



Humanely Speaking

Bangor Humane Society Newsletter

Winter 2012

Features

Spending More to Save More

In Every Issue

From the Director

Melody's Journey Home

'Fixing' the Pet Overpopulation Problem

Ask the Vet

Paws for Thought

Shelter Highlights/Events

A Labor of Love

Austin's Corner

Our Guiding Principles

Our Mission

The Bangor Humane Society champions the humane treatment and adoption of companion animals, provides quality care for homeless pets, and promotes animal welfare through education and advocacy.

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www.facebook.com/BangorHumane

Spending More to Save More By Renee Ordway

Coco, a seven-year-old sweetie with a German Shepherd face and a bushy Husky tail was not in the greatest of shape when he landed on our doorstep last August.

He had been on the run for quite awhile, had been struck by a car and had a badly broken leg.

Our staff knew right away that Coco was going to need a lot of time and expensive veterinary care. But, given his otherwise good health, his loveable disposition and adoptability, the staff committed immediately to doing what was necessary to fix him up and prepare him for a new and better life.

Coco is just one example of a trend that is putting pressure on the Bangor Humane Society's budget. An increasing number of animals with serious injuries or illness are either being brought in as strays or being surrendered by owners who can't afford the vet costs their pets require.

During this same time last year, BHS had spent \$79,000 in combined costs for our in-house clinic and outside vet costs for our pets. That was \$20,000 above the same nine-month period in 2010 FY. This year that cost has risen to \$98,000.

That's the bad news.

The good news is that our adoption rates are increasing every year and the staff here is determined to *do* more to *save* more adoptable animals.

Shelter Manager Chris Young said the long-term downturn in the economy has made it difficult for pet owners to keep up with the health of their pets.

"It's a sad thing to see an otherwise responsible and loving owner surrendering their pet here because they know it needs critical veterinary care that they simply can't afford. These are hugely difficult decisions that they are making and then subsequently we are faced with equally tough decisions," he said.

BHS is fortunate to have the support of wonderful and generous vets in the area, who do what they can to help us, but "they have to stay in business too," Young noted.

The humane society was fortunate when John and Kathy Field, one of our dedicated foster families, took Coco into their home while his leg healed.

The Fields have fostered approximately 25 dogs for BHS over the years, working with them and loving them until a forever home is found.

Their generosity of spirit led them to sponsor Coco's veterinary and rehabilitation costs. Now, Coco's leg is strong again.

Not long after Coco found his place on the Fields' living room couch, Kato, a five-year-old yellow Labrador was surrendered



Kato waits in foster care hoping to receive a \$5,000 surgery on both his knees.

Help is Out There

- * **Care Credit** offers special financing and low monthly payment options, so you can keep your pet healthy and happy.
- * **Plan to save:** Putting just a few dollars a week into a special savings account can add up to a huge financial safety net in the future for you and your pet.
- * **Set up a payment plan with your vet:** If you and your pet establish regular visits over the long-term with your veterinarian, they will be more willing to work with you directly on setting up a payment plan.
- * **Research Pet Insurance:** There are several pet insurance companies that work just like our own personal medical insurance. You pay an annual premium, which can help pay for large vet bills in the future.

Continued on page 2



From the Director

As I look ahead at 2012, I reflect upon the challenges that we face daily at the shelter and reach toward our vision, which I hope will bring us new successes. First, I wish to re-dedicate the Bangor Humane Society's mission toward raising increased awareness of spay/neuter.

I strongly believe that bringing a heightened awareness to the community about the impact of spaying and neutering our pets is the most significant step we can take in reducing the number of unwanted animals that arrive at our door. In order to reach this goal, I hope to solicit more grant dollars to fund spay neuter voucher programs for low-income individuals. I also hope to continue to build partnerships with local veterinarians who strongly support low-income spay/neuter initiatives.

