

Toto, We're Not in Kansas Anymore

The Changing Landscape of Animal Rescue – What You Need to Know

Also Inside:

Check Out Our New Digs
Monthly Pet Adoption Events
Are You Harming Your Pet?
Honoring America's Dog



Something to Chew On

A few years ago, we adopted the slogan, “Doing the right thing for animals.” We stumbled upon it during a branding discussion at a meeting of our Board of Directors. Previously we’d been testing “Transforming animal welfare.” While we enjoyed its boldness, it felt lofty and, more importantly, it didn’t speak to our core values. Branding encapsulates how one feels about an organization, and that choice of words didn’t sound or feel like the Our Companions we all know and love.

At some point during our brain-storming dialogue, while speaking of our decision to house animals in a sanctuary environment, Board member Chris Shivery said something to the effect of, “Housing animals the right way and doing what’s right for them while they’re at the sanctuary is never going to be easy or inexpensive. Animal rescue, when done thoughtfully, is costly, heart-breaking and complicated work, filled with difficult decisions.” She continued, “It’s about always doing the right thing for animals. To me, that’s Our Companions!”

At that very moment, Doug Reid, a donor and guest at this Board meeting, proclaimed somewhat matter-of-factly, “I hear Board members repeating the same theme. You see that’s it, don’t you? ‘Doing the right thing for animals.’”

The room became silent – we had our slogan.

The reason this phrase connected with everyone in that room in a very visceral way is because when you talk about doing the right thing, ninety-nine percent of the time you’re also talking about

doing the harder thing. One of the hardest pieces of the animal welfare puzzle in 2014 involves handling adoptions, particularly dog adoptions.

The adoption landscape has changed greatly over the past several years, making “Doing the right thing” particularly hard for organizations, as well as the public and animals we serve. The lead article in this issue of *Our Companions News*, entitled, “Toto, We’re Not in Kansas Anymore” explores the complexities of finding *lasting* forever homes for homeless dogs in Connecticut.

We’re committed to doing what we believe is the right thing, in every area of animal welfare in which we are engaged. We view your support as an endorsement of our mission and evidence that we are on the right path. Thank you for your involvement. We hope you enjoy the magazine!



Valerie
Valerie Friedman,
Board Chair



Susan Linker
Susan Linker,
Chief Executive Officer

About Our Companions News

Our Companions News is published three times per year by *Our Companions Animal Rescue*, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

Our Companions Animal Rescue is a leader in the movement to end the unnecessary euthanasia of pets in Connecticut.

Our Companions Officers

Valerie Friedman, *Board Chair*
Andrea Dobras, *Secretary*
Leigh Ann Kissner, *Treasurer*

Our Companions Directors

Risa Davidson
Diana Garfield
Marie Joyner
Mitchell Linker
Susan Linker
Chris Shivery
Kathleen Sullivan
Tom Weidman
Kim Zimmermann

Our Companions Advisory Board

Janet Bailey
Glynis Cassis
Maria das Neves
Patricia Foley
Linda Hatten
Gretchen LaBau
Anne Llewellyn
Lauren Mascola
Alex Oldershaw
Susan Rathgeber
Damon Scott
Maneesh Shanbhag
Ed Young
Adam Zweifler

Our Companions News Editorial Board

Jennifer Barrows, *Editor*
Kelly Alver
Jessica Beganski
Mary deManbey
Andrea Dobras
Lyn T. Garson, CVT

Graphic Design

Mandy Wieting



Toto, We're Not in Kansas Anymore



The Changing Landscape of Animal Rescue – What You Need to Know

by Jennifer Barrows

Years ago, animal shelters were nearly bursting at the seams with dogs of all ages, shapes and sizes – just longing to be taken home. In fact, it was not at all uncommon for a potential adopter to come in right off the street and quickly meet a compatible dog among the many hopeful contenders, then fill out an application and trot him or her home to become a much-loved member of the family. Unfortunately, those days are pretty much over, at least here in the Northeast. Times have changed, and many potential adopters are finding themselves confused and frustrated as they attempt to navigate a dramatically altered animal rescue landscape.

“There are many contributing factors that have changed the face of animal rescue in the past fifteen years or so,” notes Susan Linker, CEO of Our Companions. “The pet population has changed markedly, for one thing.” Due to spay/neutering, New England shelters tend to have very few puppies. There is also the growing popularity of online adoptions, often sight unseen, which can lead to unsuccessful placements and subsequent abandonment at shelters.

Further complicating matters, the dogs that are being actively bred in our communities and end up in our local shelters are largely pit bulls and pit bull mixed breeds. In fact, these make up about 70% of the dogs in our municipal shelters. Often bred in our cities for profit, these puppies end up in our shelters in abundance, generally at an average age of 10 months, when the cuteness of puppyhood has worn off.

Unfortunately, pit bulls are far too often not considered by potential adopters because of the perception that they are aggressive, but this is not true of the breed in general. While it is true that a small but unfortunate segment of this breed has been systematically abused and used in the barbaric underworld of dog fighting, their aggression is a learned behavior, and these abused dogs are not the ones being promoted for adoption in our local shelters. Adopters should consider each animal as an individual and not be swayed by stereotypes (for more information on pit bulls, see “Marie’s Den” on page 14).

In addition to the population shift in shelters, the adoption process for most rescue organizations has become more complex, involving a more rigorous application and screening phase, and often including reference checks and home visits. For potential adopters, the process can be more easily navigated with a basic understanding of the current situation – and a bit of patience.

Katherine’s Story

A few months after losing Sidney, her beloved dog of 16 years, Katherine decided it was time to think about opening her heart and home to a new canine companion. She had rescued Sidney, a black Labrador retriever, as a puppy, and she had been a perfect pet, accompanying her through many life changes, including getting married and having children. Katherine’s adoption experience from her local shelter at the time was a positive one; the process was straightforward and easy, and Sidney was a well-behaved puppy and grew into a wonderful adult dog.

Spring forward to 2014. Based on that very positive experience with Sidney, Katherine began looking to local shelters to help find another perfect match for her family. However, she quickly found herself in a morass – confused and frustrated and coming close to making a potentially bad decision. Luckily, a friend persuaded her to reconsider, explaining how things have changed and urging her to proceed with caution. She is sharing her story here in the hope that others won’t make the same mistake she came close to making.

Katherine’s first step in looking for a new puppy was to visit Petfinder.com. Petfinder is a great tool, but it’s not a shelter per se. It is an online clearinghouse for animals who are available through various rescue organizations. Katherine soon found a Labrador retriever puppy who was listed as being associated with a rescue organization in Waterbury. The group was charging an adoption fee of \$500 (Katherine had paid \$50 for Sidney 16 years ago).



Lucy, a lovely and sweet pit bull OC transferred from a local pound, has been overlooked by potential adopters for months due to the stigma attached to her breed.

When Katherine dug a little deeper she learned that the dog was not actually in Connecticut, but in Texas. Not really thinking through the situation, and not realizing that things have changed so significantly that she needed to be more wary, she made arrangements to pick up the dog at a shopping center parking lot, once it arrived in Connecticut via a transport van.

Her friend, Mitchell Linker (husband of Susan Linker), cautioned her. “You can’t just pick up a puppy and adopt it without meeting her first – you don’t know anything about the dog, and you don’t know how she will be with your kids.” As difficult as it was to do, Katherine realized she needed to extract herself from that commitment and find more reputable sources for adopting, and enlisted the help of Our Companions.

“In years past, shelters had a pretty high puppy population, but with our successful efforts at spay/neutering, shelters, particularly in New England, simply do not have puppies like they once did,” explains Susan Linker. “Although we’d love to match up a family with one of our adult dogs, if they are intent on having a puppy, it may make the most sense to go through a local, reputable breeder.”

Adopting from a breeder is something rescue organizations traditionally have never been eager to recommend. It was always the hope that adopters would consider adopting from a shelter since these animals are often at high risk of being euthanized. Why purchase a designer dog, when you can save a life? But remember that in years past, New England shelters had a broad mix of dogs, including many puppies. You may still find your soul mate through a rescue organization – and we hope you will – we are one of those organizations. However, if someone is intent on adding a puppy to their family, there are new factors to consider.

