



The Importance of “R” in TNR

*Returning a Feral Cat
After Sterilization*

Plus:

Healing Journeys: Helping Animals with Medical Challenges
We Did It! OC Meets the Newman’s Own Foundation Sanctuary Challenge
Unique Training Helps Dogs Gain Confidence
Feline Fun for All Nine Lives

Something to Chew On

Dear Friends,

In 2015, our family of donors and volunteers contributed to our success in unprecedented ways. We were overwhelmed and humbled by the extraordinary outpouring of generosity in support of the Newman's Own Foundation Sanctuary Challenge. The Newman's Own Foundation, which has long championed our work, set forth a great fundraising challenge. The Foundation pledged \$100,000 toward our Capital Campaign to build four more cottages – doubling the number of animals at our Sanctuary in Ashford, Connecticut – if we met our ambitious \$850,000 Annual Fund goal by December 31, 2015.

Thanks to you, we not only met the Challenge, procuring the \$100,000 grant for the Capital Campaign, but we significantly exceeded our Annual Fund goal. These Annual Fund monies will allow us to help even more animals in need this year. With one hundred percent of our funding coming from donations, you can imagine what this Annual Fund success story means to Our Companions.

This generous gift towards the Sanctuary also provides an excellent starting point for our Capital Campaign. We hope to complete the Campaign by year's end and begin construction in early 2017.

Volunteer participation was remarkable in 2015. Our volunteer staff expanded to more than 400 members giving close to 200 hours each week in volunteer service.

We could not respond to the more than 4,500 calls we receive annually on our Animal Helpline, operate the Sanctuary, find homes for hundreds of pets each year – many of whom are elderly and/or have special needs – offer low-cost dog training classes, and provide the many other life-saving services without this team of dedicated volunteers who make up the backbone of our workforce.

Everything we do for the most vulnerable animals among us, some of whom you will read about in the following pages, is made possible by you. Thank you for being part of our organization and helping us fulfill our promise to always do the right thing for animals, regardless of the challenge or cost.

On behalf of the people and pets we serve, thank you.



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 Officers

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

Our Companions Directors

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

Our Companions Advisory Board

Janet Bailey
Patricia Foley
Jamila Hadj-Salem
Linda Hatten
Lisa Holzwarth
Gretchen LaBau
Anne Llewellyn
Lauren Mascola
Alex Oldershaw
Damon Scott
Maneesh Shanbhag
Ed Young
Adam Zweifler

Our Companions News Editorial Board

Jennifer Barrows, *Editor*
Kelly Alver
Jessica Beganski
Mary deManbey
Lyn Garson, CVT, CCRP, *Assistant Editor*
Julie Stankiewicz
William Wilson

Graphic Design

Mandy Wieting

860-242-9999

OurCompanions.org

P.O. Box 956
Manchester, CT
06045-0956



The Importance of “R” in TNR



Returning a Feral Cat After Sterilization

by Mary L. deManbey

Animal rescue organizations have long advocated the importance of keeping cats inside in order to help ensure that they experience long and healthy lives. Our Companions Animal Rescue is no exception. However, there is one population that doesn't fit in to this philosophy – feral cats. They can lead relatively long and healthy lives outside with proper care and attention. In fact, living outside is considered best for them for their psychological and physical well-being.

“We absolutely advocate keeping feral cats outdoors in the same location they were trapped,” says Caroline Gaetano, Program Manager at Our Companions, who also directs Our Companions' Sterile Feral Program, which utilizes a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) approach. “If feral cat caregivers trap and bring their feral cat inside and keep them as indoor pets, these cats just aren't happy. They're skittish and will more than likely spend the majority of their life hiding under the sofa.”

While Our Companions recommends trapping, neutering, and returning feral cats to their original location, it is possible that over time some cats may form trusting relationships with people and may very well evolve to become housecats. However, we suggest giving them the option, rather than forcing confinement on them.

To better understand the feral cat's need to live outside, it's important to understand the difference between feral cats and stray cats. According to the American Humane Association, a stray cat is a pet who has been lost or abandoned, is used to contact with people, and is tame enough to be adopted with the right care and socialization. A feral cat is the offspring of stray or feral cats (usually born outside) and is not accustomed to human contact, and therefore becomes fearful of people. Feral cats will:

- Not approach you, whereas a stray cat will exhibit some curiosity;
- Curl their tails around their bodies for protection;



Feral cats can live happy lives when sterilized and cared for daily.



- Crouch, whereas strays will stand up straight, often with their tails standing upright;
- Remain quiet, unlike a stray who is sometimes vocal;
- Appear mainly at nighttime, as they are nocturnal – a stray will often appear during the daytime;
- Have eyes that appear fearful and unblinking, whereas a stray cat's eyes sometimes show acceptance and slow, friendly blinking;
- Appear well-kept (as opposed to a stray's often disheveled look).

Upon closer observation, feral cats can be likened to their much wilder, bigger relatives – lions and tigers. The ancestral gene wins out with a little bit of the wild remaining in them. This desire to be one with their natural environment is key to their survival and inner life. Well-intentioned cat lovers who see a cat braving the winter cold will want to capture that cat and keep her inside. More than likely, the feral cat will not be approachable or will have erratic behavior, if brought inside (i.e., trying to climb walls and jump through windows), causing some rescuers to resort to keeping these

Continued on page 4

cats in cages. This kind of treatment is like confining a tiger to a cage, when he is used to surviving and thriving in the jungle. It’s simply inhumane because it denies them the ability to exercise every natural feline behavior.

Good Intentions Gone Awry

Some well-intentioned yet misguided animal control and animal welfare organizations believe that feral cats need to be taken to shelters. Their assumption is that these cats await terrible fates from disease, injuries and human cruelty, if left outside to fend for themselves. The sad truth is that the majority of feral cats taken to shelters are eventually euthanized. A 2006 study found that of 103,643 stray and feral cats examined in spay/neuter clinics in six states from 1993 to 2004, less than 1% of those cats needed to be euthanized due to debilitating conditions, trauma, or infectious diseases.⁽¹⁾ Keeping feral cats in their outside homes, according to research, actually is a stronger indicator that they will lead longer and healthier lives. In 2003, a long-term study of a Trap-Neuter-Return program noted that 83% of the cats present at the end of the observation period had been there for more than six years.⁽²⁾

“We would never suggest putting them in shelters or contacting Animal Control for reasons other than providing TNR assistance,” continues Gaetano. “They just aren’t adoptable and more than likely they will be euthanized after enduring a highly traumatic experience.”

Other well-intentioned rescuers claim that by bringing feral cats inside, the risk of transferring rabies to humans is diminished – and yet, there hasn’t been a confirmed case of a cat transmitting rabies to a human in 30 years. In 2008, only 294 cases of rabies were reported in cats, both pet and feral.⁽³⁾ That’s just 4.3% of all rabies cases reported in animals that year.

Sometimes a feral cat’s tendency to prey on wildlife is of concern to people, and can lead to efforts to remove the cat from that location. Cat lovers and wildlife lovers, in general, agree that cats should not be outside and that the goal should be to reduce the number of cats living outdoors. In fact, the only way to solve the problems presented by feral cats is to



Volunteers during a feral cat shelter building workshop.



