

SPCA Rescue Update

*The quarterly newsletter of the SPCA of Southwest Michigan
a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving homeless pets since 2002*

SPCA Nears Groundbreaking for New Shelter!

We're Not Just Talking about It. . . We're Making It Happen!



A progress update from Mike Kounelis, Capital Campaign Co-Chair

We're thrilled to announce that we will break ground on our new Pet Rescue and Adoption Center before the end of May, with a move-in date of November 1, 2009. We're not just talking

about a new shelter—we're making it happen!

Even in this troubled economy, the SPCA of Southwest Michigan's capital campaign continues to forge ahead and seek valuable partners. In the past three months, we've reached several important milestones:

- Fund-raising has approached the halfway mark on our \$1.2 million target. We have donations and pledges totaling nearly \$600,000.
- The SPCA has engaged the services of The Skillman Corporation, a regionally based project administration and construction management firm, to act as the SPCA's Owner's Agent in the building project.

- The SPCA has hired BETA Design of Grand Rapids to design our new pet rescue center. BETA has just completed a \$5MM full-service animal facility for Kent County and brings valuable resources and experience to the SPCA's project.
- The SPCA has entered into a financial partnership with Portage Commerce Bank, a local financial institution with deep roots in our community and a long history of commitment to, and support of, charitable projects. Portage Commerce Bank will provide bridge loans to the SPCA to facilitate the construction project during 2009. This will enable us to take advantage of historically low construction costs and to make our new shelter a reality during 2009—even before we have completed the fund-raising task.

Fund-raising will continue throughout 2009 toward the \$1.2 MM goal. Any costs not covered by the campaign will convert to long-term debt (i.e., a mortgage) in 2011. Obviously, we are doing everything we can to ensure we are debt-free at the end of the campaign.

How you can help

The SPCA's Joining Hands to Save Lives campaign will expand and strengthen the organization's ability to save homeless pets throughout the Southwest and South Central region.

There are a number of ways you can help:

- A one-time cash gift
- A multiple-year pledge commitment (can extend to three or four years)
- A gift of appreciated assets such as stocks or bonds
- An estate gift
- In-kind donations of building materials or equipment

Tell your friends and family, neighbors and coworkers about our shelter project. This campaign is a community effort, and we need YOUR help.



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Our Mission

We are here to rescue, rehabilitate, and find loving homes for the forgotten pets in Southwest Michigan pounds. We save adoptable pets and make families complete.

The SPCA has stepped forward to provide leadership in several areas:

- Put in place a safety net for thousands of unwanted and unloved companion animals that perish each year in our communities
- Meet the growing demand in our communities for rescued pets as family members
- Promote responsible pet ownership
- Reduce pet overpopulation

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SPCA of Southwest Michigan

Public Shelter Hours

Monday 5 - 7 pm
Wednesday 4 - 7 pm
Friday 4 - 7 pm

Donations, Volunteering, Adoption Events

269.629.0567
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Construction Bidding and Work Opportunities

Construction companies or workers interested in bidding on work for the new shelter are invited to contact Mike Kounelis at The Skillman Company. You will then be placed on our mailing list for upcoming work opportunities and the construction bidding process. mjkounelis@skillman.com

With the economy the way it is, what will we do if the \$1.2 million goal is not reached?

The campaign leaders have developed two contingency plans to address this very real possibility. Whatever the amount of money raised, the SPCA will build a new facility. The size of the facility can be reduced; but with a smaller footprint the building plans will be designed to facilitate future expansion. It may also be necessary for the SPCA to take out a mortgage to construct the facility it needs, while continuing to raise funds even after construction is complete. Our main priority is a new home for the SPCA - one that is safe, healthy and welcoming for the homeless pets and people served by the SPCA of Southwest Michigan.



How Far We've Come....