Not All Shelters are Created Equal

“Potential adopters should know that there are statutes that Connecticut municipal shelters have to follow, but there is a lot of room for discretion,” notes Susan Linker. “All shelters must pick up stray dogs and hold them for up to seven days, allowing an owner to come forward and claim them. After that time, the animal becomes the town’s property. Some towns immediately euthanize these animals, some hold onto them for a while and hope an adopter comes along. Some have a progressive Animal Control Officer (ACO) who looks out for the animals and gets them the help they need, including working with a local rescue organization to find a suitable home.”

OC has strong working relationships with several excellent shelters in our area, including Glastonbury Animal Control. When asked what has been important to their own success, Cathy Kodes, an Animal Control Officer in Glastonbury offered the following:

“We pride ourselves on cleanliness. A shelter doesn’t have to be brand new, bright and beautiful, but it should show signs of being cleaned daily and any obvious health issues with the animals should be addressed.

“We try to identify any negative behaviors in an animal, and if possible, initiate basic training. Many local rescues will come to the kennel to start teaching dogs some manners prior to adoption.

“We evaluate all potential adopters to make sure they will be responsible pet owners; this includes performing background checks.

“We require a “meet and greet” between the animal and all members of the family. It’s very important for everyone to be on board with the adoption.

“Probably the most important aspect of the adoption process is making the right match of pet to family. A family might be exceptional adopters, but perhaps the pet they are drawn to is not the best match for them. The staff at our shelter evaluates the temperament and needs of an animal to determine whether those needs will be met in a potential new home. Our first goal is to find the best *permanent* placement for the animal in our care.

“We also offer our adopters resources during and after the adoption to ensure a smooth transition.”

Dog Importation

Given the backdrop of what is happening in New England, it’s interesting to look at what is happening in other parts of the country, including the southern U.S., where the concept of spay/neutering has not caught on in the way it has here. As a result, they have the opposite problem. They have a lot of puppies who end up in shelters and these are often desperate places, without county or community support. Animal abandonment is commonplace and many communities have lax shelter admission policies so people are allowed to just drop their animals in a box at night for the staff to find in the morning.

The plight of these dogs and puppies has brought about the emergence of a transport operation for exporting puppies from the South to the northern U.S where there is an abundance of eager adopters. In recent years, this effort has become more organized and non-profits have sprung up, engaged in more formal importation practices. These days there are even transport companies whose sole job is to make sure the transport laws and regulations are met – and now the transport itself is its own industry.

“This whole situation is fraught with problems but the biggest one is that most of these dogs go to homes, having never had the opportunity to meet the adopter or family in advance,” says Marie Joyner, OC Canine Operations Director.



Dogs in southern shelters live in cramped conditions – and only for a few days before being euthanized – adding to the urgency of their importation to New England.

“The family knows nothing about the history or temperament of the dog. It’s a chancy situation at best – a dangerous one at worst.

“The adopters typically pay online in advance (often adoption fees range from \$400-\$600). Adopters then pick up their dog at a certain location at a specific time – often at a stop along the interstate or some other public location. The sellers usually don’t make allowances for returning the dog, should there be a problem, and when adopters try to contact them later on for assistance, they are often unreachable. Adopters who just wanted to rescue a dog and give it a good home find themselves stuck with an unsuitable pet for their family. Usually the dog and the family are traumatized. It’s just a very sad situation and a woefully irresponsible practice.”

The good news is that there are some responsible groups involved in dog importation. These organizations tend to include a network of foster homes both in the state of origin and here in Connecticut. They take in dogs from the high-kill shelters, providing them with full veterinary care, while getting to know them and having a chance to evaluate their temperament. This time and attention also enable the dogs to recover and become better socialized. Such groups work diligently to find good homes and coordinate efforts to bring the animals here, often fostering them again locally and letting prospective adopters meet them before adoption. With these groups there is a local foster parent or agent of the rescue that is accessible to the adopters after the dog has been adopted, and the dogs are welcomed back to the rescue should the adoption prove unsuccessful.

“That’s not normally the case though,” cautions Marie. “Usually these poor dogs are getting off a truck, having just been spayed or neutered, recently vaccinated, transported for 26 hours, and are handed off to complete strangers. It’s an irresponsible way to do things. They are treating these dogs as products, rather than as sentient beings with individual needs and feelings.”

The people involved in this movement are most often well-intentioned, but not properly educated about the complexities and ramifications of importation. This practice has resulted in a chaotic and steady stream of animals flowing into our area. Some are affiliated with professional groups, and some are being sold by individuals just trying to make a fast buck. As previously mentioned, these adoption arrangements can fall through, and our local shelters and rescues bear the burden of an influx of unwanted animals who have been unnecessarily traumatized.

What about Pet Shops?

Thanks to disclosure laws in our state and public education from animal protection organizations, many in Connecticut are now familiar with the concept of puppy mills, the large commercial breeding facilities that supply pet shops with their puppies. In fact there are only 16 pet shops left in Connecticut that sell commercially-bred dogs. The importation of puppies from other regions of the country has provided direct competition to pet shops, as people tend to prefer the idea of rescuing a pet, rather than supporting puppy mill operations. The problem now is that puppy mills are starting to advertise online, masquerading as reputable breeders and cutting out the pet shops. Our advice: Don’t go to pet shops – you will get a puppy mill dog; and don’t buy online – you have no idea whom you are buying from and what you are getting.

In some cases, an adopter may want a pure-bred dog. Shelters often have pure-breds so it’s definitely worth checking there first. The next place to look is a breed-specific rescue group. In both cases, you may need to be patient, as it can take time for the right dog to come along. If you decide to go to a breeder, be certain only to seek the services of a local, reputable one. A good breeder will let you see where the animals are housed, interact with the puppies (if they

are old enough), and meet the mom or both parents of the litter.

How to Identify a Reputable Breeder

OC volunteer Gretchen Van Alstyne has been breeding Basenjis for 20 years. Gretchen has a robust process for adopting out her puppies. She first conducts a phone interview with interested adopters, asking them why they are interested in Basenjis and how they learned about them. She asks a series of questions to ascertain if an adopter would be a responsible pet owner and an appropriate match to one of her puppies.

The next step in her process is to meet the individual or family in person, typically at her own home. “Ideally, you want them to see the dogs in a home setting, with all of the adoptive family members present.” Gretchen prefers to interview prospective families in advance of the litter, since all puppies are cute and therefore hard to resist.

“I share information with them about the breed,” Gretchen explains. “I review the results of any testing that has been done on the parents, in preparation for bearing a litter.” A purebred dog breeder should be confident that this is a healthy puppy she is producing and selling to you.

Responsible breeding practices and good communication are critical, and are in the best interest of both the breeder and the adopter. A reputable breeder wants her puppies to stay in their forever homes for their entire lives. Although she will take them back if there is a problem, her goal is to do everything possible up front in order to prevent this from occurring. Gretchen recommends asking for veterinary and former customer references from a breeder. These should be something a reputable breeder is proud of and happy to provide. Gretchen never breeds her female dogs until they have reached maturity (around 3 years) and she breeds them only twice over a three-year period.

“How can any of these precautionary measures take place through online sales?” Gretchen asks. “Online purveyors don’t want to meet the



Gusto, an adoptable pit bull mix, meets a new family at an OC adoption event.

adopters; they want the puppy gone and the money in the bank. Look for someone who is devoted to their dogs, but is not doing this to survive financially. Ideally, you want their breeding services to be a cherished hobby, rather than a money maker.”

Gretchen contends that a good breeder knows their work is an investment both of capital and of dedication. This is why no reputable breeder would ever sell their puppies to a pet store, where there is no control over the appropriateness of the breed for the purchasing family and where a poor match can result in surrender to a shelter or even euthanasia.

Katherine’s Search Continues

Katherine has submitted an adoption application and is working with OC to find the perfect match for her family. The process takes a little more time than it once did, but having learned about the many complex issues facing animal rescue, Katherine feels confident that this is the right way to proceed, and the outcome will be worth the wait.

“Welcoming a companion animal into your family is a lifelong commitment,” says Katherine. “This extra due diligence seems like the least we can do to ensure the happiness of our family members as well as that of the pet being considered. We know we will end up with a wonderful new addition to our family, and that our time will have been very well spent.”