This feral cat lives in a garage with a heated bed.

reduce the cat population. The only way to effectively and permanently reduce the population is through TNR.

Attempts to permanently remove cats from an area always fail because of a natural and scientifically-documented phenomenon known as the vacuum effect. In basic terms, whenever cats are removed (either by extermination, relocation or by being brought indoors), new cats move in – or the surviving cats left behind breed to capacity, in effect, replacing those cats who were removed from the colony.

The lean physique of some feral cats sometimes leads Animal Control and others to claim that the cats are starving or ill, but a 2002

study found that feral cats have healthy body weights and fat distribution.⁽⁴⁾ If they may be a little leaner than the cat on your couch, it’s the result of a different lifestyle, not because they’re suffering or sick. Neutering feral cats can further improve weight gain and coat condition – just one more of the many ways Trap-Neuter-Return improves feral cats’ lives.

The “R” in TNR

Our Companions’ Sterile Feral Program trains those who are feeding feral cats how to trap these animals humanely and care for them in their outdoor homes. Humane traps can be provided along with low-cost spay/neuter services. It’s important to sterilize and vaccinate all the cats in the colony so that

the caregiver's neighborhood is less likely to experience the growth of a large colony of cats. Unfortunately, some rescuers, in an attempt to prevent the proliferation of a cat colony in their neighborhood, will opt to relocate the cat(s) somewhere else.

"We don't suggest relocating," says Gaetano. "Where they are now – it's their home. It's what they know. They have grown up there and have figured out where to go for food and shelter and have negotiated territory with other cats in the area. They understand the predators in their neighborhood and the traffic patterns. If you move them to a new location, you are significantly increasing their exposure to unknown dangers and threats, and dumping them straight into the territory of other cats, which will likely lead to dangerous territory disputes."

Caroline notes that if a caregiver moves away, Our Companions will work with that client to move the feeding station and shelter to a place not far away from the original location, and will work with the client to identify someone else in the neighborhood to care for the colony.

Quality of Life

Rescuers and cat lovers alike have long debated the issue of quantity over quality and indoor versus outdoor living for cats. Feral cats fall into a special category where quality of life is connected to their natural habitat outdoors. "You might think it's better to keep a feral cat indoors, but its quality of life has been diminished," says Gaetano. They were born to live outdoors. If they have a dedicated caregiver, if they've been sterilized and vaccinated, if they have a reliable food source, and warm dry shelter, they really do quite well, and they have a good life. They also have the socialization of the other feral cats they live with."

And in some very special cases – and likely over a period of time – there may be a feral cat or two who will gain your trust and decide that you're special enough to have them as your housecat – in which case, they will let you know and move right in.

For more information on how to care for feral cats, contact Caroline Gaetano at Caroline@ourcompanions.org.



A feral cat being released after sterilization.



This feral cat joined an existing colony – they currently live peacefully together.

References

- [1] Wallace, Jennifer L, and Julie K Levy, "Population Characteristics of Feral Cats Admitted to Seven Trap-Neuter-Return Programs in the United States," *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery* 8 (2006): 279-284.
- [2] Levy, Julie K, et al., "Evaluation of the Effect of a Long-Term Trap-Neuter-Return and Adoption Program on a Free-Roaming Cat Population," *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 222, no. 1 (2003): 42-46.
- [3] Blanton, Jesse D, et al., "Rabies Surveillance in the United States during 2008." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 235, no. 6 (2009): 676-689
- (4) Scott, Karen C, et al., "Body Condition of Feral Cats and the Effect of Neutering," *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* 5, no. 3 (2002): 203-213

Healing Journeys: Helping Animals with Medical Challenges

By Julie Stankiewicz



At Our Companions, we believe that all animals deserve a second chance. Animals who arrive at our Sanctuary sick or injured receive whatever is necessary to give them their best chance at reclaiming health and living a happy and pain-free life.

“Animals who are suffering and vulnerable due to physical or emotional trauma deserve the most compassionate care that we can provide,” says CEO Susan Linker. “We are absolutely humbled by the resilience of these brave animals. Witnessing how gracefully they recover only furthers our conviction to be there for them in their time of need.”

When Xavier and Johnny arrived at Our Companions Sanctuary, neither of them could have imagined how magnificently their lives were about to change. As a result of many years of neglect, both suffered from chronic, painful, and difficult-to-treat medical conditions. They had never experienced life in a safe place with people they could trust. For them, their time at the Sanctuary served not only to heal their physical bodies, but also to heal their spirits by enriching their lives with new comforts, friendships, and adventures. Most importantly, they were given the opportunity to begin promising new lives with families of their own – lives full of love, joy, and fulfillment.

Xavier Sees a Bright New Future

Xavier lived on his own as a stray cat for many years and nearly starved until a kind couple rescued him and contacted Our Companions on his behalf. While he entered a warm, safe environment at our Sanctuary, the tremendous hardships of life on the streets left Xavier with serious medical issues.

Xavier had a painful condition known as entropion, in which his lower eyelids folded inward, causing his eyelashes to constantly rub against and irritate his eyes. Left untreated, entropion results in ulcers to the cornea as well as vision loss. Most likely as a result of having to fight for food and territory with other



Xavier in his new home with Kim Adamski, Sanctuary volunteer.

cats, Xavier’s eyelids also had cuts that had not healed properly. On top of his ophthalmic conditions, this poor kitty had five teeth that were infected or fractured, as well as FIV (feline immunodeficiency virus).

Multiple surgeries performed by a veterinary ophthalmologist were needed to repair Xavier’s eyelids as well as to remove a corneal ulcer. Xavier’s fractured and infected teeth were removed, and his mouth healed beautifully as staff and volunteers spoiled him with unlimited wet food. With much love and attention, Xavier recovered from these procedures in the comfort of his own room at the feline rescue cottage.

Xavier conveyed his appreciation by eagerly greeting Sanctuary visitors with purrs and lap visits, quickly becoming a heart-stealer and a favorite at the rescue cottage.

Sanctuary volunteer Kim Adamski immediately noticed this sweet and special soul. The first time she met Xavier, he was cuddling under a blanket. “When I moved the blanket to pet him he started purring. He couldn’t really open his

eyes [at that point] but he seemed so happy to be paid attention to.” As Kim continued to visit Xavier, he frequently found comfort sitting in her lap. “Although he had some bald spots and goopy eyes, he was so sweet I had to adopt him,” said Kim.

Kim and Xavier are now family to one another, and couldn’t be happier together. Xavier often stares out the window in eager anticipation of Kim’s arrival in the afternoon, and happily runs to the door to greet her. “He is the best friend I could have,” says Kim. “He is almost always interested in hanging out with me and we do lots of things together, from watching TV, to napping, to eating our meals. He also sleeps in my bed most nights and cuddles with me, which I love.”