January 10, 2008
Campaign formally launched to community leaders
August 6, 2008
SPCA purchased 4.5 acres of land at 6955 West KL Ave. in Oshtemo Twp.
October 17, 2008
Campaign is officially announced to the public
January 2009
Partnered with the Skillman Corp.
February 2009
Hired BETA Design for design expertise
March 1, 2009
More than \$580,000 in gifts and pledges!



ON THE WINGS OF ANGELS: A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE SPCA RESCUE OPERATION

In every SPCA Rescue Update, you'll find joyful accounts of recent SPCA pet adoptions. We call them "happy tails." We pull these stories from the hundreds of notes, emails, and photographs we receive each year celebrating the homecoming of a new pet.



But we rarely tell the story of our rescue program. Happy tails begin, in fact, with the rescue of 1,600 homeless pets each year. That's 1,600 little miracles per year. We push

ourselves to rescue as many homeless pets as we can. Space is the primary driver determining the number of pets we can save. Space opens up when a dog or cat is adopted, so the ultimate driver of our rescue program is...the happy tails. It's a circle of life.

So how and where do we rescue? Who performs these little miracles? Let's take a look at a typical week in the life of our dog rescue program.

On any given week, the SPCA rescues an average of 23 dogs and puppies, primarily from 10 Southwest and South Central Michigan pounds. During the week in question, March 16 – 20, 2009, we rescued a few more: 31 in total.

Monday, March 16, 2009. The week begins with a call from our dog intake leader to the shelter. He's after a count of open spaces—based on the previous week's adoptions and the vacancies created at the shelter by foster care providers, who have taken dogs home during the previous week. We've got space for about 16 dogs.

Calls go out to our rescue angels all over Southwest and South Central Michigan. We're open for business! Get to the pounds! Let's save some lives!

A cross-check is done of the many emails received in the previous week from other rescue contacts in the region, begging and pleading for dogs to be saved.

Twelve homeless dogs and pups arrive this afternoon from St. Joseph County. Our angels on the ground in Centreville had called the previous Friday and had convinced the pound to hang on to the dogs and pups until Monday, when space would open up in our Peekstock Rescue Center.

The dogs and pups are checked in. Each is assigned a census number and given a name. Kennels have been prepared for their arrival—fresh towels, fresh water, and a spotless, sanitized kennel. New arrivals are typically placed in a quiet room or corner of the shelter, given time and space to decompress from the ordeal of the pound and transport to Kalamazoo.

Tuesday, March 17. Happy St. Paddy's Day. Our army of angels is pounding the pavement. Visits are made to Kalamazoo Animal Services, Calhoun County Animal Control, Barry County, and Eaton County. The rescue angel at one of the pounds reports that the pound is bursting at the seams. Would we consider two English setter mixes, about a year old, that had been confiscated from intolerable conditions. They had been living in the basement for five months. Five months of no fresh air. Five months in the dark. Malnourished, dizzy from the sunlight. One of the dogs fell over in the parking lot, weak and dizzy. They are safe with us now, fattening up, learning to interact with people once again, enjoying the small pleasures of being able to squat on grass.



At the same pound: Would we take a black lab pup with a broken leg? Animal Control had been called by a concerned neighbor, who saw some kids kicking a pup down the street. The pup is safe, will have x-rays, will be given all the love it can handle, and then some.

From another Southwest Michigan pound: Would you come rescue an older Shi Tzu that's been surrendered to us? Matted beyond recognition? Horrible teeth. A quick shave-down revealed a sweet little dog who wants continued on page 4 nothing more than to sit in your lap all day. While there, we spot a seven-year old Yellow Lab, Bubba, brought in by a family that's lost their home. Pleading eyes: get me out of here. We do. He's on his way to a second chance.

From the same pound: a ten-year old Schooodle, Francesca, is rescued. Our angel has a soft spot for older dogs. A pound is no place for a family pet.

A good day: 15 dogs and pups saved from an uncertain fate.

Wednesday, March 18. Another great day. Sixteen dogs and pups rescued from three Southwest Michigan pounds. Infant pups go directly into the waiting arms of a foster mom. The rest are squeezed into the shelter. The shelter is full again. Mission accomplished.