Check Out Our New Digs!

This year OC opened two new canine cottages, the Henree House and the Chelsea House. Both cottages offer a home-like environment with private “bedrooms” for the dogs, a living room with lots of couches, chairs and a TV, and their favorite place – a fully functional kitchen!

In January, when the dogs who formerly lived in the lower level of the Sebastian House (our first rescue cottage built in 2012) moved into the new canine cottages, renovations were completed at the Sebastian House to transform what had been the dog area into a kitty paradise.

Our feline guests are most excited about the outdoor “catio” which allows the cats to have access to an outdoor

enclosure where they can chase bugs, take a sun bath and safely enjoy the great outdoors anytime their hearts desire.

Rafters and wall shelving were installed so cats who love vertical space can climb around and enjoy surveying those below. Scratching trees, climbing posts and lots of nooks and crannies for hiding and pouncing have been strategically designed so that even the shyest cat feels safe and right at home.

We hope the fun photos below will entice you to join us during visiting hours (every Saturday from 1-3 p.m.), where you can enjoy our beautiful new facilities and meet the wonderful animals that are awaiting adoption.



The Remembrance Wall reminds us of the history of the land and the transformation from factory farm to sanctuary.



Spring flowers pop up at the sanctuary!



Marilyn enjoys an early spring day in the catio!



This addition was built off the back of the cottage to install a big, fun catio!



OC Canine Manager, Krystal, works on training with Gidget.

In-Kind Donations Help Save Money... and Lives

We need your help! Please consider donating any of the following items to the animals. In-kind donations are tax-deductible and can be dropped off at our Manchester Program Center or Ashford sanctuary. To learn how to get these supplies to the sanctuary, email our Office Manager, Paul Johnson, at Paul@OurCompanions.org or call us at 860-242-9999, ext. 304.

Supply Wish List:

- Supermarket gift cards • Paper towels • Bleach
- Cat food – all kinds and lots of it!
- Liquid laundry detergent for high efficiency washing machine, unscented
- Dryer sheets, unscented • Dishwasher detergent
- Large heavy-duty trash bags (55 gallon)
- Tall kitchen trash bags (13 gallon)

You can also donate items through our Amazon Wish List:

Please visit ourcompanions.org/pages/getinvolved_otherways.htm or go to the Our Companions website, click on **Get Involved**, and then click on **Amazon Wish List**. Amazon will ship the items directly to the sanctuary. Please take a look – there are many affordable items that we can use right away! Please email us at info@ourcompanions.org if you've purchased an item on our Amazon Wish List, so that we can send you an acknowledgement for tax purposes. On behalf of the animals, we THANK YOU!!!



The two new canine cottages.



OC volunteer Daryl provides regular pet massage to Johnny.



Smudge & Cinder enjoy the heated window perch.



Henry and Katharine McLane Leadership Society Honors Donors and Celebrates Successes

Ninety-nine percent of Our Companions' funding comes from public donations. The donations received through the Our Companions Leadership Society constitute 83% of all funds raised, so this generous group is integral to making our programs and rescue work possible.

To celebrate the accomplishments of 2013 and to recognize this key group of donors, members of the Henry and Katharine McLane Leadership Society gathered on April 2nd at the home of Our Companions Advisory Board member, Linda Hatten.

Established in 2007, in memory of Our Companions' first donors, the Henry and Katharine McLane Society honors a distinguished group of individuals, businesses and organizations who generously support our programs and services in a leadership capacity.

2013 Henry and Katharine McLane Society Members:

Our Companions' Circle, \$20,000 +

Gerald and Claire Gerath Foundation
Ms. Valerie Friedman



OC Board Chair Valerie Friedman with Bradley Hoffman.

Founders' Circle, \$10,000 - \$19,999

Mr. Samuel and Mrs. Janet Bailey
Bozzuto's Inc.
Ms. Maria R. Das Neves and Mr. Frank Hawkins
Ms. Gale Epstein
Ms. Barbara Erskine
Mr. Mark and Mrs. Linda Hatten
Mr. Neil and Mrs. Maryanne Hornish
Ms. Lisa Ireland
Mr. Rob and Mrs. Susan Mason
Mr. Leon and Mrs. Bernadette Olivier
Ms. Lida Orzeck
Mr. Douglas and Mrs. Julie Reid
Ms. Barbara Ruben and Ms. June Roy
Ms. Cynthia Tyler
United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut

Guardians' Circle, \$5,000 - \$9,999

Aetna Foundation, Inc
Mr. Mickey Cartin
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
Ms. Joy Daentl
Ms. Ora Avni and Mr. Josue Harari
Ms. Ann R. Hardy
Mr. & Mrs. I. Bradley Hoffman

Mr. Neil and Mrs. Maryanne Hornish
Katie Reid Memorial Fund
Ms. Sue Kautz and Mr. Stephen Kitts
Ms. Dottie Kern
Mr. Irwin Linker
Mr. H. Richard McLane
Ms. Joleen M. Nevers and Mr. James Larabee
Ms. Gail Perkins-Gemme and Mr. Robert Gemme
Mr. Henry and Mrs. Helen Savage
Mr. Charles W. and Mrs. Christine Shivery
Mr. Roy Simpson
Sweetheart Invitational
Travelers
Mr. George and Mrs. Lynda Trumbull
Mrs. Betty Willis
Dr. Gordon and Mrs. Kim Zimmermann

Caregivers' Circle, \$2,500 - \$4,999

Mr. Bruce and Mrs. Terri Alpert
America's Charities
Ms. Laura Baker
Bank of America Matching Gifts
Ms. Sandra A. Bass
Ms. Patricia Foley
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Linda Forrester
Mr. Frank T. and Mrs. Caroline Gaetano
Hanky Panky Ltd.
Ms. Lisa Holzwarth and Mr. Evan Schiller
ING Foundation
Mr. Randall and Mrs. Marie Joyner
Ms. Leigh Ann Kissner
Ms. Jeannie Kitchens
Ms. Angela Lennox-Kay
Ms. Anne Llewellyn
Middlesex United Way, Inc.
William and Alice Mortensen Foundation
Newman's Own Foundation, Inc.
PETCO Foundation
Ms. Ruth Rollin and Mr. Henry Petrofsky
Mr. Frank and Mrs. Penny Petrone
Mr. Patrick and Mrs. Kathleen Sullivan
Truist
Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Rita Weidman
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow

Companions' Row \$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous
Mr. James Agonis
Mr. Bruce and Mrs. Carol-Ann Barlow
Dr. George and Mrs. Jennifer Barrows
Mr. Brian and Mrs. Nicole Baummer
Mr. Leo and Mrs. Audrey A. Belanger
Ms. Cindy Bergner

Ms. Georgina Bloomberg
Bridgewater Associates, LP
Ms. Joan Brodeur
Mr. Craig and Mrs. Paula Brown
Mr. Steven and Mrs. Alexandra Cohen
Mr. Ronald and Mrs. Nancy Compton
Mr. John and Mrs. Carol Coulton
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred V. Covello
Mr. Alan and Mrs. Risa Davidson
Mr. Dudley Day
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Derr
Disney Company Foundation
Ms. Shirley Galka and Ms. Susan Fabian
Farmington Miniature Golf Course
Mrs. Lisa Fekete
Ms. Robin Fontaine and Mr. Mark Alexander
Ms. Kelly France
Mr. Marvin Fried
Ms. Kim Gabler
Ms. Diana Garfield
Mr. Alan and Mrs. Wendy Gorfain
Mr. Ian and Mrs. Kimberly Green
Mr. Douglas and Mrs. Irma Gregory
Ms. Jamila Hadj-Salem and Mr. Joshua Ochs
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Susan Hart
Ms. Elizabeth Hartzog
Ms. Gillian Howell and Mr. Stephen Patrizzi
Dr. Jo Nol and Dr. Nancy Humphreys
Mr. Wallace and Mrs. Hedy Jarvis
Ms. Catherine Kulak and Mr. Kevin Sheehan
Ms. Marta Jo Lawrence
Mr. Mitchell and Mrs. Susan Linker
Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Jo Marinello
MassMutual
Mr. David and Mrs. Shannon McHale
National Philanthropic Trust
Mr. Peter and Mrs. Alexandra Oldershaw
Dr. Eric Orzeck
Ms. Nancy Parker
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Patricelli
Ms. Barbara Prine and Mr. Cyprian Martin
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Judith W. M. Prohaska
Mr. Michael Rao
Ms. Elizabeth R. Rea
Ms. Beth Hillson and Dr. Joel Reich
Ms. Melanie Rose and Ms. Janet Perna
Ms. Susan Smith Rubin
D.J. St. Germain Company, Inc.
Dr. Paul and Mrs. Melinda M. Sullivan
Talcott Mountain Agility Club
Mr. P. Ross Taylor and Mrs. Anne B. Taylor
Ms. Lynda Thornton
Ms. Sandra Tullius
Tunxis Grange No. 13, Inc.