My second major goal for the upcoming year is to significantly increase our adoption rate, moving us forward as the first choice for community members when they look to add a new furry friend to their families. My hope is to find creative and innovative ways to increase adoptions through our facility, our foster care program, and through collaborations with partner agencies (like Petco, Petquarters, and local veterinary offices) in hosting off-site adoption events. Additionally, I want to embrace each new adopter as a part of our growing BHS family, so that our relationship with them does not stop at the time of adoption. I want BHS to build an ongoing relationship with each new adopter, so that they will look to us as a network of support and resources for a lifetime of pet companionship.

Lastly, this new year I seek new and inspired ways to gain financial resources to support the increased medical and animal care costs for the pets that find refuge with us. With increased financial support, we can remove the barriers of care that many of our adoptable pets require before they can be placed into new forever homes. Removing all barriers, financial and otherwise, will help give each of our pets the very best chance possible.

I hope you will join me this New Year in helping BHS achieve each of these goals, giving our pets the best chance each of them deserves.

Best Regards,

'Spending More' Continued

because his owner could not afford his expensive knee surgery.

"Again, we're looking at this beautiful, loving dog that has a full-life ahead and would make someone a great companion, but that needs very expensive care," Young said.

Suzan Bell, BHS executive director, is determined to find a way.

"We're not giving up on one of our pets just because it needs surgery," she said. "We'll find a way."

Kato's first challenge is to lose 15 pounds so he can qualify for surgery.

Fortunately, another one of our foster families has taken Kato into their home to help him trim down and prepare for knee surgery.

Our biggest hope is that loving pet owners will first use our recommen-

dations to help them keep their pets and keep them healthy.

We also hope that those who are thinking about bringing a pet into their family research the monetary costs of keeping that pet long-term.

Our staff goes the extra mile to ensure that each BHS pet will make a loving addition to your home. We feel they all deserve a second chance and we hope that you feel that way too.

As for Coco?

After resisting adopting the 25 other dogs they fostered, the Fields could not resist him.

He is a permanent fixture in their lives and on their couch and is currently wintering with them in Florida. Lucky dog! ■



Hours of Operation

Monday — Friday: 12:00 p.m.— 6:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m.— 6:00 p.m.

Board of Directors

Steve Thomas, President
 Emily McIntosh, Vice-President
 Robert Shuman, Treasurer
 Amy Faircloth, Secretary
 Anne Marie Storey, Past President
 David Cloutier, DVM
 Louise Cross
 Lani Naihe
 Renee Ordway
 John Kenney
 Lanni Moffatt
 Matt Nye
 Jeff Russell

Our Staff

Executive Director
 Suzan Bell

Shelter Operations Manager
 Chris Young

Office Manager
 Amy Gentle

Volunteer & Public Relations Manager
 Stacey R. Coventry

Adoption Counselors
 Sonia, Laura, Kristian, Brittany, Lisa, Carol, Josh

Animal Technicians
 Sadie, Charmaine, Sarah, Tasha, Anika, Kimberly, and Jill

Veterinary Technician
 Lauren Landry

Foster Care Program
 Kimberly Patterson

Your Donor Dollars Matter...

Melody's Journey Home

By Stacey R. Coventry

When Melody, a young Bluetick Coonhound, first arrived at the Bangor Humane Society in early October, she was a scared and shy stray. She quickly found herself a new forever family at the end of October, soon after she was available for adoption.

Unfortunately, a month later, her new owner returned her to the shelter because of her extremely timid nature and for failure to connect and bond. BHS staff believed that she just needed the "right" home and that it just may take time to find her the perfect fit.

And time it took. Melody spent almost three months at the shelter waiting for her ideal match. Volunteers took her on Dog's Day Out adventures and staff members signed her out for sleepovers to help us learn more in order to find the right home for Melody. We had her spend several days out of the kennel behind the front desk to help her socialize with staff and the public. We learned that while timid, if she was around another confident dog, Melody's confidence increased as well. We also learned that off-leash and outdoors in a secured yard, she was a happy dog that loved to play her own canine version of tag.