Johnny Finds a Family of His Own

Ironically, Johnny’s opportunity for a fresh start began on what could have potentially been the worst day of his life. On a sweltering summer day more than two years ago, this beautiful black Labrador retriever was abandoned and found lying in the road adjacent to the property

of Our Companions Sanctuary. Neighbors raced to the Sanctuary in a panic, afraid that this cruelly discarded dog might be suffering from heatstroke. Our Companions staff immediately came to his rescue, and welcomed him as a guest in one of the canine cottages.

Based on Johnny's presentation, Our Companions Director of Canine Operations, Marie Joyner, surmised that he was probably used as a breeding dog for many years and had never received veterinary care. Following many years of brutal neglect, Johnny suffered from a long list of health conditions, including elephantized skin, cracked skin on the bottom of his feet, ear, eye, and urinary tract infections, food allergies, anemia, and a lump that required surgical removal.

Our Companions staff knew that this lovable guy needed many special comforts in addition to proper veterinary care to recover from the lifetime of exploitation he experienced. To ease the discomfort of Johnny's skin conditions, volunteers bathed him and applied lotion to his sore skin every other day. He wore special socks and boots that made it possible for him to walk outside in the winter despite the painfully cracked skin on his paws. The long overdue love and attention that Johnny received, in addition to a special diet and veterinary care, slowly and beautifully restored his energy and spirit.

As soon as Johnny's health began to improve, he found a world of new adventures and joys waiting for him. A happy and friendly dog by nature, Johnny easily developed close relationships with Sanctuary volunteers as well as



Johnny in his new home with his adopter Courtney Swanson.

other dogs. During visiting hours, he became a Sanctuary mascot who loved being in the spotlight and entertaining guests. In addition, Johnny traveled to the Manchester Training Center each week to participate in the Buddy Project, a program in which at-risk youths train homeless dogs to increase their adoptability.

After two years of living at the Sanctuary, Johnny finally received the greatest joy of all – a new family of his own. The Swanson family had been wanting to add another dog to their family for quite some time. When they met Johnny at the Sanctuary, "He was right there to greet us with a smile and wagging tail," says Courtney Swanson. At the home visit, Johnny eagerly explored the unfamiliar surroundings, and then "flopped down on the couch behind my dad. It was like he was home."

Neglected for so many years, Johnny now has the unconditional love of Courtney and her parents Carol and Frank Swanson. He enjoys daily walks, car rides, cuddling in front of the TV, as well as naps and doggy daycare with his new "brother" Todd, a six-year-old puggle.

"Having Johnny in our home is such a joy," says Courtney. "He's the happiest guy I've ever met. No matter what's going on, he wants to be a part of it, and he's always smiling or wagging his tail. He has a disposition we should all aspire to: seeing every little thing as the greatest thing ever."

Congratulations Xavier and Johnny! Your friends at Our Companions wish you many years of happiness in your new homes!

Maurice and Kaylee are all about having fun! Both are at our Sanctuary in Ashford waiting for a forever home. To learn more, email us at HelpLine@OurCompanions.org.



Maurice
Loveable lap cat, playful, curious and absolutely loves attention!



Kaylee
Goofy, athletic, intelligent and loves playing with tennis balls!





Inspired Giving

The amazing ripple effect created by one couple in their “own back yard”

By Jennifer Barrows

Joleen Nevers and James Larabee almost have a hard time recounting the many ways they have been involved in Our Companions over the years. Of course, one big reason is that they are humble about their involvement and their giving, like most animal lovers and supporters of OC. They are quick to point out that they don't think their giving is particularly extraordinary. “We're not really sure how exciting our story will be to your readers,” laughs Joleen at the start of our interview.

Their enthusiasm for helping animals really is extraordinary in many ways – in fact, it's nothing short of inspiring. After reflecting a moment, they begin talking about the individual animals they have had the privilege of helping – many animals in dire medical circumstances – and it becomes abundantly clear that Joleen and James are galvanized by the positive energy and affection they feel for Our Companions – an energy that, as it turns out, has created a ripple effect of giving among their friends and family members.

Our Companions CEO Susan Linker characterizes their support as unwavering. “They've never said no to an animal in need or to a special project we feel strongly about,” she said. “They always come through for us, and their support is multi-faceted.” While their favorite projects are those that directly impact animals whose cases they are familiar with, Joleen and James also have made contributions toward structural enhancements, such as adding a much-needed interior door to separate spaces at the Sanctuary, or funding the creation of a garden for visitors to enjoy.

Joleen and James take pride in recalling one of their earliest projects with OC, where they provided assistance to a local farmer and his large colony of feral cats. They also enjoy helping older cats, since they can be harder to find homes for, as well as cats adopted by elderly people who may be in difficult situations and need help caring for their pets. Special-needs and medically challenging cases, in particular, strike an important chord for them. “We like

to help out when a cat needs attention above and beyond the daily care that OC provides,” says Joleen.

There is a lot about Our Companions that resonates with James and Joleen. For one thing, they appreciate that the organization is local. “It's right in our back yard, and that appealed to us from the very beginning,” they both agreed. “The Sanctuary in Ashford and the program center in Manchester are not far from us here in Storrs. We also like the fact that OC helps every animal regardless of their age or the extent of their needs; and the fact that the organization was building a sanctuary was something we thought was a great idea.”

Joleen and James have two beautiful black cats, Beaker and Bunsen (named after two of Jim Henson's famous “Muppets”), both of whom are rescues – and the couple's love for animals is not limited to cats. They also fund special projects for dogs at OC and have enjoyed having pet dogs in the past, though right now, due to their work schedules, they are content with their two kitties. In the future, when work schedules ease up, they likely will be keeping their options open, and if James's past is any indication, who knows what critters may be sharing their home in the years to come.

James comes from a long line of family members who help animals in need – and just about any kind of animal. Growing up, his family home turned into a sort of informal “drop off” place for abandoned animals. As a result, there could be a veritable menagerie at any given time, including many rabbits and cats.

In addition to their own direct giving, Joleen and James donate to OC in others' names for special occasions, and often request that any gifts they may receive also be donations to OC (or any other organization of the giver's choice). “Some of our friends and family members have begun donating on our behalf, which we love,” explains Joleen. “We also make donations for friends who have experienced the loss of a pet, donating in the pet's



Above: James and Joleen

Below: Beaker and Bunsen snuggling.



honor. We love spreading awareness about the important work of Our Companions to people we care about.”

Through her work at a local university, Joleen demonstrates her passion for animal care and wellbeing via bulletin boards designed to educate students about the care and responsibilities of being a pet parent. She also hosts pet therapy visits every other week as a stress management offering for her students. As a result of her enthusiasm for Our Companions, a few of Joleen's students have gone on to become volunteers for the organization.

When she can break away from her busy schedule, visiting the Sanctuary is a special treat for Joleen. “I like to go to the Open House hours on Saturdays,” she says. “I enjoy visiting the cats and dogs, making them feel like part of a family. I like them to know that people care about them. James and I cannot personally take in every stray animal in the world, as much as we'd like to. So, for us, it's wonderful to be part of a bigger community effort to help as many as we possibly can.”



We Did It! OC Meets the Newman's Own Foundation Sanctuary Challenge

We are elated to report that we not only met the Newman's Own Foundation Sanctuary Challenge in 2015 – we actually SURPASSED it!!