The late Katharine McLane, known to her friends as K.K., with her beloved dog, Jenny.



GIVING

Uno Alla Volta, LLC
 Veterinary Specialists of Connecticut
 Mr. Paul Volpe
 Ms. Susan Weber
 Dr. Mary White-Roath
 Ms. Cinnamon Young

Rescuers' Row, \$250 - \$999

Anonymous (4)
 Advanced Veterinary Care
 Mr. John and Mrs. Christina Altier
 American Express
 Ms. Carrie Angyal
 Mr. and Mrs. George Aronstamm
 Mr. Craig and Mrs. Vivian Asche
 Ashford School
 Ms. Jeanne Auerbach
 Mr. Christopher and Mrs. Mary Baier
 Ms. Mary Baker
 Mr. Brett and Mrs. Wendy Barczak
 Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Melanie Barnes
 Mr. David and Mrs. Deborah Batten
 Ms. Jane Batton
 Mr. Michael A. Park and Ms. Janet Beatty
 Mr. Joe and Mrs. Pat Beaudin
 Mr. Whit and Mrs. Jarre Betts
 Ms. Lynn Biella
 Ms. Gail Billet and Ms. Mia Sullivan



OC's Feline Manager Christine Penney with volunteer Nanette Tummers.

Ms. Sylvia Bissell
 Mr. Curtis and Mrs. Patricia Blake
 Mr. Randy and Mrs. Arlis Bobb
 Mr. Richard and Mrs. Barbara Booth
 Mr. Andrew and Mrs. Amber A. Bordley
 Mr. Mark and Mrs. Susan Bottomley
 Mr. Normand and Mrs. Sharon Boulanger
 Mr. Paul Bourdeau
 Ms. Jane Boyle and Mr. Michael Galonska
 Ms. Susan Boyle
 Ms. Marguerite Brennan
 Ms. Cheryl Brightman
 Mr. Harold and Mrs. Donna Britto
 Mr. D. Scott and Mrs. Terese Brown
 Mr. Timothy and Mrs. Doreen Brown
 Mr. Phil and Mrs. Lynn Brown
 Ms. Shari Brunell
 Mr. Daniel and Mrs. Jenny Bucci
 Mr. Edward and Mrs. Mary Budd

Ms. Joann Bugai
 Ms. Jen Rilla and Mr. Michael Cafasso
 Ms. Gail T. Cahill and Ms. Cheryl Yorton
 Ms. Allison Calvello
 Ms. Susan Cannon
 Ms. Colleen Carroll and Ms. Debra Kempton
 Ms. Janice Cartin
 Mr. Richard and Mrs. Ellen Cartun
 Mr. Angelo and Mrs. Susan Casagrande
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Jill Casey
 Mrs. Ellen L. Cassidy
 Ms. Kathleen Cassidy
 Cats Limited Veterinary Hospital
 Ms. Jennifer Cavaliere
 Mrs. Dorothy Cermola
 Mr. Eleas and Mrs. Sandra Chafouleas
 Ms. Marcia Chambers
 Mr. Gerard and Mrs. Dawn Chartier
 Ms. Penni Cheatle
 Ms. Annie Chittenden
 Ms. Candace Clark
 Ms. Debra Clover
 Mr. Keith and Mrs. Madeline Coakley
 Coast to Coast Produce
 Ms. Linda Coleman
 Mr. Jim and Mrs. Tina Collias
 Ms. Jessica Collis and Mr. Victor Belenchia
 Ms. Jenny Colucci and Ms. Jane Holt
 Dr. Joyce Comer
 Ms. Sandra Conlin and Mr. Joseph Puzzo
 Mr. Wayne and Mrs. Concetta Conlogue
 Mr. William and Mrs. Ellen E. Conlon
 Connecticut Housing Finance Authority
 Connecticut On-Line Computer Center
 Ms. Colleen Cooper
 Ms. Lynne L. Cooper and Mr. Russ Pekar
 Mr. and Mrs. Tim Corbett
 Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers, LLC
 Ms. Susan C. Barnes and Mr. Daniel Cosgrove
 Ms. Renee Costello
 Mr. James and Mrs. Jessica Couzens
 Mr. Bill and Mrs. Ilona Crosswhite
 Ms. Elizabeth Cullen and Mr. Martin Lilienthal
 Mr. Harry and Mrs. Joan Curry
 Mr. Charles and Mrs. Nancy Curtiss
 Ms. Tammie Cutler
 Ms. Joanne Cyr
 Ms. Susan M. Dauray and Mr. Ed Hatch
 Ms. June Day
 Ms. Cornelia Dayton and Mr. James Boster
 Mr. Lee and Mrs. Taury Del Valle
 Mr. Benny and Mrs. Brittany Delbon
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Ann M. DeMaio
 Ms. Mary DeManbey
 Ms. Lorraine Demarest
 Mr. Steve and Mrs. Jean DeVito
 Mr. Ronald and Mrs. Penny Dionne
 Ms. Andrea Dobras
 Dog Days of West Hartford
 Mr. Daniel and Mrs. Ellen P. Dollar
 Mr. John Domijan
 Mr. John and Mrs. Carole G. Donagher
 Mr. Thomas F. and Mrs. Dorothy J. Dorsey
 Ms. Claudette Douglas
 Mr. Victor and Mrs. Jody Dowling
 Mr. Orest and Mrs. Irene Dubno
 Ms. Judy Dworin and Mr. William Lambert
 The EASTER Foundation
 Mr. Robert Edmunds
 Ms. Laurie Egger and Mr. Robert Deutsch
 Ms. Karen Ericson



Susan Linker with Steve Shura, who presented OC with a 5K gift from the Sweetheart Invitational Bowling League.

Mr. Kenneth and Mrs. F. Libbey Farrell
 Ms. Lynda Fee
 Dr. Judd and Mrs. Bella Fink
 Mr. Jeffrey Finley
 Ms. Paula Fischer
 Ms. Lori Stevenson and Mr. Gordon Fishell
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Tracey Fitzpatrick
 Mr. James and Mrs. Jennifer Fitzsimmons
 Mr. William and Mrs. Patricia Flaherty
 Mr. Robert Fochi
 Dr. Alexander and Mrs. Carol Fortier
 Mr. Ray and Mrs. Taryn Fredericksen
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Patricia Fritz
 Gateway Terminal
 Mr. and Mrs. Martin Gavin
 GeminEye Images
 Mr. Chris and Mrs. Diane Gent
 Mr. Ward and Mrs. Carol Glassmeyer
 Mr. Steve and Mrs. Blanche Goldenberg
 Ms. Lori Goldenberg
 Mr. Brian and Mrs. Erin Goldman
 Ms. Carol Goodstein
 Grace United Methodist Church
 Mr. Mark and Mrs. Angela Graham
 Mr. Arthur and Mrs. Zabelle Greenblatt
 Mr. Brian and Mrs. Carol Gregory
 Mr. Lindsey and Mrs. Jane Gruson
 Guild Family Foundation, Inc.



OC Board members Kathy Sullivan and Risa Davidson with volunteer Lynda Thornton.



OC staff members proudly pose for a photo.