Melody hanging out behind the front desk at BHS.

When Jill Cavanaugh visited the Bangor Humane Society right after Christmas, she fell in love with Melody immediately. Staff was honest with her about Melody's needs and how to best transition her into a home. Jill's home seemed ideal. It was just Jill, her husband, and their confi-

dent, male Boxer, Rocco. When Melody met Rocco, it was love at first sight. Her tail immediately went from tucked between her legs to wagging happily.

Melody went home with Jill, Peter and Rocco through the foster-to-adopt program, for a two-week trial period.

While it has taken lots of patience to slowly build a trust with Melody and reverse some of her behaviors, she is the happiest she has ever been. She is emerging more frequently from her hiding places to lounge with the family, and follows and mirrors Rocco constantly.

"She is still very timid and distrusting, but every day she gives me a new sign of her confidence in me," says Jill. "It's work, and frustrating at times, but so worth the returns.

The other night she actually laid belly up and let me scratch her belly! She's generally very guarded, but we have heard her bark a few times when out with Rocco and she hangs on the couch with me at night."

On January 13th, Jill completed Melody's adoption. Melody has finally found her way home, and a little confidence along the way.

"Melody never ceases to amaze me. We love her very much and are proud to call her family," says Jill. "I hope someone reading this will give their heart a challenge." ■



Melody in her new home with new pal, Rocco.

'Fixing' the Pet Overpopulation Problem

By Stacey R. Coventry

It happens everywhere. In every community and in every state, there are homeless animals. In the U.S., there is an estimated 6-8 million homeless animals entering animal shelters every year. Only half of these animals are adopted.

At BHS alone, we take in over 5,000 animals a year. Two-thirds of those animals are cats. The reality is that every time an unneutered dog finds his way out of his yard to visit the female dog down the street, or the indoor/outdoor cat comes home pregnant once again, the result is often another unwanted litter of dogs or cats. Even if they are placed into homes, it is still possible for them to end up in shelters once they become too much

responsibility or they reproduce the next generation of homeless puppies or kittens.

It is just as important to spay or neuter pet rabbits. Rabbits reproduce faster than dogs or cats and often end up in shelters as well.

Spay/neuter is the only permanent, 100-percent effective method of birth control for dogs, cats and rabbits.

That is why the Humane Society of the United States has designated the month of February as spay/neuter month to help educate the public. While each pet adopted from the Bangor Humane Society is spayed and neutered, BHS has also committed to participate in pub-

Continued on page 6

Ask the Vet

Q: What are some good pet tips for the cold weather season?

A: Be careful when taking or leaving your pets outside during very bitter cold temperatures. It is important to ensure that pets have access to regularly changed water as it will freeze, along with access to shelter from the cold, particularly on very windy days. Pets can get frostbite on their ears and toes if you are not careful. Pets should not be left outdoors for more than 15 minutes in extreme cold (temperatures dropping below five degrees). It is also important to use extra precautions with pets that have short coats. Pet jackets, sweaters, and footwear are available for animals particularly sensitive to the cold.

Be aware of your pet's body signals. If your pet is shivering, bring him/her inside immediately! And, remember older pets grow increasingly more sensitive to cold weather as they are not able to regulate their body temperature as efficiently as when they were younger.

Although your car will protect your pet from the wind, in extreme temperatures, it becomes like a refrigerator inside. So, please leave your pets home where it is warm during the bitter cold weather season.

Q: How can I help my pet have good dental hygiene?

A: February is not only Spay/Neuter month,

but it also National Pet Dental Health Awareness month, sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

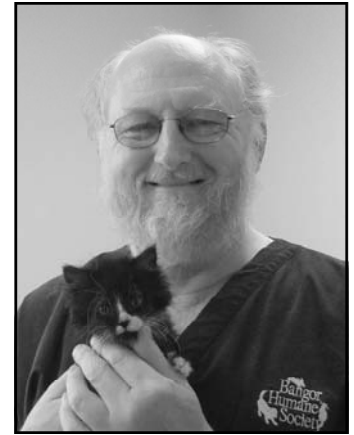
By the time pets reach the age of four, they usually begin to show the signs of increased tartar and may require a professional dental cleaning with your vet.

