittens using EFE general equipment funds. This will allow them to house up to eight kittens at once. The Horticulture class will even be growing catnip in the greenhouse. This is an amazing experience for all involved. Stay tuned our Paws Fur Learning page on www.animalsbestfriendfund.org and our facebook page for updates on this project. For more information you can also contact Sarah at sarahgerstner@hotmail.com using subject line "Paws Fur Learning."

ABF ONLINE

Stay the most up to date with Animal's Best Friend Fund happenings online at www.animalsbestfriendfund.org or find us on facebook!



Animals Best Friend is an all volunteer animal welfare group dedicated to reducing cat and dog overpopulation in Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. Donations to Animals Best Friend are tax deductible and be sent to us at P.O. Box 443, Oshtemo, MI 49077. Our policy is to spend 10% or less of donations we receive on administrative expenses, which means that at least 90% of your donation funds spay/neuter surgeries for cats and dogs. Since Animals Best Friend was founded in 1981 we have helped spay/neuter over 46,876 cats and dogs.