Thursday, March 19. An owner calls, can no longer keep a very nice German Shepherd mix. Can we squeeze it in? We'll find room somewhere, somehow. A scramble. Can we double up this dog and that? Will he get along with a roommate? The staff juggle and test chemistry until a kennel can be freed up.

Just another day at the SPCA's Peekstock Rescue Center. So many unsung heroes. So many angels in so many places.

Our mission: "We're here to rescue, rehabilitate, and find loving, responsible homes for the forgotten pets in Southwest Michigan pounds. We save adoptable pets and make families complete."



2009 Year-to-Date* Adoptions

Pets Adopted: 333

Dogs Adopted: 241

Cats Adopted: 92

*Through March 24, 2009

SPCA Starts Out Strong in 2009 Because of Sluggish Economy



The SPCA rescue and adoption program has gotten off to a terrific start in 2009. Both dog and cat adoptions are up significantly over 2008 figures, with cat adoptions rising by 34 percent in the first two months of 2009 versus the same period in 2008; and dog adoptions rising by 23 percent in the first two months of this year.

All told, the SPCA adopted a remarkable 244 homeless dogs and cats in the first two months of 2009, defying common belief that rescue organizations grind to a halt in the harsh winter months. In the same period, 267 homeless pets were rescued.

The SPCA's President, Jim Di Loreto, attributes the sharp rise in rescues and adoptions to the recession. In past recessions, consumer experts have observed an increase in consumer spending in areas associated with "nesting" behaviors. In tough economic times, people tend to pull in. They tend to spend more on home-centered activities such as eating in (versus eating out) and on home-based comforts and enhancements. Their spending patterns reflect an increased commitment to the "nest." Adopting a pet is probably the most perfect expression of "nesting" behavior. Hence, the increase in SPCA adoptions.

So the recession has been good for the SPCA's homeless pets! Sadly, however, the housing crisis and recession have also conspired to create a crisis in pet homelessness. More people may be adopting pets in 2009, but there is also a sharp rise in abandoned and discarded pets in the pound facilities of Southwest and South Central Michigan. The pounds are packed, as people lose their homes and move into pet-unfriendly apartments; and as they find themselves struggling to feed their families, let alone their hungry pets.

So the recession is both good news and, ultimately, bad news, for pets. As long as people continue to adopt, the SPCA will be able to rescue. The more adoptions, the more rescues. That's the SPCA's bottom line.

Happy Tails



We have our baby at home now and he's so adorable and so smart! You have a wonderful organization there and I'm telling everyone I know about it. It was well worth the drive! I wish I could have taken all the dogs. I thought about calling into work this morning to see if I could take maternity leave to stay home with my new baby, but I didn't think they would approve it. My husband is home with him, and I'm sure he's spoiling him rotten. By the way, we changed his name from Snickers to Redgee. He's already learning to respond to it. Thank you so much for filling our hearts with such renewed joy!

Submitted by Pat McMahan of Columbia City, IN



Lake (who we now call Ernie) is doing well. He has already adjusted to his home as if it were his own. He was

a bit skittish the first 24 hours but as of this morning he is much better. He was a bit apprehensive to let us pet him or come near him but now he is rubbing against us and letting us pick him up. He is a real sweetheart. He even made himself at home on the bed last evening for a while. A funny thing about him, he took over Lucky's bed!!! We did go get another but he prefers Lucky's. Not sure how Mr. Lucky feels about that...

If anyone is having issues adjusting it would be Lucky. They do indeed like each other but Lucky seems to play a little harder than I would like him to with the new guy. Ernie does keep coming back for more play and rubs up against Lucky (kitty hugs as I call them) all the time so I know Ern likes him.

