



ANIMAL RESCUE PROJECT

2021 Holiday Newsletter

A Great Year for Homeless Pets

A Message from Shelter Director and Board Member Jack Frost

The pandemic has been good news for homeless pets and for organizations like ours that save them. We will finish 2021 having rescued a little more 1,000 homeless cats and dogs, up about 35% from what we were able to do in 2020. Adoptions in 2021 will exceed 900, also a jump of about 30% from 2020 figures. In fact, beginning in mid-March of 2020, when the lockdown began, we have not been able to catch a breath. The demand for family pets has skyrocketed. And we're happy to report that we are seeing very few returned pets. Adoptions seem to be lasting.

The increase in rescues and adoptions has required increases in staffing. We now have 10 full-time and 4 part-time employees. Fully 70% of our labor hours are devoted to the care of the homeless pets in our shelter. The remaining 30% of labor hours go to the adoption process and administrative activities.

It brings me a lot of joy to realize that ARP is definitely a going concern. We are here to stay. We've established ourselves as a trusted source of family pets in the Southwest Michigan region. We're proud of the work we do. We run a tight ship. Cleanliness and organization are everything, and we're fortunate to have a group of employees who are neat freaks as well as big-hearted pet lovers. We love bleach at ARP! At a time when other organizations are struggling to retain or recruit employees, we're also blessed with a loyal workforce—people who care deeply about the mission of our organization and who get deep satisfaction knowing that the work they do is life-saving for animals and life-enhancing for their human companions.

Our shelter at 219 Peekstock took quite a beating in a late-summer storm. A tree alongside the building was taken down by the wind and crashed through the roof of the "big room," which houses 20 or more dogs. The tree also destroyed a new gutter that had been installed only weeks before the storm, and it crushed the fencing in a play yard alongside the building. Everything has finally been repaired, and we're operating at full capacity.

But the shelter itself is badly in need of renovation and expansion. We're in a 6,800-sq. ft. facility that is composed of four separate buildings, added over time to a small structure that once was a bagel factory. We've made do with the space we have, and we really like the location on Peekstock, but we need a building with greater functionality, better ventilation, better insulation, and better heating. And boy would it be nice to have air conditioning during the summer!

We hope to launch an effort to fund a renovation project sometime in 2022. ARP is, in my humble opinion, a precious jewel in our community, and it deserves a better home than it currently has.

We are grateful for all the support we receive from our community. Our only source of support is from our donors—individuals and businesses in the Kalamazoo area that believe in our mission and are moved to support it.

We're looking forward to a better 2022—more lives saved, and more families blessed with new animal companions.



Visit us at the shelter and help decorate our holiday giving tree

Here's how it works. Donate \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 and choose an ornament at your giving level to place on our tree. You can customize your ornament with the name of your family, the name of a family pet, or the name of a dearly departed family member or friend. For a \$500 donation, you can place the STAR on top of the tree. You can also send a donation check through the mail or via the Paypal link on our website, but please make sure you have specified your donation is for the giving tree so we can add an ornament for your family.

Happy Holidays from ARP!

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Labors of Love

This is a story about the extraordinary efforts of our staff and volunteers—and the quiet miracles that they produce.

On August 28, Animal Rescue Project was asked to take on 17 kittens and one mother cat from a hoarding case in Southwest Michigan. The kittens were very ill, clinging to life by a thread. They suffered from genetic conditions such as stunted growth and wasting kitten syndrome, and had chronic upper respiratory infections and feline herpes.

Another rescue organization might have viewed these kittens as a lost cause and humanely destroyed them. But Animal Rescue Project is different. We rise to the challenge! Our staff and veterinary team mobilized. They decided to do whatever was needed to save the kittens, restore their health, and get them to the point where they could be adopted.

The first step in the process of bringing the kittens back from death's door was to rid them of all parasites—fleas, worms, and bacterial and viral infections. Staff monitored weight on a daily basis as well as the amount of food they were eating. Some of the kittens were so weak they could not drink or eat on their own. Those kittens received tender loving care. There was daily communication between the Animal Rescue Project care team and the veterinary team. Individual cases were discussed. Some days were good, some were bad. All told, four of the kittens were simply too sick and passed away, one at a time, despite everyone's best efforts.

Every crowd has a standout. In this case, it was a male kitten named Plum Pie. When he arrived at six weeks of age, he weight 0.72 oz. It was touch and go for him, but now is a whopping 3 pounds and finally looks his age. He has astounded the shelter staff with his will to live. His constant maneuvering for attention and his efforts to be picked up and held only made the staff fight harder to keep him and ALL the kittens alive.