Mr. Bill and Mrs. Eva Gurley
 Mr. Bernard and Mrs. Linda Halligan
 Mr. John and Mrs. Veronica Hari
 Hartford Union of the King's Daughters and Sons
 Harry E. Goldfarb Family Foundation
 Mr. Neale and Mrs. Carol Hauss
 Mr. John and Mrs. Cheryl Henderson
 Mrs. Jane Henderson
 Ms. Alice Hendrickson
 Mr. John and Mrs. Debra B. Hernandez
 Ms. Jane Hewitt
 Ms. Kathleen Hunt
 Mr. William Hunter
 Mr. Denis and Mrs. Mary Hyland
 Ms. Judith Ivie and Mr. Jorge A. Parra
 Mr. George and Mrs. Livia Jacobs
 Ms. Frances Jedrzejczyk
 Mr. Theodore P. and Mrs. Ellen S. Jennings
 Ms. Kristen Johnson and Mr. Martin Azzolina
 Mr. Paul and Mrs. Lyn F. Johnson
 Ms. Ann Jones and Mr. Stephen D. Ramsey
 Ms. Judith Jordan
 Ms. Llyn Kaimowitz
 Mrs. Gretchen LaBau
 Ms. Julie Baron and Mr. Patric Lagny
 Mr. Gary and Mrs. Dorrie Lamberg
 Ms. Jayme Lamphere and Mr. Phuc Phan
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Larson
 Ms. Karen R. Laski
 Mr. Robert Lazzerini
 Ms. Karen Fraser and Mr. Ronald LeBleu
 Mr. Scott and Mrs. Noraleen LeClaire
 Mr. Walter and Mrs. Irene Lesniaski
 Mr. Mark and Mrs. Anne Lewchik
 Ms. Sara Linsley
 Mr. John Loge
 Ms. Mary Lowe
 Ms. Karianne Maccalous
 Ms. Sharon MacDonald and Ms. Shirley MacDonald
 Ms. Diane Mack and Ms. Robin Gilmartin
 Ms. Dolores Magraw
 Malkin Fund Inc.
 Mr. Peter and Mrs. Isabel Malkin
 Ms. Diane Manganello
 Mr. Peter Mann
 Ms. Jeanne Coppola and Mr. Paul Manson
 Ms. Leah Martin
 Mr. David Matheson
 Mr. Fred and Mrs. Kay McCarthy
 Ms. Patricia McGuinness
 Ms. Roberta McLean
 Mr. Donald and Mrs. Kathleen McMahan
 Ms. Cheryl Medvetsky

Ms. Janice Melvin and Mr. Jeffrey Friedman
 Dr. Pietro and Mrs. Catherine Memmo
 Ms. Kathy Mangiafico and Mr. Stephen Merlino
 Mr. William and Mrs. Linda Mester
 Mr. Michael Metayer
 Ms. Jacqueline Mickiewicz
 Mr. and Mrs. James Millar
 Mr. Edward and Mrs. Robin Milstein
 Ms. Arlene Mirsky-MacNamara
 Ms. Christine Moffitt
 Ms. Wendy A. Morris
 Mr. Brian Mullen and Mr. Stephen Shura
 Mr. Ethan Musler
 Mr. Scott and Mrs. Kate Musler
 Mr. Peter and Mrs. Cathy Neag
 Mr. Kenneth Nelson
 Ms. Holly Billings and Ms. Marianne Nelson
 Dr. and Mrs. Tony Ness
 Network for Good
 Mr. Mark and Mrs. Luanne Paley
 Mr. Peter Papallo
 Mr. Gary Paradee
 Mr. David and Mrs. Catherine Parsons
 Mr. Richard Pelletier
 Ms. Laura Perlotto
 Mr. Steven and Mrs. Debra Perrelli
 Petcare Veterinary Services
 Mr. Stephen D. and Mrs. Suzanne Petke
 Mr. Scott and Mrs. Gail Petras
 Mr. Francis Pierce
 Ms. Carol Pilbeam
 The Kathy Pingitore Charitable Fund
 Ms. Elizabeth Poirier
 Ms. Margaret McCarthy and Mr. Michael Potter
 Mrs. Dina Pratt
 Ms. Esther Pryor
 Ms Marguerite Purnell
 Mr. Christopher and Mrs. Karen Purrone
 Mr. Michael and Mrs. Cheryl Radzvilowicz
 Mr. Chris and Mrs. Meg Raimo
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Susan Raiola
 Ms. Ann Ramsdell
 Mr. John and Mrs. Susan Rathgeber
 Ms. Elizabeth Reed
 Ms. Alice De Tora and Mr. Gary Reynolds
 Ms. Victoria Ricciuti
 Ms. Sandy Richmond
 Ms. Debra Riendeau
 Ms. Kim Rivest and Mr. Joseph C. Mayo
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Lori Robert
 Mr. Nathan Rochette
 Ms. Che Roehner and Ms. Karen Kluger
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Jill Rosen
 Mr. Ken Rosenblatt
 Mr. David M. and Mrs. Linda H. Roth
 Mrs. Mary Rounsavall
 Ms. Barbara Rubin
 Ms. Diane Samuels
 Ms. Dianna Santos and Mr. Michael Gobar
 Ms. Alison V. Scherer
 Mr. Don and Mrs. Kathy Schmidt
 Dr. Steve and Mrs. Karen L. Schutzer
 Ms. Lorraine Scotti
 Mr. Anthony C. and Mrs. Sharon Scussel
 Ms. Andrea Seader and Mr. Samuel Harrison
 Ms. Lorraine Semnoski
 Ms. Robin Shannon
 Mr. David and Mrs. Joy M. Shepherd
 The Shuskus Family
 Ms. Karen Simpson
 Ms. Claudia J. Sklar and Ms. Caroline Reinish
 Ms. Vi R. Smalley

Mr. William Smith
 Ms. Carol Ann Spencer
 Mr. Peter and Mrs. Judy Spring
 Mr. Michael and Mrs. Carol Stacy
 Mr. Gabe and Mrs. Audrey Stein
 Mr. Morris and Mrs. Nancy Storck
 Ms. Sandy Strain
 Ms. Tera Jensen and Mr. Jeremy Strange
 Ms. Pamela Stratton
 Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Jan Sweitzer
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald Tappin
 Mr. William and Mrs. Harriet Teichert
 Ms. Ginny Tennison
 Ms. Natalie Tepy and Ms. Pamela Wells
 Ms. Lynn Tracy
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tremblay
 Mr. Bronson and Mrs. Nancy Trevor
 Mr. Alexander and Mrs. Judith Trzcinski
 Ms. Nanette Tummers
 UCONN Office of Student Financial Aid
 United Way of Pioneer Valley, Inc.
 United Way of Rhode Island
 United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, Inc.
 Representative Diana Urban
 Mr. John and Mrs. Mary Anne Urquhart
 Verizon Foundation
 Ms. Angela Visone
 Mr. Edward and Mrs. Debbie Voyer
 Mr. Terry and Dr. Mary C. Wakeman
 Mr. James and Mrs. Donna Wakim
 Ms. Katherine Walters
 Ms. Karen Wassell
 Mr. Marty and Mrs. Linda Wasserstein
 Mr. John J. and Mrs. Christine P. Wells
 Mr. Lee and Mrs. Donna Wenzel
 Mr. and Ms. Frank Weston
 Ms. Georgiana White
 Mr. Kevin and Mrs. Joanne Wholey
 Ms. Eva Wickwire
 Mr. Scott and Mrs. Amanda Wieting
 Mr. Al and Mrs. Helen Wilke
 Mr. Don and Mrs. Monica C. Wilson
 X9 Interactive LLC
 Yalesville Veterinary Hospital
 Ms. Vanessa Yi and Mr. Kevin Mounts
 Mr. Edward and Mrs. Kathleen Young
 Ms. Anita L. Zlatev and Mr. Paul S. Szwed
 Ms. Maureen Armstrong and Mr. Adam Zweifler



OC Board of Directors with hosts Linda and Mark Hatten.



Leave a Legacy for the Animals, Become a Member of the Forever Home Society

By including Our Companions in your estate plans, you will become a member of our Forever Home Society. Giving is one of life's greatest satisfactions, especially when you know that your gift will improve the lives of deserving animals for generations to come.

Below is a current listing of the Our Companions Forever Home Society members – we hope you will consider adding your name to this list.