Submitted by Jennifer Afton



Woofstock Fest

Kalamazoo's Grooviest Pet Friendly Event

Arcadia Creek Festival Site
Saturday July 18, 2009 10am - midnight
www.WoofstockFest.org

Please mark your calendars for July 18, 2009! The SPCA is hosting a groovy, pet-friendly event this summer that will be packed full of entertainment! A few things on the agenda are:

- Live Music
- Ultimate Air Dog Dock Jumpers
- Agility Exhibitions
- Stupid Pet Tricks Competition
- Dog Costume Contest
- Human Costume Contest
- Puppy Races
- Arts & Crafts Booths
- Extreme Make Over - Groomer's Edition
- Mascot Pavilion
- Kids & K9 Kraft Korner
- & Much, Much More!



We're inviting all dog adopting families to bring their adopted dogs for a fun reunion. Cats usually don't enjoy events like this, so we hope cat adopters bring their brag photos with them. Woofstock should be fun for the whole SPCA family!



Woofstock will require hundreds of volunteers. Please consider volunteering by filling out an application online at www.WoofstockFest.org.

For more information, or if you would like to help us plan and implement this ambitious event, please contact Vicki VanDenBerg at 269-217-3708 or VickiVDB@WoofstockFest.org.



Tyler & Rusty

Zulu is in good hands and is loved a great deal! Tyler (my 3 year old) decided to name his new puppy Rusty and so you may find me referring to Zulu as Rusty.

Rusty is now the center of attention in our home. Tyler spends time letting Rusty chase him around our home and we even have a bunch of new toys for him to chew and play with. Rusty gets pretty worn out and then spends the rest of the time cuddling. He is a very irresistible dog. We try not to spoil him but we just cant resist him when he wants picked up and cuddled.

We have only had Rusty a few short days but couldn't imagine being without him. He is now part of our daily routine: wake up for another trip outside, then wake Tyler up with puppy kisses, play with Tyler and or eat breakfast, cuddle with Tyler for a movie, alone time while my family is away, play time when they get home and dinner, cuddle time, play time, cuddle during the bedtime story, one more play time and then off to bed.

Tyler is learning that Rusty will demand attention and that he has to give it to him. It's kind of nice to see the roles reversed (Tyler usually is always demanding my attention and driving me nuts). He worries about Rusty when we are away and is trying to teach Rusty that he is never alone that "God is with you, Rusty, so don't be afraid". It is cute to see him parenting his dog. We are very grateful for this new joy in our lives. Thank you for everything you have done for our little Rusty. We promise to take very good care of him, and he will be a great playmate for our son.

Submitted by Jennifer Herbert

Upcoming Special Events

May 8th: 4 to 8	Adopt a Shelter Pet Month
May 9th: 11 to 5	Live Remote with WNWN
June 6th	Cheff City Annual Fund Raiser
June 6th	Doo-Dah Parade Downtown Kalamazoo
June 27th: 11 to 5	Summer Tent Event- Independence Day
June 28: 12 to 5	Live Remote with WNWN
July 1st	Christmas in July Wish Trees in Pet Stores
July 4th	Independence Day Parade Schoolcraft
July 18th	Woofstock Festival Arcadia Creek, Downtown Kalamazoo

We need your help! Become an SPCA Volunteer!

We have great volunteer opportunities in many areas:

- Hands-on dog care at our Peekstock shelter
- Hands-on cat care at our Peekstock shelter
- Dog or cat foster care
- Marketing and fund raising
- Capital Campaign
- Clerical
- Shelter reception

If interested, contact us or stop by an event!

Phone, 269 344 1474

Email to info@spcaswmich.org

Your donation of **ANY AMOUNT** will make a huge difference in a rescued animal's life.
Please help us save more lives.

\$25

\$50

\$100

Other \$ _____

I'd like my donation to go towards:

Joining Hands to Save Lives Capital Campaign General Operating Fund It doesn't matter

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Please return this slip to P.O. Box 2676, Portage, MI 49081, Attn: Robin Vleugel, Treasurer
Checks should be made payable to SPCA of SW Michigan
Donations are tax deductible under IRS 501(c)(3). Tax ID 38-361-4688