Thanks to your generous support of our Annual Fund, we have once again secured the resources to continue doing the important work we do for animals in need. The Newman's Own Foundation has rewarded this tremendous outpouring of financial support with a one hundred thousand dollar grant for the Ashford Sanctuary, which will serve as the starting point for the next phase of our capital campaign to build four more rescue cottages.

One hundred percent of our funding comes from you, our loyal, caring, generous donors. It is no exaggeration to say that everything we do for the people and pets we serve is made possible by you. Thank you for your commitment to our shared vision.

From all of us at Our Companions, I wish you and your animal family a safe, happy, and healthy 2016.



NEWMAN'S OWN
FOUNDATION



Our Companions Animal Rescue
sends a huge purr-filled
THANK YOU
to **Wellness Natural Pet Food,**
Jackson Galaxy Foundation and **Chewy.com!**

Our Companions received 4 pallets of donated Wellness food for our cats! It took no time for our hungry kitties to seize the moment!





Forever Home Society

Including Our Companions in your estate plan is a profound way of ensuring that we will always have the resources to fulfill our promise to do the right thing for animals, regardless of the challenge or cost.

Our Companions' Forever Home Society honors those who have included Our Companions in their estate plans through charitable bequests, trusts, beneficiary designations or other provisions.

Following, is a list of our current Forever Home Society members; we hope you will consider adding your name to this list.



Donor Feature

Paula Fischer became a member of the Forever Home Society in 2012.

"I can't think of a better way to leave this world than by knowing my gift to Our Companions will make a difference to so many animals for years to come. Knowing this today brings me peace, joy and a tremendous sense of purpose to my life!"

Anonymous

Ms. Elizabeth Aaronsohn
Ms. Mary Jean Agostini
Mrs. Janet Bailey
Dr. George and Mrs. Jennifer Barrows
Mrs. Deborah Batten
Ms. Joan Oppelt Brodeur
Ms. Lana Burchman
Ms. Pamela Cabrera
Ms. Donna Canalis
Ms. Judith Caravati
Mr. James and Mrs. Jessica Couzens
Mrs. Carol Covello
Mr. Harry and Mrs. Joan Curry
Ms. Christina (Tina) Davies
Ms. June E. Day
Ms. Mary June Day
Ms. Mary deManbey
Ms. Heather Dennis and Mr. Kevin Gillespie
Ms. Claudette Douglas
Ms. Christine Durrer
Ms. Karen A. Ellsworth
Ms. Karen Ericson
Ms. Barbara J. Erskine
Ms. Paula Fischer
Mr. Marvin Fried
Ms. Valerie Friedman

Ms. Lyn Garson
Ms. Michele Greaves and Mr. Joseph Popovitch
Mr. David Gregorski
Ms. Leslie Haber
Ms. Jamila Hadj-Salem
Mr. Bob and Mrs. Susan Hart
Ms. Harriet Hersh
Ms. Kim Hoffman
Ms. Kathy Hucks
Ms. Kathie Hunter
Ms. Lisa Ireland *
Ms. Kathleen Kennedy
Ms. Dottie Kern
Ms. Leigh Ann Kissner
Mrs. Gretchen LaBau
Ms. Estelle Langlois
Ms. Mary Kathryn LaRose
Mr. Mitchell and Mrs. Susan Linker
Ms. Mary Mansfield
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Susan Mason
Ms. Mari Merwin
Mr. Roger and Mrs. Barbara Orsie
Ms. Lida Orzeck
Ms. Nancy Parker
Mr. William and Mrs. Eleanor Peters
Mr. Henry Petrofsky
Mr. Neil and Mrs. Kathy Pierson

Ms. Barbara Prine and Mr. Cyprian Martin
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Judith W.M. Prohaska
Ms. Rajeshwari Punekar
Mr. Robert J. and Mrs. Eileen Rau
Ms. June Roy
Ms. Barbara Ruben
Ms. Susan Smith Rubin
Ms. Lisa St. Germain and Ms. Karen Beaulieu
Ms. Karen Scucchi-Carr
Ms. Lorraine Semnoski
Mr. Charles and Mrs. Chris Shivery
Ms. Joanne Singer
Ms. Vi Smalley
Ms. Diane Smith
Ms. Joyce Snyder
Mr. Michael and Mrs. Patricia Starace
Ms. Christa Sterling
Mr. George and Mrs. Nancy Stimac
Mr. Patrick and Mrs. Kathleen Sullivan
Ms. Ginny Tennon
Ms. Lynda Thornton
Mr. Albert Toro
Mr. Tom and Mrs. Rita Weidman
Mr. Edward and Mrs. Kathleen Young
Dr. Gordon and Mrs. Kim Zimmermann
*Deceased

If you have already included Our Companions in your estate plan, please let us know so that 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.

The language to include Our Companions as a beneficiary of a charitable gift through your estate (will) is as follows: "I give (x dollars/ x percent or all of the residue of my estate) to Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary (DBA, Our Companions Animal Rescue) organizing and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut, and with a principal business address of P.O. Box 956, Manchester, CT 06045-0956. TAX-ID # 41-2047734."

Oh What Fun!

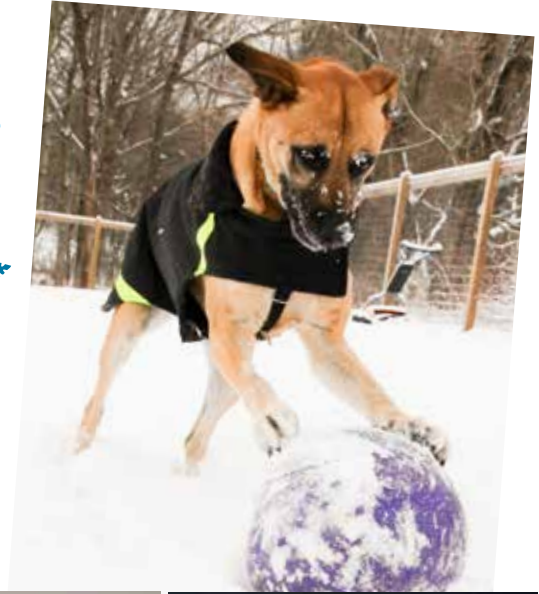
Got the winter blues? We have the cure!

Jump into your car and head down the 'pike to 46 Floeting Road, Ashford, Connecticut. When you arrive, we guarantee you will be greeted by a cadre of furry and friendly faces, welcoming you to our comfortable and toasty animal Sanctuary! Many people have said that a visit to our Sanctuary is like getting a vitamin B12 shot for your heart and soul!

Open every Saturday from 1-3 p.m., our visiting hours are hosted by knowledgeable staff and volunteers who will be thrilled to introduce you to the many animals recovering and rehabilitating at our Sanctuary. Some of these lovable critters are finally ready for their forever homes – who knows, maybe one of those forever homes will be yours!

While there, you can also learn more about volunteer opportunities and some of the many ways you can become involved in the work we do on behalf of animals in need.

Here are some gratuitously cute photos to entice you to visit. *We hope to see you soon!*





HANDYPERSON WANTED!