Anonymous	Mrs. Gretchen LaBau
Ms. Elizabeth Aaronsohn	Mrs. Estelle, Langlois
Ms. Mary Jean Agostini	Mr. Mitchell and Mrs. Susan Linker
Mrs. Janet Bailey	Ms. Mary Mansfield
Dr. George and Mrs. Jennifer Barrows	Mr. Robert and Mrs. Susan Mason
Mrs. Deborah Batten	Mr. Roger and Mrs. Barbara Orsie
Ms. Joan Brodeur	Ms. Lida Orzeck
Mr. James and Mrs. Jessica Couzens	Ms. Nancy Parker
Mr. Harry and Mrs. Joan Curry	Mr. Neil and Mrs. Kathy Pierson
Ms. Mary June Day	Ms. Barbara Prine and Mr. Cyprian Martin
Ms. Heather Dennis and Mr. Kevin Gillespie	Mr. Robert and Mrs. Judith W.M. Prohaska
Ms. Christine Durrer	Ms. Barbara Ruben and Ms. June Roy
Ms. Paula Fischer	Ms. Lorraine Semnoski
Mr. Marvin Fried	Mr. Charles and Mrs. Chris Shivery
Ms. Valerie Friedman	Ms. Joanne Singer
Ms. Lyn Garson and Ms. Tara Martin	Ms. Vi Smalley
Mr. Bob and Mrs. Susan Hart	Ms. Joyce Snyder
Ms. Harriet Hersh	Mr. Michael and Mrs. Patricia Starace
Ms. Kim Hoffman	Mr. Patrick and Mrs. Kathleen Sullivan
Ms. Kathy Hucks	Ms. Lynda Thornton
Ms. Kathie Hunter	Mr. Tom and Mrs. Rita Weidman
Ms. Lisa Ireland *	Dr. Gordon and Mrs. Kim Zimmermann
Ms. Dottie Kern	*Deceased



If you have already included Our Companions in your estate plans, please let us know so we can welcome you as a member of the Forever Home Society.

To learn more, please contact Susan Linker at 860-242-9999, ext 301 or email SusanL@OurCompanions.org.

If you wish to name Our Companions in your will or estate plan, we should be named as:

Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary
Legal Address: P.O. Box 956, Manchester, CT 06045

Tax ID number: 41-2047734

Your Financial Support Makes it all Possible

There is nothing more rewarding than witnessing a homeless animal recover from abuse and neglect; watching their personality blossom as they learn to play, cuddle, and trust – and finally, saying goodbye, as they leave for their forever home. The many transformations we have witnessed since Our Companions began have been inspirational, and it is our privilege to offer these beautiful creatures “sanctuary” from the brutality of homelessness.

As you can imagine, providing animals the care they need, while also sustaining our many life-saving programs that directly target pet homelessness, requires significant resources. Everything we do for the animals is made possible thanks to the generosity of people like you. On behalf of these animals and so many others who have found a second chance at Our Companions, we hope you will consider making a generous gift to support our work.

Here's how you can make a tax deductible contribution to the animals:

Online: Please visit us at www.ourcompanions.org/giving.

By check: Please make checks payable to Our Companions Animal Rescue and mail to Our Companions Animal Rescue, P.O. Box 956, Manchester, CT 06045-0956.

Gifts of stock: To make a gift of stock, please contact Susan Linker at 860-242-9999 ext. 301.

Workplace giving:* To make a recurring gift via payroll deduction, contact your employer to see if your company offers this opportunity.

*Contact your HR department to see if your company has a matching gift program. This is a great way to maximize and leverage your support!



Monthly Pet Adoption Events – Successful and Oh So Fun!

By Susan Linker, CEO

When we moved into our new 6,000-square-foot Program Center in Manchester back in January 2013, we knew it would be a great place for all of our programs, including our many dog training and behavior classes, educational seminars for the community, and our TNR (Trap/Neuter/Return) program for feral cats. We also hoped that it would prove to be the ideal location for monthly adoption events, and indeed it has. Each month since our Program Center opened, we have held a Pet Adoption Event, and through these efforts, have successfully placed dozens of animals into loving homes.

If you are looking to add a pet to your household, we hope you will visit one of our upcoming adoption events and meet the many beautiful animals who are longing to find their forever homes. Please help us spread the word to your friends, coworkers and family, because the more animals we find good homes for, the more at-risk animals we can help. Thanks in advance and we hope to see you at a Pet Adoption Event soon!

Our Companions Monthly Pet Adoption Events

Valerie Friedman Program Center
34C Sanrico Drive, Manchester
10am – Noon

- May 17
- June 21*
- July 19
- Aug. 16
- Sept. 20
- Oct. 18
- Nov. 15
- Dec. 13

*Join us on June 21st for “The Big Lick Event” a Super Adoption Day and Community Ice Cream Party! More details can be found at OurCompanions.org.

We ALL Found Homes!



Ferris - a stray wandering streets of Bloomfield found his perfect forever home at the November event.



Snagglepuss - showed off his famous Pick Me face and it worked!



Bruiser - Who could resist this face? One lucky adopter at the February event just couldn't!



A young visitor admires Baby, a cat who soon after found his forever home.



It Takes Two

TJ and Rosie's story could have been written by the best romance writer. We're not talking about instant love between a human and her feline companion. We're talking about feline to feline – and it all happened at the sanctuary.

Injured and abandoned on the side of the road, TJ, a young tuxedo cat, was discovered by construction workers who promptly brought him to a vet's office for medical care. Because they were unable to pay for the surgery needed on his broken jaw, TJ was doomed to be euthanized. However, the kind-hearted vet could not bring himself to end TJ's life, once she noted how spirited and sweet he was.

The vet contacted Our Companions about TJ and his need for special rehabilitative treatment. Under OC's care, TJ received his surgery and slowly began to mend, all the while showing off his quirky, fun personality. Visitors to the sanctuary began to see him as OC's unofficial mascot.

"He was having a hard time in the beginning," noted OC's Feline Sanctuary Director Laura Jordan. "We weren't sure if he had brain damage, and he sometimes was unpredictable with other cats and volunteers, so he had a hard time making friends."

In came Rosie to the rescue. Rosie was a dainty calico cat, young and shy. "Yet she seemed to have a calming influence on TJ who was outgoing and naughty. He, on the other hand, brought Rosie out of her shell," said Laura.

The two began to play together. If TJ began to play too roughly with Rosie, he would stop, knowing that he was playing inappropriately. In turn, Rosie's shyness began to fade as she became more confident under TJ's protection. The two began napping together, often grooming each other, a true sign of affection between cats. "He gave her self-confidence and protection. She gave him a sense of peacefulness and affection that he so needed," observed Laura.

Because of their special bond, OC was determined to adopt them out as a pair. "I always tell potential adopters that two cats are just about



Rosie and TJ napping together at the sanctuary.



TJ at the sanctuary.



Rosie at the sanctuary.

as easy to care for as one," explained Laura. "And they really do keep each other company, especially if you're going to be away during the day for a long period of time. It also makes their transition into a new home that much easier, as they have each other."

How appropriate that on Valentine's Day this loving couple found their forever home with a compassionate woman who has also provided care and shelter for strays in the past. The two are thriving together, eagerly exploring their new surroundings and bonding with their human companion who claims they are the "new loves of her life."

Sometimes it takes two to make a happy home.



TJ and Rosie continue their loving cuddles in their new home!



Honoring America's Dog

In light of how the pet adoption process has changed over the past several years, finding the perfect dog for your family has become a bit more complicated. As reported in our cover story, our local shelters have an abundance of pit bulls and pit bull mixes. These dogs make wonderful pets, yet are frequently overlooked because they are considered to be intimidating and aggressive. The misconceptions surrounding the breed negatively impact the chances of their being adopted, and for those in the animal rescue field, this is discouraging and even heartbreaking. I spoke with Marie Joyner about her experience with the breed, the public's perception, and how it impacts Our Companions' ability to help these needy dogs.

"It's not uncommon for people to visit the sanctuary and spend time cuddling on a couch with one of our adoptable pit bulls – snuggling and just falling in love," said Marie. "When adopters finally ask, 'what breed is she?' and I respond, 'a pit bull,' they jump off the couch and leave the cottage."