Also, your pet's bad breath may be a sign it is need of important dental care. If you think it is time for your pet to have a cleaning, ask you vet if he/she is running any discounts during the month for dental health awareness. As a preventative, begin brushing your pet's teeth at a young age to get them used to it. Pet stores sell special pet friendly toothbrushes and flavored toothpaste to make brushing easier.

Additionally, rawhides and dental chews or treats work wonderfully to scrape and remove tartar from your pet's teeth for those who resist brushing. ■



PETS NEED DENTAL CARE, TOO!
Make regular brushing and check-ups a part of your pet's health care routine.



Dr. Benson, Broadway Vet


Paws for Thought


By spaying and neutering just one male cat and one female cat:


More than 2,000 unwanted births can be prevented in just 4 years...

And more than 2 million in 8 years!

Shelter Highlights & Events

 Penobscot Surgical Care and Veazie Veterinary Clinic both became a Corporate Silver Kennel Sponsor! Thank you!

 A Big thank you to the O'Sullivan Family who held a special dinner benefit for the Humane Society raising over \$9,000 for our shelter pets!

 BHS was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the ASPCA to join 55 other shelters nationwide to participate in their Mega Match Adopt-a-thon on March 30th, 31st, and April 1st!

Check our website and Facebook for more details to come!



Our holiday Wish List Tree was a huge success! We had numerous individuals, families, and children donate toys, food, litter, blankets and many other items from our wish list tree. Thank you to all for making the holidays a little more joyous for our animals.

A Labor of Love

By: Amy Faircloth & Stacey R. Coventry

Have you thought about volunteering at your local animal shelter? Good. Because we need you. More importantly, the animals need you. Volunteering at Bangor Humane Society means much more than cuddling and socializing cute kittens and puppies. BHS needs volunteers to do the dirty work along side our staff. That's right - laundry, scrubbing cages and cleaning messes. You know, all that stuff we do for our families.

Volunteers at the Bangor Humane Society assist in maintaining clean and healthful conditions for animals in order to reduce stress and disease. An attractive and clean facility allows the shelter to provide the best of care and showcase animals in their best light. Specific tasks include cleaning kennels, washing dishes, washing and folding laundry, sweeping and mopping, providing food and water, photographing animals for use on web sites, socializing and exercising animals. The rewards are great but it is not an easy job.

"When I first began my volunteer experience at BHS, it soon became obvious to me that running the shelter is an extremely labor intensive effort," says volunteer Peggy Hall. "Many things need to happen on a daily basis to get each and every shelter pet a forever home. Volunteers can have a major impact on the overall health of the animals during their shelter stay."

Each Sunday you will find Sue Baker, one of the agency's long-term volunteers, at the shelter caring for our many cats. She empties litter boxes, refills food and water, strokes the cats, and wipes out their kennels. Sue spends a couple of hours each week cleaning cages and completing numerous loads of laundry.

Sue calls her Sundays spent cleaning cat kennels her "fun day." After a long week at work in an office, she appreciates providing love and attention to a living thing. She understands that many folks might think that working in a shelter can be depressing. But, Sue sees it differently. "I hope to improve the quality of life for the animals that are waiting to be adopted," says Baker.

And she is right. You can see it in their eyes, you can hear it in their purrs and you feel it in that warm feeling inside of yourself.

For Peggy, cleaning kennels or scrubbing dishes sometimes provides a much needed break from the emotional stress that sometimes exists in a shelter environment.

"I am very sensitive, so sometimes working with the animals regularly can get overwhelming," says Peggy. "Sweeping the floors and folding laundry allows me to still help the animals without getting burned out."