We are looking for volunteer handypeople to help us do minor repairs and improvements at our animal sanctuary.

CAN YOU HELP?

Call or email Krystal...

860-242-9999 x317 Krystal@OurCompanions.org

46 Floeting Road, Ashford, CT



Our Companions Expansion Plans: Helping More Animals in Need

By Susan Linker

Our Companions was founded in 2002 after receiving a gift of 43 acres of land in Ashford, Connecticut. Ironically, this property, formerly a factory farm for laying hens, has been transformed into a Sanctuary that offers a unique and much-needed resource for homeless cats and dogs.

Each year, Connecticut shelters euthanize thousands of adoptable animals who could have been saved if they had a proper environment for longer-term rehabilitative care. The Sanctuary's purpose is to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of animals.

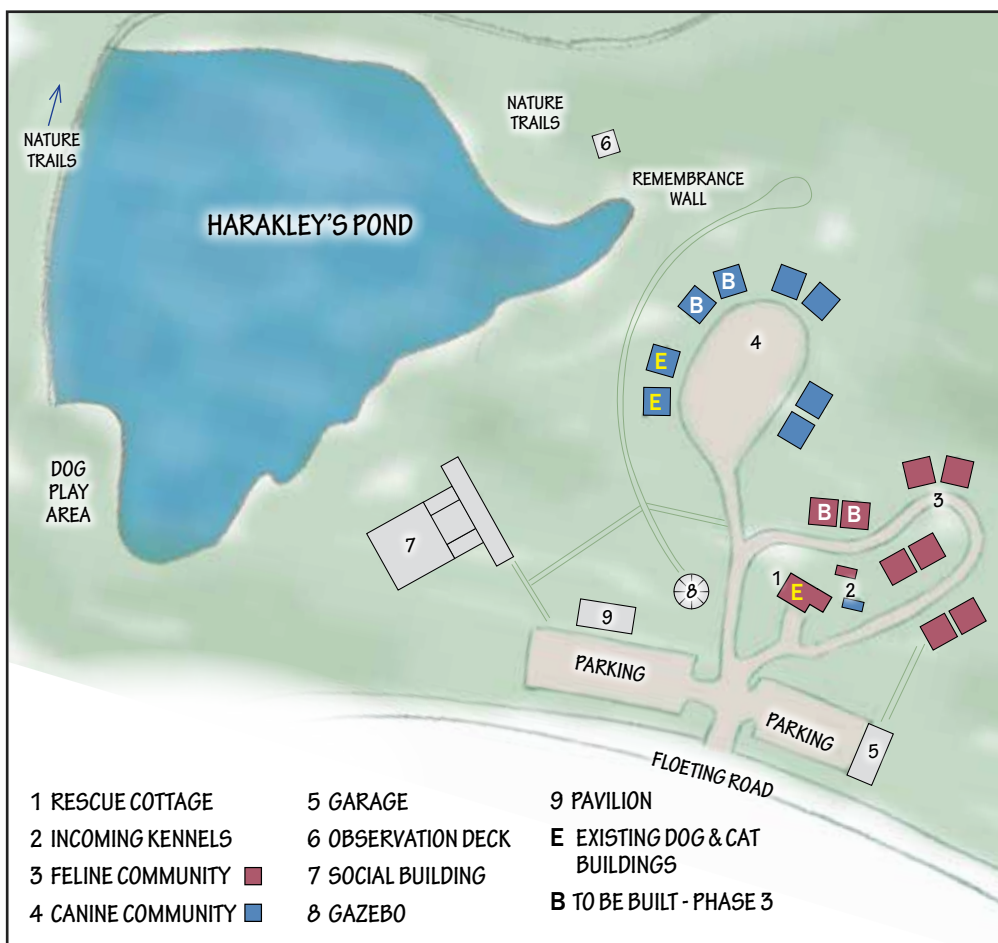
The animals at our Sanctuary, most of whom are older, traumatized, abused, or neglected, are provided with a home-like setting that is conducive to a longer-term stay: a low-stress, enriching atmosphere that encourages healing and rehabilitation. Each animal receives a medical and behavioral treatment plan that is updated each week. The Sanctuary also serves as an adoption center, providing an inviting place for people to meet our animals and find the perfect addition to their family.

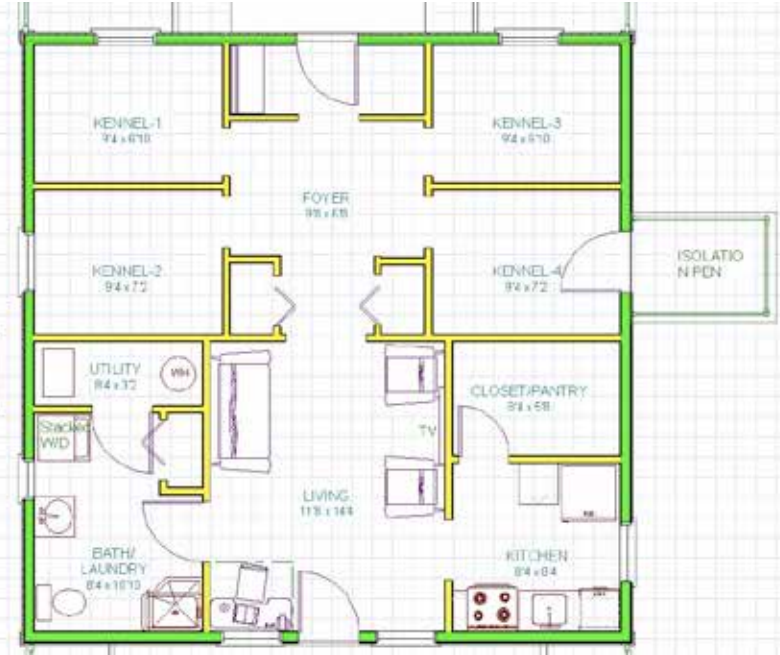
The complete, multi-phase Sanctuary construction plan entails 17 cottages for cats and dogs, an education center, a dog park, walking trails and nature preserve. Thanks to generous support within the community, we successfully demolished the defunct factory farm and completed Phase 1 of construction. Subsequently, we completed Phase 2 in 2013.

We are now planning Phase 3 of Sanctuary construction: a one-million-dollar commitment that will double our capacity for housing animals at the Sanctuary through the addition of two new cat cottages and two new dog cottages. Thanks to the Newman's Own Foundation Sanctuary Challenge, we have received a lead gift of \$100,000 to start the capital campaign. Our intent is to continue fundraising this year with the goal of opening the new cottages in 2017.

The chart below illustrates our progress thus far, as well as future construction phases.