As we write this story in mid-November, 12 of the original 17 kittens have been adopted, as has the mother cat. Only one kitten remains at our shelter, waiting patiently for a home.

What started as a project with a bleak outlook—to save 17 infant kittens clinging to life—turned into just about the best team-building activity for our staff that we could imagine. Every shelter deals with life and death on a daily basis. The people who work at ARP are special people. They defy the odds. They take on the tough assignments. And of all this life-saving work is made possible through the generosity and kindness of ARP's donors and supporters.

This is the work we do. This is who we are.

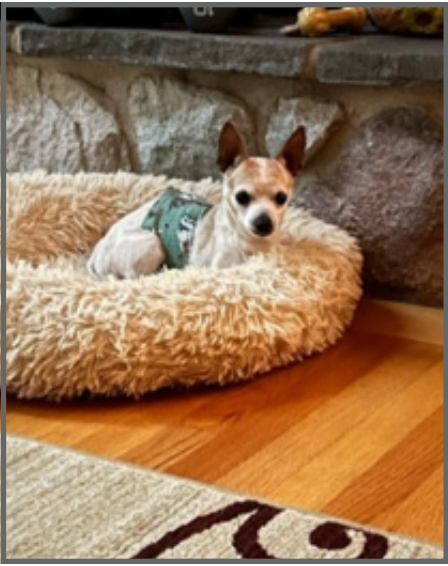


All's Well that Ends Well—Caesar's Story

Caesar, a senior Chihuahua mix, came to Animal Rescue Project in really bad shape. He needed extensive medical care and of course a forever home. He had dry skin and acne, a bad upper respiratory infection, and teeth that were ready to fall out. Due to his advanced age and poor care, he also had a bent spine that causes arthritic pain. To add insult to injury, Caesar had never been neutered, and he had a crypt orchid condition—where one testicle does not drop and remains in the abdomen. This makes the neuter surgery a little tricky.

Many of the animals we rescue have had minimal to no care and poor nutrition. In that respect, Caesar is more the rule than the exception. But what made his situation exceptional was his advanced age. Many homeless senior pets struggle to find a new home. Still, we were committed to addressing all of Caesar's medical needs and working hard to find a forever home for him.

Animal Rescue Project put Caesar on medications to treat all of his ailments, all the while spoiling him rotten. We all fell in



love with him! For a small dog, Caesar has a huge personality—and that made it so easy to love him.

Due to his advanced age, we had concerns about his ability to make it through anesthesia for his crypt orchid neuter procedure and the much-needed dental surgery. But his blood work came back strong, indicating that he would do well in his surgeries. Even as we were discussing Caesar's course of treatment with our veterinarian, Dr. Kathy Eckler of Gull Lake Animal Hospital, a woman stepped forward expressing interest in adopting him.

Caesar came through his surgeries with flying colors, but he lost all but one of his teeth. He'll need to be on a soft-food diet for the rest of his life.

Not a bad ending to the story of Caesar's homelessness late in life. He's found a loving home with a kind family and two other rescued dogs who have welcomed him with open paws.

A Haircut Can Change a Life

Charlie came to us from a kill shelter. When he arrived, he was withdrawn and seemed depressed. Soon after arriving, it was Charlie's turn with the intake bathing team. What they discovered shocked them. Charlie was so matted that his legs, toes, ears, and tail were “stuck” to his body, limiting his movement and mobility.

An emergency grooming ensued that lasted 3 hours. The team meticulously and carefully trimmed the fur from his body, freeing his legs, toes, ears, and tail. As the liberation process proceeded, Charlie became a new dog—licking and leaning in to the volunteers, wagging his tail freely and bouncing with excitement. He was transformed—physically AND emotionally.



Being now a handsome scruffy lad, the adoption applications for Charlie poured in. It took the staff a few days to read through all of them and to find the best possible match for Charlie. But before he could be adopted, he fell ill with a severe kennel cough that took some time—and several different medications—to get under control. Once he was better, he was adopted to a great local family.

Recently, Charlie and his people stopped in for a visit. Charlie loves car rides and loves going for walks even more. He has a very active tail that gets to wagging quite often—to greet people, other dogs, and maybe even fenceposts! Charlie is one happy fella.



Warning: Rescue Work Can Be Addicting

Notes from a Foster Mom and Board Member Jill Murphy
I was interested in rescue because of a friend at work who told me her stories of foster care and forever home placements. New to Kalamazoo, I wandered into a pet store one Saturday and met a woman who was working an adoption event. I went home with a big temporary dog. When he found a home, I took home another one. Then a pair of puppies. Little ones, big ones, sick ones, pregnant dogs, lots of different breeds. Sadly, the number of dogs needing help continues to be a problem. Fourteen years later, I've lost count. I say rescue is addicting, because there is a wave of joy when your foster dog makes a great match and goes home to a new family.