And, for new volunteer, Joel Audet, volunteering gives him an opportunity to make a difference, while building a positive relationship with his girlfriend's son, who joins him on Saturdays. "It's lots of hard work, but you know it all helps the animals," says Joel. "I love coming in each week to find out which animals have been adopted, and to meet the new crew of animals waiting for a new home."

Volunteering as a shelter helper will increase the size of your heart, while improving the quality of lives of others. With that large of a reward, you would expect it to be difficult. If you are willing to work hard for huge benefits, give us a call. You won't regret it and neither will the animals you have helped. ■

Austin's Corner



It's me again, Austin, the Cat In Residence here at BHS.

If you stop by, you may likely see me spread across the front counter overseeing an adoption, sauntering through the dog kennels area or rubbing up against staff who can't seem to resist my company.

Though my days are busy, I wanted to share with you some of my hopes for the New Year to improve the lives of the pets here and ensure they each get the second chance that your kindness and generosity allow for.

Come see us first. If you are considering bringing a new pet into your home, please give us a chance first. The staff here was pretty lucky to get me, but we have a lot of other cats who deserve to find a forever home.

Don't get me started on the dogs. We have a great variety of dogs that all share the same basic need - to be wanted and loved. Come meet some of them. Staff will work with you closely to help you find the right match.

We have also been developing some wonderful com-

munity partnerships. The dogs seem to particularly enjoy the generosity of Bangor Pet Resort and Spa, which donates doggy day care to us twice a week. It gives our dogs a break from the kennel and helps staff learn more about their personalities to make even better matches.

We also have great relationships with our area veterinarians. If you use one of the vets in the community who supports us, please thank them for what they do for us. Their generosity means a lot to us here.

I also hope that we can build even more professional relationships with businesses in the area during 2012. We have a lot to offer one another.

On behalf of all the pets who found refuge here in 2011, I would like to thank you for your generosity. Every animal is well-cared for while they are here because of your financial help.

So, please stop by. Unfortunately you can't take me home, but if you're lucky I may see fit to allow you some petting and loving time.

Austin



Data, a 6-month year old brown tabby cat, was surrendered because his owners couldn't afford to care for him, including having him neutered. He was adopted on January 10th.

lic spay/neuter awareness not just in February, but year round.

In December 2011, the agency contracted with Broadway Veterinary Clinic to host a monthly spay/neuter clinic for low-income feline owners. The clinic results in the spay/neuter of 30 felines each month. BHS is hoping to encourage other local vets to participate in the spay/neuter

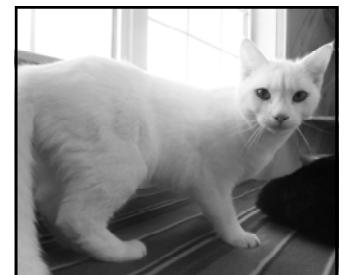
monthly clinic so that the monthly outcomes will double, resulting in over 700 public felines spayed/neutered annually.

In addition to the monthly clinic, BHS was recently awarded over \$20,000 in grant dollars from the Belvedere Animal Welfare Fund of the Maine Community Foundation, and from other generous local foundations to be disbursed to qualifying individuals through vouchers to spay/neuter their cat or dog through the participating veterinarians in the local area.

By spaying and neutering your pet or helping to raise awareness on the pet overpopulation dilemma, you too can become an important part of the solution. ■

Our Guiding Principles

- Treat all animals and people with respect, dignity, and integrity.
- Work diligently to end companion animal overpopulation by increasing awareness of spay and neuter programs.
- Promote adoption of physically and mentally healthy companion animals.
- Educate and train caretakers to develop fulfilling and lifelong relationships with their companion animals.
- Serve as responsible stewards of our resources.
- Hold ourselves to the highest standards of safety, care, and cleanliness.
- Raise public awareness with regard to the humane treatment of animals.
- Use euthanasia only as a last humane option in the best interest of the animal.



Sammy thanks you for your support!