Phase	Details	Goal	Fundraising Status	Project Status
Demolition	Demolish Defunct Factory Farm	\$300,000	Completed Fall 2008	Completed Winter 2009
1	First Rescue Cottage, Welcome Center, Garage, Site Work & Vehicle Purchase	\$1,000,000	Completed Spring 2011	Completed Fall 2012
2	2 More Rescue Cottages, Remembrance Wall & Reflection Gardens	\$630,000	Completed Spring 2013	Completed Fall 2013
3	4 More Cottages (2 Feline & 2 Canine)	\$1,000,000	Begin Capital Campaign Fall 2015	Begin Construction 2017
4	10 More Cottages & Education Center	\$3,500,000	TBD	TBD



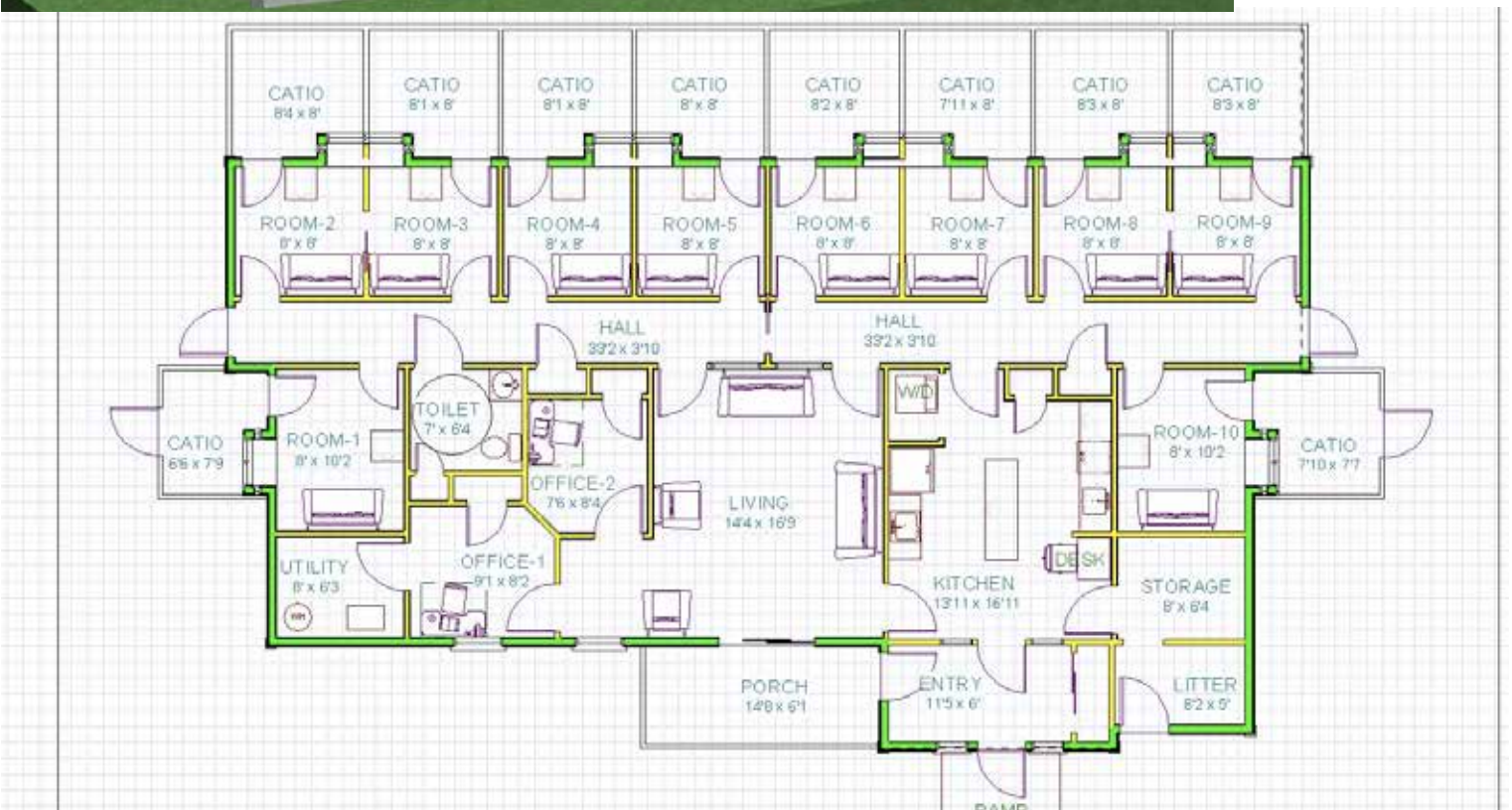


Interior & Exterior Plans for Phase 3 Canine Cottage



Interior & Exterior Plans for Phase 3 Feline Cottage

Architectural design by Dennis Davey



Unique Training Helps Dogs Gain Confidence

By Kelly Alver



At Our Companions, we offer special programs that give fearful and reactive dogs a safe environment to learn attention skills, confidence and impulse control. Our Companions' Canine College training programs go beyond traditional dog obedience classes to help our clients understand their dogs' emotions and how to support them, while giving canine companions the necessary skills to be valued family members.

Our clients often come to us because they are concerned or frustrated by their dog's behavior. Many times, they are looking for Our Companions to assist with placing the dog in another home. Our goal is to help dogs remain in their own homes, and we encourage our clients to consider classes first because challenging behaviors can be addressed and managed with training. Our programs use positive reinforcement and management skills to develop and grow the human/canine relationship.

"What's different about Our Companions' classes is that training occurs at the dog's own pace," explains Deanna Nickels, Our Companions Canine College Coordinator. "Dogs often need to be reassured that they are safe, and our Family Companion courses provide an environment that makes them feel safe and helps them focus."

In our Family Companion 1 program, each dog and owner has their own area where they can't see others, which allows the dog to concentrate on his or her person. For reactive dogs, this is a more comfortable setting because they do not socialize with other dogs during these sessions.

Each session has a head trainer and multiple assistants. Having several trainers on hand allows our team to provide more individualized attention to clients and their dogs. The first few classes are geared toward building attention skills, and by the fourth class, many dogs are ready to be near the other dogs in the classroom and outdoors for additional manners and impulse control training. For

those who aren't ready to interact with other dogs, Our Companions has a separate area so the training can continue without the stress of seeing other canines.

There is also a discussion component at the end of each class where participants learn more about topics such as exercising your dog, dog massage, ways to calm your dog, understanding a dog's body language and first aid.

Upon graduating from Family Companion 1, learning continues with Family Companion 2. This program builds on Level 1 skills by having the classes take place at local public parks. The class teaches new skills, including focusing on loose leash walking and maintaining attention amidst distractions.

"Family Companion 1 and 2 classes are also very effective for family dogs who need to learn to pay attention to their people," says Nickels. "Mastering basic manners helps dogs learn to fit into daily life, which typically means on a leash dealing with other pets and people."

One recent graduate of Family Companion 1 is Kobie, a three-year-old Lab mix. When Kobie began showing aggression toward members of his family, they contacted Our Companions to discuss options for another home. After learning about our training programs, they decided to participate in Family Companion 1. They discovered that Kobie was exhibiting aggression because he was afraid and was being put into situations that made him uncomfortable. By understanding the reason behind his behavior, the family was able to recognize Kobie's signals and use techniques to manage the situation.

"Kobie has gained more confidence and he has made such great progress," says Michael, Kobie's owner. "We've also learned how to manage his behavior and it's made a difference for all of us."