While there are things to consider when adopting a pit bull (and people should use caution with *all* dogs), this over-generalized fear has prompted people to consider these loyal dogs (once known as America's Dog) as some type of monster, and is largely unfounded. We hope to give you an honest assessment of pit bulls and encourage those who are right for the breed to consider adopting one.

The term "pit bull" doesn't describe one breed of dog. The type of dog identified as a pit bull can vary – it can actually mean any of several

breeds with similar physical characteristics. Pit bulls were initially bred to assist hunters of large game and they are different from other canines; pit bulls are used to working hard and playing hard. They were not bred to live or work in packs; however, they typically do very well in pairs and in fact seem to fare better as part of a male/female duo. Pit bulls do have terrier in them and while many enjoy the company of felines, there are those who are not good with cats. Before bringing any dog into a household where a feline is present, the dog should be tested to make sure he or she is compatible with cats.

Like people, each dog is unique and should be considered as an individual. Depending upon your lifestyle and what you are looking for in a pet, a pit bull may be a great fit for your household. Pit bulls tend to be intelligent, active dogs and need to be challenged with mental and physical exercises on a regular basis. Plenty of activities, such as running, agility training, and games of fetch, are important to their well-being.

As with all breeds, especially pit bulls, ensuring proper socialization with other dogs and people is essential throughout their lives and is particularly important during puppyhood. Another thing to consider is that some companies providing homeowners insurance will not cover pit bulls, but State Farm is one that does.

Local animal shelters screen their dogs carefully and you can ask the animal control officers (ACOs) what they know about the dogs in their care. If the ACOs do not have detailed back-



Lucy, a smart, beautiful one year-old pit bull has been at the Ashford sanctuary for months.

ground information on a dog, they can share their own observations with you.

In the past few years, *Our Companions News* has featured stories about unforgettable pit bull companions, including the amazing Arthur (Marie Joyner's beloved pet) and Johnny Angel, a happy, gentle, and loving pit bull who is now living with humans and other animals as part of a wonderful family.

At the present time, *Our Companions* is looking for a home for Lucy, a smart, beautiful one year-old pit bull who has been at the Ashford sanctuary for months now. She is gentle and friendly, and even a bit on the shy side. Lucy has many friends at the sanctuary and we hope to find the right match for her forever home. We hope you will consider visiting the sanctuary and meeting her – you might just fall in love!



Our Companions Canine Operations Director, Marie Joyner, receives questions every day about dogs and their behavioral issues. Marie's Den answers some of the more commonly asked questions.

Marie's Den

To submit a question for consideration in a future edition of Marie's Den, call us at 860-242-9999, ext. 301, or e-mail editor@ourcompanions.org.



Are You Harming Your Pets?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 42.1 million people in the United States unknowingly participate in an act that results in the premature death of their pets. This same act causes 1,300 human deaths in the United States every day. And every single day more than 3,200 people under the age of 18 begin to do this. Are you harming your pet? Unfortunately, the answer is yes – if you are a smoker.

Cigarette, pipe and cigar smoking in the house exposes your pets to second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is that which is exhaled by a smoker and also the smoke given off by tobacco products when burned, such as with a lit cigarette. Pets become exposed by involuntary smoke inhalation.

Carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, arsenic, tar and nicotine are just a few of the more than 4,000 chemicals and cancer-causing agents contained in second-hand smoke. Research has shown that exposure to second-hand smoke is responsible for causing cancer and many health-related issues in pets.

Lung and nasal cancers are the two most common cancers in dogs exposed to second-hand smoke. Studies show that due to living in smoking households, dogs with long noses, such as collies and shepherds, develop nasal cancer 2.5 times more often than those in non-smoking households. In bulldogs, pugs and other short-nosed breeds, the smoke passes through the nose and is directly inhaled into the lungs (just as in people) resulting in lung cancer 1.6 times more often than in dogs from

non-smoking households.

Cats from smoking households, especially those living indoors under constant exposure to second-hand smoke, are even more susceptible to developing cancer than dogs. Because second-hand smoke is airborne, cats are exposed not only by breathing it in but also by grooming themselves. Smoke residue settles onto the cat's coat and toxins are literally eaten by the cat when licking their fur. The risk to cats increases the longer they live in a house with smokers and the more they are directly exposed to smoke. When two or more people in the household smoke, a cat is four times more likely to develop cancer than cats from non-smoking households. Malignant lymphoma and oral squamous cell carcinoma are two deadly cancers seen in cats caused by second-hand smoke. Both types of cancer are fast growing and a high percentage of cats die from these cancers within one year of diagnosis.

Constant exposure to smoking environments also predisposes cats and dogs to lung disease, respiratory problems, and eye irritation, and can make them depressed and lethargic.

Exotic pets including birds, rabbits, and rats are also affected by second-hand smoke due to their sensitive respiratory systems which are susceptible to lung cancer and pneumonia when living in smoking environments.

Second-hand smoke is not the only danger to pets in smoking households. The tobacco itself is poisonous due to the nicotine content. Nicotine is also found in products designed to help



people stop smoking, such as nicotine gum, inhalers, patches, and nasal sprays. Keep in mind that these products, even after discarded, still contain residual amounts of nicotine.

Cigar and cigarette butts left in ashtrays can be inviting for cats to play with, often resulting in fatal consequences. It only takes a small amount of nicotine for cats to become ill or die. Dogs, especially puppies, will also play with and chew on tobacco products left unattended or in ash trays. Signs of nicotine toxicity in dogs can be seen after only ingesting one cigar or a few cigarette butts.

Smoking outside greatly reduces toxins but does not totally eliminate them. At the very least providing HEPA air purifiers and smoke-free rooms within the house may help. If you are not willing or able to quit smoking for your own health, consider quitting for the health of your pet. Remember: when you smoke, your pet smokes too.



Technically Speaking is written by Certified Veterinary Technician, Lyn T. Garson, to address basic information on animal health issues and how they needn't be barriers to adopting a great pet.

Technically speaking

To submit a question for consideration in a future edition of *Technically Speaking*, call us at 860-242-9999, ext. 301, or e-mail editor@ourcompanions.org.

Do you have an idea for a future article in Our Companions News?

Email us at susanl@ourcompanions.org for consideration.



Putting an End to the Unwanted 3 a.m. Wakeup Call

I had a great friend and co-volunteer named Lisa Ireland who once told me she would take in absolutely ANY foster cat that I needed her to, except the “talkers.” I never understood why she was so opposed. I mean, who doesn’t like a little back and forth banter with their cats? That was until recently, when one of my cats started screaming bloody murder around 3 a.m. and every morning since. Mirabelle has always been somewhat of a talker, but mostly her mouth and face would make a “mew” and nothing really would come out. Well those well-rested vocal chords are in full use now! This recent vocalization got me thinking that there must be something wrong or she must need something — and if I ever wanted to get another full night’s sleep, I’d better figure out what!

Cats are nocturnal by nature, and despite their patterns’ becoming more diurnal with domestication, they will most likely still wake at least a few times during the night. If, like Mirabelle, your cat’s screaming is something new, and especially if it is also occurring during the day, we recommend taking your cat to the vet to rule out any medical issues. Perhaps your feline is stressed and wants you to know about it. Stressors could include anything that may have changed in their daily routine, such as a new member in the household, a new home, or a rearrangement of furniture. Also take into consideration the age of your cat. Senior cats have a tendency to have weakened eyesight and hearing as they age, and this may be causing confusion and stress in your cat who is now clamoring for reassurance from you.

Another possibility is boredom or hunger. Being mainly nocturnal, this is a feline’s favorite time to hunt, play and eat. They’re just trying to get you to join in their fun, or at the very least, put



down some nice fresh wet food because they have no interest in that dried-up stuff you put out at 7 p.m. (you know, “normal” dinner time).

Here are some tips for managing your early-morning opera singer:

- Night lights can help prevent an aging cat from getting confused in a dark house.
- Give your cat additional attention. If stress is the cause, providing affection or grooming will help reassure her that everything is going to be okay.
- Adjust dinner time to right before you go to sleep. Cats will most likely sleep after a meal. Another option is an automatic feeder that can be set to dispense food at different times. This will encourage your hungry tiger to wait by the feeder for food rather than jumping on your stomach or swatting at your batting eyelashes while you sleep in hopes of being fed.