Ginger's Story

At my house, I foster a lot of pregnant small dogs and help them through having a litter, including getting the pups matched with forever homes. When Ginger the Chiweenie came in, she was in a crate, with 5 newborns. The crate was securely closed with a sign that said ‘BITES’. Thinking she must be thirsty, I opened the door to put in a small bowl of water. She bit me. When I got her home, I stood back and cut the ties holding the door closed. She lunged and tried to bite me again. Thinking food might help, I tossed cooked chicken to her. Lots of chicken. Weeks of chicken. In order to touch the puppies or clean their pen, I would throw chicken on one side of the room. Eventually she stopped trying to bite me every time I visited the pups. The puppies grew and socialized well, and found new homes. But Ginger decided to live under and behind the furniture, only coming out for chicken. For six months. Then she explored the back yard and made friends with my resident dogs. Any attempt to touch her would result in her ducking back under a couch or dresser. She was labeled ‘unadoptable’. And yet, she was great with other dogs. Every new mama dog that came into the house as a foster would get her approval. When pups were big enough, Ginger would play with them.

Then came the pandemic. We had lots and lots of time at home together. Ginger started to come sit on my lap for brief moments. Then longer and longer. And then she let me touch her, We started a little game of matching her wagging tail to the speed of my index finger tapping. We played the wagging game while making eye contact for hours and hours. Over the months of ‘safe at home’, Ginger started to show how safe she felt. She now greets strangers!!! There are a few more steps before we get a collar and leash on, but she is definitely a different dog because she was fortunate enough to get to a foster home.

Your donation of ANY AMOUNT will make a difference to a rescued animal. Please help us save more lives.

Your donation is tax deductible under IRS 501(c)(3)
Our tax ID is 27-286-8265

Please accept my donation in the amount of:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Return this donation slip with a check made payable to:

Animal Rescue Project, 219 Peekstock Dr, Kalamazoo MI 49001

Or visit AnimalRescueProject.org and click the **Donate** box to pay with PayPal.

Kids' Corner



Thank you to Savanna D!
She brought ARP all of these
donations in honor of her
17th birthday.



Instead of birthday presents,
Elvie, Jocie and Anna asked
for donations for ARP! Happy
birthday, girls, and thank you!



How amazing are Claire, Henry
and Emma? They hosted
lemonade stands and all of the
sales were donated to the
animals at ARP. Thank you!



Kenton and family hosted a
lemonade stand and made over
\$200. Dad's coworkers matched
what he made. We thank you
for your hard work!

Thank You for Your Kindness!

Many people prefer to donate goods and supplies rather than making a monetary contribution to our organization. Below you will find our Wish List of pet foods and shelter supplies. You can shop for us and drop your gift at the shelter, or you can order through **Chewy.com** and **Amazon** and have your gift delivered to our door. Check our website for shelter hours if you wish to deliver in person.

Dog Food

- Any brand of canned food, adult or puppy
- Purina Pro Plan dry dog food
- Diamond Naturals small bites dog food
- Fromm dog foods—any kind, adult or puppy
- Iams, Royal Canin, Eukanuba, Redford, Natural Balance, Nutro, Wellness, 4 Health, Zignature

Cat Food

- Fancy Feast Broths, which helps with cats who are ill and need help eating
- Dry Purina Cat Chow compete
- Purina Kitten Chow
- Scoopable or clumping preferred, but will accept all kinds

Cat & Dog Toys

- All shapes and textures

Cleaning Supplies

- Any brand liquid HE (high-efficiency) laundry soap
- Original blue Dawn liquid soap
- Garbage bags—kitchen-size and large heavy-duty
- Paper towels
- Hand sanitizer
- Lysol or Clorox wipes
- Mr. Clean Magic Erasers

Linens and Towels

- New or used towels, wash cloths, hand towels
- Blankets

Looking to Volunteer?

ARP relies on—and is grateful for—its volunteers. We look to volunteers to walk dogs, socialize cats, cuddle with kittens and puppies, bathe and groom animals in need, and so many other hands-on interactions with pets. Whatever your talents and interests, we have a role for you.

Top ten reasons to volunteer or foster with Animal Rescue Project:

- 1) Rescue saves lives
- 2) There is always something to do
- 3) Make a difference for one pet, or for many
- 4) Accessorize any outfit with fur and fluff
- 5) Meet other pet lovers
- 6) Help complete families when they adopt a pet
- 7) Work with a great group of people
- 8) Cool shirts
- 9) You can post cool photos on Facebook
- 10) Sloppy kisses and tail wags

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