Our Companions' mission is to always do the right thing for animals. Our training programs further this mission by providing clients with



the knowledge and resources to help their dogs be confident, well-adjusted family members. For more information on Our Companions' dog training programs, including our Trick Training course, Focus on Focus class, and Walking Club, visit our website at www.OurCompanions.org.



Any one of a variety of clinical issues or injuries could send your cat to the emergency clinic. Several of the most concerning are difficulty breathing, seizure, excessive vomiting, allergic reactions and traumatic injury. These are obvious medical emergencies, yet other urgent conditions could present with less conspicuous signs and symptoms revealing the tip of a life-threatening iceberg. One of the most critical is when a male cat stops urinating due to a urinary tract obstruction.

Referred to as a “blocked cat,” the sudden inability of male cats to urinate is a dangerous and commonly seen medical emergency in which an obstruction occurs in the urethra, preventing normal flow of urine from the urinary bladder to the outside of the body. Because the male cat urethra is long, narrow, and forms a curve, it can easily become plugged with material containing inflammatory cells, or a clump of mucus-like protein, minerals, crystals, and/or gritty stone formations (called calculi). Urinary obstruction in female cats is extremely rare due to their larger, straight and shorter urethral opening.

What exactly causes an obstruction to form is not well understood despite decades of research. However, recent studies indicate a complex relationship between bladder abnormalities, changes in nervous system and hormones, and high sensitivity to environmental stress – all contributing factors. Blocked cats are typically indoor neutered males, between one and ten years of age. Overweight cats receiving little to no exercise, and those living in multi-cat households have been identified to be at greater risk. An increased incidence of urinary blockage occurs during winter months.

Even the most astute pet owners may be oblivious to their cat’s daily bathroom habits.

Cats are private, modest creatures after all, and we normally wouldn’t have reason to accompany them to their litter box. However, changes in a cat’s usual routine could indicate significant problems. Once urine flow is obstructed, either partially or fully, a blocked cat is only able to urinate small amounts at a time, tiny droplets, or not pass any urine at all. Blood is visible or the urine may be red-tinged. Be watchful of anything out of character for your cat as irregularities in behavior or routine can be a sign that your cat is in pain and alerting you that something is wrong. Blocked cats often experience pain when their abdominal area is pressed, and may prefer solitude by hiding due to discomfort. They tend to lick their genital area excessively. Typically they display intensified meowing or howling, appear restless or agitated, and make frequent trips to the litter box in a painful attempt to pass urine. Repeated straining to urinate is often mistaken for constipation since the cat spends prolonged periods just sitting in the litter box with their tail held up or straight out. Urinating directly outside the box, or elsewhere around the house, especially on cooler smooth surfaces such as tile flooring, sinks or bathtubs, is also a common sign of trouble.

Blocked cats are a true medical emergency requiring immediate attention. This is not something that resolves on its own, and the longer treatment is delayed, the less chance of survival. Cats endure a growing state of discomfort even after just a few hours of being blocked, however they may not be noticeably despondent or evasive right away. In some cases, the disorder may be a urinary tract infection that can be more easily treated, however do not assume you have the luxury of time – even a day or two can mean the difference between life and death if your cat is actually blocked. Left untreated, blocked cats



become increasingly distressed very quickly. Lethargy, nausea, vomiting and appetite loss soon follow. The kidneys are not able to filter out waste products or maintain the proper fluid and electrolyte balance to sustain life. Toxins begin to build up within 24 hours. Collectively, these imbalances cause life-threatening heart rhythm disturbances ultimately leading to heart failure. Blocked cats may seem relatively fine one day and can die within a short time period, sometimes in as little as 48 to 72 hours.

Decreasing life stressors is an important component of prevention and ongoing treatment for at-risk cats. While not a guarantee, certain measures can help reduce environmental stress and provide an overall healthier lifestyle. Quality canned food diets are preferable to dry kibble. Prescription diets may be indicated by your veterinarian. Clean, fresh water is of utmost importance to keep urine more dilute. Drinking fountains specifically for cats are commercially available to encourage increased water consumption, although some cats simply enjoy a dripping kitchen or bathroom faucet.

The best preventive strategy is observation and interaction with your pet on a daily basis. Once you are already familiar with their normal behaviors, potential problems are more readily apparent. Pay close attention to anything out of the ordinary and seek veterinary care without delay if your cat shows any indication of discomfort or unusual behaviors. Remaining diligent through early detection and timely treatment for blocked cats is often a lifesaver.



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.



There are nights when my wife and I look at P (short for Patty), our eight-year-old tabby, and comment on how, even though cats are considered by many to be the “low maintenance” pet, so much effort and attention is required of us as cat owners. From scooping the litter box to deciding between wet and dry cat food to making sure the door stays closed so our furry friends don’t sneak out, we need to stay on our toes (or perhaps land on our feet) when it comes to being competent, responsible feline guardians.

One thing that often goes unconsidered is playing with our cat. I had the opportunity to chat with Our Companions’ Sanctuary Feline Behavior Manager, Karen Aseltine, about this very issue. I wondered how I could maximize playtime with P to appeal to her natural instincts and strengthen the bond between human and feline. Karen gave me several suggestions about how to play in a manner most suitable to P’s needs.

How to Play with Your Cat

- **Create a safe, stimulating environment:** Many of us know that our cats need to be in a comfortable and safe home environment; however, the fun often gets neglected. If a cat’s home is too dull, they might sleep more, gain weight, vocalize excessively, over-groom, and/or become aggressive. Providing varied terrain for them to explore is vital for their mental and physical health. Try setting up items such as boxes, chairs, paper bags, and blankets, so that your cat has spots to hide in and observe from.
- **Find the right toys:** Cats have a natural instinct and curiosity that drives them to hunt,



and the best cat play is pretend-hunting. When it comes to your companion, you’ll want to identify their favorite “prey.” Pet suppliers sell toys that mimic the sounds, textures, and motions of all kinds of animals (birds, snakes, mice, insects, etc.). To find the best toy, purchase several options and experiment to see which one(s) your cat responds to. One suggestion is to choose toys that are on the smaller side, since cats won’t hunt something if they feel they won’t “win,” or if they feel intimidated.

- **Play the right way:** Cats follow a certain sequence when playing. First, they silently stare at their toy, eventually moving to within striking distance. Next, they chase the toy, pouncing, biting, grabbing, and swatting as they see fit. Be sure to follow this routine until your cat chooses to stop. If you end playtime early, you will likely frustrate your cat. To maximize



the fun, you should use the toy to mimic prey. Alternate the speed, finesse, and direction of your movements. Never dangle the toy in front of your cat or “attack” with the toy. Movement away from your cat or across their field of vision is best. Another tip is to let your cat catch their prey and “win.” You might even imitate the scratching or noises that prey animals make upon being caught.

The benefits of play will make both you and your cat happier. Your cat will experience a boost in confidence and a reduction in stress. The increased exercise will also keep weight in check and improve overall health. You may also see a decrease in or the elimination of problematic behaviors (aggression, boredom, depression). Most importantly, you and your companion will be able to bond in a new and exciting way. So, next time you see your pal, grab their favorite toy and have a blast! After all, all sleep and no play makes for a dull kitty.