- Have an interactive play session with your cat before bed and several times during the day if possible. Use fishing pole style toys to help tire them out. A cat that is awake more during the day stands a better chance of sleeping during the night.
- Offer activities for self-play during the night. Scratching posts, scattered treats or a paper bag – anything that may help them to self-entertain.
- Do not feed your cat as soon as you get up. This will cause them to associate getting out of bed with their being fed.

Almost more important than what to do, is what NOT to do. Above all, DO NOT GET UP. Do not talk to your cat. Do not pet your cat. Unless your cat is ill or injured, tending to him/her in the middle of the night will only reinforce that waking you up works! Once your cat learns that screaming will get him nowhere, he will stop and you will go back to getting a good night’s sleep.

References:

www.aspc.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/cat-behavior/nighttime-activity-cats

www.catchat.org/meowing.html

pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/cats-excessive-meowing



Andrea Dobras is an Our Companions Board member and one of our animal welfare professionals. She specializes in the placement of cats with FIV. In this regular feature, she helps others with the most complex cat conundrums.

The Scoop

To submit a question for consideration in a future edition of *The Scoop*, call us at 860-242-9999, ext. 301, or e-mail editor@ourcompanions.org.




Cats Limited
VETERINARY HOSPITAL PC

*Your Cat's Family Doctor
for over 18 years!*

**COMPLETE HEALTH CARE
FOR YOUR CAT
INCLUDING
HOUSECALLS!**



AAHA
ACCREDITED
The Standard of
Excellence Cats Limited is proud to be the first feline-
only hospital in Connecticut
that is accredited by the
American Animal Hospital Association






Cat Friendly Practice
By the American Association of Feline Practitioners

1260 New Britain Ave
West Hartford, CT
(860) 561-9885

www.CatsLimited.com

 Facebook.com/CatsLimited

FRONTIER MEDICINE
A Broader View of Your Pets Healthcare

A professional office with experienced veterinarians who are certified in veterinary acupuncture and chiropractic and accomplished in many effective holistic modalities.

**Allys Maybank, VMD
Amy Matthews, VMD PhD**

860-653-7831
17 South Main Street, East Granby, CT
www.frontiervetmed.com

Leaving Again?

Do you have someone to care for your pet when you're away?

We offer: Pet Sitting Services
Vacation Services • Mid-Day Dog Walks

Call for a free consultation
860-231-0494




"We treat your pets like family"

WestHartfordPetSitters.com
whpetsitters@yahoo.com • Bonded & Fully Insured

Client and
Veterinary
Recommended

**Custom software applications
and database systems**
to help your business compete in a demanding marketplace.

Sales Support • Ordering Systems
Reporting Applications
Information solutions that enhance efficiency,
save time and reduce costs.



JTECHWORKS
Putting Your Information to Work

JTechWorks, LLC
Rocky Hill
860-563-5930
JTechWorks.com



Volunteer with your dog!

Therapy Dog Training Classes Now Forming
Manchester, New Britain, Willington

Sponsored by **Tails of Joy, Inc.** Animal Assisted Therapy



Sharing Through
the Comfort of Animals

Contact **Sue Gagnon** 860-487-0001
smgagnon@charter.net

www.TailsofJoy.org

**LIBERTY
TAX
SERVICE®**

Income Tax Preparation • Bookkeeping

**TAX
EXPERTS**

We can help!

860-432-9494
290 Main Street, Manchester, CT

Journal Inquirer

The JI Tells It Like It Is. Somebody Has To.

Serving the following communities with local, state and national news, weather and sports

**East Windsor, Enfield, Somers,
Suffield, Windsor, Windsor Locks,
Andover, Bolton, Coventry,
East Hartford, Hebron, Manchester
Ellington, South Windsor,
Stafford, Tolland, Vernon**

306 Progress Dr., Manchester, CT 860-646-0500 • 800-237-3606

**veterinary
SPECIALISTS of CT**

General and Specialty Practice

Our general hospital provides routine healthcare & surgery for small animals including dogs, cats and exotics.

Our state-of-the-art referral hospital offers expanded services including:

- ✦ On-site MRI facility
- ✦ Physical Rehabilitation
- ✦ Ultrasound

www.veterinarianspecialistsofct.com

Our Board Certified Specialists diagnose and treat complex diseases and perform advanced procedures.

Jeffrey L. Berzon, DVM, DACVS
Steven S. Leshem, DVM, DACVS
Kenneth E. Knaack, DVM, DACVIM
Elizabeth Goldman, DVM, DACVIM
Harlan C. Gustafson, DVM
Deidre S. Galbo, DVM
Mary Zee, BVetMed

**993 North Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06117
(860) 236-3273**



FRONTIER WELLNESS *For People and Pets*



Catering to health care therapies and items for pets and their people.

- Advanced Allergy Therapeutics
- For People:** Dr. Carla Hutt, ND
- For Animals:** Dr. Allys Maybank, VMD
- Self Care Therapies and Supplements
- Health Care Items
- Gifts

860-653-7831

17 South Main St, East Granby, CT

www.frontiervetmed.com




120 Linwood Ave (Rte 16) Colchester, CT

860-537-3431

800-545-GANO

www.ganos.com

STIHL IS THE NUMBER ONE SELLING BRAND OF GASOLINE-POWERED HANDHELD OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT IN AMERICA*

Market size selling brand based on worldwide Sales Data Research Company's analysis of retail sales as reported by consumer research of 2010-2011 U.S. sales and market share data for the gasoline-powered handheld outdoor power equipment category combined sales to various professional contractors.

<p>FS 55 R TRIMMER \$21995</p> <p>Versatile, straight-shaft trimmer for around-the-home or light-duty professional use</p> <p>Can use nylon line or STIHL PolyCut™ head</p> <p>Simple line advancement and replacement</p>		<p>MS 180 C-B CHAIN SAW \$19995</p> <p>18" bar</p> <p>Quick Chain Adjuster for fast and easy toolless chain adjustment</p>	
		<p>HS 45 HEDGE TRIMMER \$29995</p> <p>18" blade</p> <p>Powerful, lightweight and easy to use</p> <p>Features double-sided reciprocating blades with integrated cutter guard</p>	

DOUBLE YOUR WARRANTY

WHEN YOU PURCHASE 5 BOTTLES OF STIHL HP ULTRA OIL OR 5 GALLONS OF STIHL MotoMix™ PREMIXED FUEL. Double limited warranty protection applies to STIHL gasoline-powered products purchased and registered for personal or non-commercial purposes, strictly within the United States only. Other restrictions apply. See dealer for details. All prices MSRP. Available at participating dealers while supplies last. © 2012 STIHL.

800.225.7266 /// www.hoffmanauto.com

600-750 Connecticut Blvd., East Hartford, CT 06108

36-46 Albany Tnpk., West Simsbury, CT 06092

490 Broad St., New London, CT 06032





P.O. Box 956
Manchester, CT 06045-0956
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
PERMIT No. 1754

meet our
Reubenesque 
Beauties



Dusty

Had a long day at work? Dusty will give you the warmest welcome home. You'll walk through your door and he'll come running, looking smashing in his beautiful charcoal grey coat, with those soulful eyes and a heart chock-full of love, ready to bestow on you. Already have a cat or dog? No problem! Dusty loves everyone, and there's enough of him to go around!



Polly

You will find this voluptuous green-eyed beauty hard to resist. Don't even try, you don't stand a chance! She will lovingly brush against you with her dead man's curves (check out that loveable belly!) and hypnotize you with her melodic purr. But be warned: she's dangerous - once you meet her you will never forget her. Snuggling is her forte.



Noah

Talk about sociable - Noah loves people! He likes to sit himself down in the midst of everyone and take in the conversation. He also loves to play, especially with his laser pointer. As you can probably tell, Noah loves his vittles. But who doesn't? He's a big boy with an extra big heart full of love. And talk about easy-going? This is one relaxed cat who easily adjusts to new environments. Noah will be a great companion with his happy-go-lucky nature.