Karen Aseltine is the Sanctuary Feline Behavior Manager and Caregiver at the Our Companions Sanctuary. Karen is a Certified Cat Behavior Counselor and serves as one of our resident “kitty psychologists.” She receives questions every day about cat behavior. This column will highlight the most commonly asked questions.

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.

For an informative video on Interactive Play from Jackson Galaxy, check out this link: <https://goo.gl/SL57PW>





Through her work as Our Companions Canine Operations Director, Marie Joyner has witnessed first-hand the transition hundreds of dogs have made from shelters to homes. She and her team of dog trainers have developed an approach that works with typical rescue dogs – even those who might be less socially outgoing than others.

Socialize, Socialize, Socialize

Much like puppies do, adult rescue dogs seem to have a socialization window that is open for only a few weeks after they enter their new home. During that time, dogs form their new “inner circle.” The more positive experiences the dog has, especially within that important time-frame, the more confident the dog becomes.

The single most important thing you can do when bringing a rescue dog into your home is to expose the dog to the people, pets, places and activities he will regularly encounter as a new member of your family. According to Marie, “It is a mistake to take a wait-and-see approach.” During the first few weeks in his new home, your dog is forming behavior and habits that will be much harder to change once they become established.

Within the first few weeks of bringing your new dog home, Marie suggests that:

- If you have family and friends who visit frequently, invite them over for a quick visit.
- If your dog will be interacting with other dogs while with you, arrange to meet those other dogs on neutral ground – on a walk, for example.
- If your dog will be a regular guest at boarding or daycare, bring the dog there for a tour.



Volunteer Taury DelValle and her daughter Rachel, walk Carmel and Lucy at a Sanctuary adoption event.

- If your dog will visit a groomer regularly, schedule a grooming.
- Bring your dog to the veterinarian. Your dog will already have had his required shots but a quick visit to the vet will help your dog be more at ease for subsequent visits.

One very crucial caveat: Marie advises that these encounters should be brief. While exposure to people, places and other animals is important and helpful, it's equally important that you watch your pet carefully for body language cues indicating that they have had enough for one day. Stress behaviors may include lip and nose licking, yawning, panting and avoidance. Remember never to force a dog into a new situation – guide him gently and patiently, and be sure to give lots of rewards.

Enroll in Training

Our Companions policy provides positive

reinforcement training to all adoptive families at a reduced rate – that's how important we think it is to the long-term success of your adoption. Training not only teaches skills that you and your new dog need – for example, recall, leash-walking and basic commands – training also helps to create a lifelong bond and encourages your dog to develop confidence.

Give Your New Dog Space

The first few weeks after adoption represent a time of transition for your new dog. While it may be loads of fun for your family to play continuously with this new playmate, paying too much attention to your new dog is not necessarily the best thing for him. Give your newly adopted dog space and time to adjust to his new home. Within a relatively short amount of time, your new family member's personality will reveal itself and he will seek attention from you.

Welcoming a rescue dog into your home is exciting and rewarding for both you and your canine companion. Following Marie's advice will help to reduce some of the behavioral issues that less socialized dogs may have. Please keep in mind that Our Companions is here to help if you ever encounter a behavioral problem you cannot solve.



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.



Your Cat's Family Doctor
for over 21 years!

COMPLETE
HEALTH CARE
FOR YOUR CAT
INCLUDING
HOUSECALLS!



Cats Limited is proud to be the first feline-only hospital in Connecticut that is accredited by the American Animal Hospital Association



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

www.CatsLimited.com

[Facebook.com/CatsLimited](https://www.facebook.com/CatsLimited)

Volunteer with your dog!

Therapy Dog Training Classes Now Forming
Manchester, Farmington, Willington
Sponsored by **Tails of Joy, Inc.** Animal Assisted Therapy



Sharing Through
the Comfort of Animals

Contact **Sue Gagnon** 860-466-0759
tedsuedoghouse233@yahoo.com

www.TailsofJoy.org



The easiest way to keep
your dog's bandaging or
cast clean and dry!



WWW.CANINECASTCOVERS.COM
INFO@CANINECASTCOVERS.COM
888-414-6339

Leaving Again?



Client and
Veterinary
Recommended

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

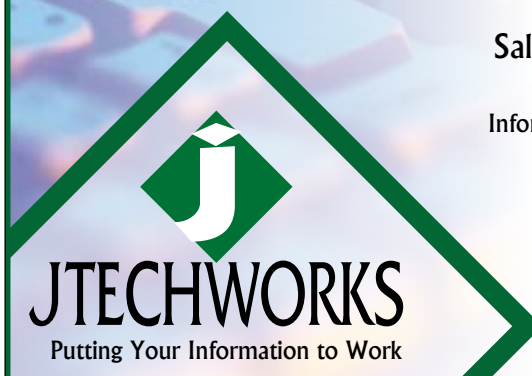


"We treat your pets like family"

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

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, LLC
Rocky Hill

860-563-5930
JTechWorks.com



ideas
+
ideals
—
impact

Glenmede is proud to support OUR COMPANIONS ANIMAL RESCUE

Glenmede was created as an independent trust company nearly 60 years ago to serve as investment manager and trustee of the Pew family's charitable interests. Today, we manage \$30 billion for high-net-worth individuals and families, endowments, foundations and institutional clients. Please contact Steve Brandfield at 212-328-7332 or steve.brandfield@glenmede.com for a personal conversation.

GLENMEDE

Founded on ideals. Built on ideas.

glenmede.com



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

Hoffman

Driven by trust.™



Life is easier when you can count on someone. *Driven by Trust* is not simply our slogan, it's our way of life.

600-750 Connecticut Blvd., East Hartford, CT 06108
36-46 Albany Tnpk., West Simsbury, CT 06092
490 Broad St., New London, CT 06032

800.225.7266

www.hoffmanauto.com



P.O. Box 956
Manchester, CT 06045-0956

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

HARTFORD, CT

PERMIT No. 1754



Meet Mimi!

There is so much to love about Mimi! This beautiful golden five-year-old girl is super sweet, chatty and friendly. She's even a perfect hostess who enjoys welcoming guests with a cute little conversation! Cuddling on laps is one of her favorite past times, but she can be enticed to play with a laser pointer, mice and feather toys as well. Mimi is happiest when with people and would be a stellar companion!

For more information on adorable Mimi, please contact Donna at 860-242-9999 x302 or Donna@ourcompanions.org.

Meet Jesse!

He is a delightfully happy one-and-a-half-year-old dog. When not playing in his yard, he loves to cuddle or climb into your lap – and he is sure that he can fit! If it is cold, he'll even bury himself under the covers! To sweeten the deal even more, as you can see from his photo, he is one handsome boy! Jesse is very intelligent and well trained. He would love a family that is active so he can keep up with his very important stick chasing and learning. He just loves attending dog classes! Jesse would prefer to be an only pet so that he can focus all his love on his people – and of course be the sole focus of their affections.

Learn more about this beautiful boy by calling Our Companions at 860-242-9999 or email daryl@ourcompanions.org.

