



Johnson County Humane Society
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June 2012 Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Tip of the Iceberg

Teresa Kopel, JCHS President

In late January, a local stray cat became somewhat of a minor celebrity in Iowa City when she was stranded high in the branches of a tree. Her plight caught the attention of both animal lovers and the local press. People drove for miles to come and try to rescue her. Local television stations sent news crews to film her and interview potential rescuers. Willa Hamilton, Animal Control Officer for the Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center (ICAC), conquered her fear of heights to go up in a cherry picker to try to get her down. Several days later, cold and hungry, she finally allowed herself to be grabbed by a tree service employee. After several weeks of medical treatment, care and socialization, she was placed for adoption at ICAC and found a home.

I was one of the people who haunted the location that weekend. On the one hand, I was heartened by people's concern for the little cat. People were desperate to help her get down. But no one asked where her "owner" was, nor did any of the concerned citizens offer her a home. She turned out to be a 10-month-old female - small, sick, and scared, though not feral. The local business owner on whose property she was stuck said that he recognized her as a neighborhood cat, possibly abandoned by her owner or born to a friendly stray. She wasn't spayed, and thankfully wasn't already pregnant.

The little "tree kitty" was actually just one of hundreds, if not thousands, of local homeless cats. She was very visible, high in the naked branches of a tree, but those cats are everywhere – slinking down alleys, eating out of dumpsters, and bearing litter after litter of unwanted kittens. She was one of the lucky ones. So are Bunny and Claire, two local cats who I rescued on campus along with their kittens. But more die of disease, accidents, poisoning, dog attacks and starvation. Those who survive compound the problem: some studies have suggested a pair of unneutered cats can generate as many 420,000 homeless cats in a 7-year period. Where is the concern, the outrage, for those cats? And what can people do, anyway?

As I see it there are three conditions that must change if we are to achieve a state where we have no more homeless pets. The first is to commit to adopting homeless animals from reputable shelters such as the Johnson County Humane Society. Every pet purchased from pet stores or breeders means one more homeless animal who lives on the street or is euthanized in a shelter. (And EVERY animal sold in a pet store comes from puppy or kitten mills, despite what the sales staff tells you, because NO reputable breeder would ever entrust their charges to someone else.) Shelter staff and volunteers are committed to finding permanent homes appropriate for the animal, and not selling them to anyone with a checkbook or credit card.

The second is to commit to lifelong pet guardianship. When we adopt a companion animal, we need to commit that we will meet the animal's need for shelter, food, veterinary care and socialization as long as the animal lives – not until we change our minds, move, get married, or resent the time that they take.

Third, veterinary care absolutely MUST include spaying and neutering all companion animals before they have a chance to reproduce. Just the other day the person who cut my hair told me about her sister's dog who had a litter of seven puppies. When I urged her to encourage her sister to spay the dog and all of the puppies, she said her sister wanted her dog to have just one litter first. Now there are 7 more dogs who need homes, and 8 dogs who need to be spayed and neutered – one was already too many.

Organizations like the Johnson County Humane Society are trying to help solve the problem of homeless and unwanted pets. We foster cats who would make wonderful lifelong companions. We provide guidance and support in resolving problems that might otherwise lead people to relinquish their pet. We sponsor periodic low-cost spay days. And we administer the Florence Unash Neuter Fund, which provides funding assistance to Johnson County residents who would otherwise be unable to afford to spay and neuter their companion animals.

Please help support us in this important work, so that there will never again be a lost little “tree kitty” clinging to a tree for dear life!

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

Amy McBeth, JCHS Treasurer

Where Your Donations Went in 2011

JCHS started 2011 with \$6,175.54 in our checking account and \$2,193.72 in our savings account.

In 2011, we had bank deposits of \$14,294.45. An additional \$1,781.87 was given directly by donors to our vendors. (I also include in this figure gift certificates to be used on behalf of JCHS animals or projects.) \$8,770.20 arrived as general donations, donation jar income, and memorials. Through our membership in Iowa Shares, we received \$5,513.14. We earned \$7.11 in checking account interest and received a \$4 vendor cash rebate.

JCHS spent \$15,236.55 in project costs and \$1,515.06 on administrative costs (office, promotional, and fundraising materials, website costs, postage and P.O. box rental, memberships, and a small bank fee). Of the administrative costs, \$453.20 was paid directly to vendors by our donors.

Our total costs for 2011 were \$16,751.61, which translates to 91% spent on project costs and 9% on administrative costs.

If you cannot attend fundraising and tabling events, but would like more animals in our community receive the help and support they need, enclosed you will find a return envelope and donation card to send back to JCHS with your gift.

The Generosity of Friends and Strangers

Early in January this year, Kevin Olish, an acquaintance of mine and friend to many in Iowa City, passed away suddenly. Kevin was a long-time cashier at New Pioneer Coop. For years, New Pi has allowed JCHS to keep donation jars at their downtown location, but I’d never talked at great length with Kevin about JCHS. Apparently Kevin had a special place in his heart for his brother’s dogs, so his family decided to direct memorial donations to JCHS. Gifts arrived from people whose lives had been touched by Kevin—I knew some donors, but most were strangers to me.

As it would happen, Kevin’s sister-in-law, Carol, passed away two months later, after a battle with cancer. Even though they live out-of-state, the Olish family again directed friends and acquaintances to send donations to JCHS. A substantial memorial in Kevin and Carol’s honor has been received, and both Kevin’s sister, Marie, and brother, Tim, remain supportive of JCHS. We thank them for their generosity.

In March, JCHS received a bequest from the estate of a long-time resident of Johnson County, Patty K. Aldrich. Unfortunately, I didn’t know Patty, but as well as working as a registered nurse for many years, she more recently was employed at the Oxford Veterinary Center. As a special tribute in her honor, JCHS joined with the Oxford Vet Clinic in April and sponsored a feline spay/neuter day. We spent only about a third of the bequest for that event, so the remainder was used to sponsor more low cost spays and neuters in May. We think this would have met with Patty’s approval.

JCHS regularly receives memorial donations in honor of loved ones---both human and companion animals--- and it is bittersweet for me when I send acknowledgement of these gifts to the donors. In the situations where I have personal familiarity with those involved, it’s particularly difficult to say, ‘I’m sorry for your loss,’ followed closely by, ‘Thank you for your gift,’ and I can only hope the recipient of one of these notes understands how much the board of JCHS truly appreciates a gesture of generosity from a donor when we know that person is facing his or her own sorrow and grief. (Cont.)

Along with the many memorials we receive during the year, I'd like to thank everyone who regularly (or irregularly) helps to keep us financially afloat.

If you would like your gift donation acknowledged in a future newsletter, please let us know.

Thank you for your continued support in helping our local animals in need.

TECH TALK

Health Benefits of Spaying/Neutering Pets

Amanda Clark, RVT
JCHS Secretary

Pet overpopulation is a problem everywhere. Our humane societies, animal shelters, and rescue groups are overrun with pets needing homes. Spaying or neutering your pet helps control the pet population but also offers numerous health benefits.

If you spay your female pet before the age of 6 months, the chance of developing mammary tumors is only 0.5%. With each additional heat cycle, this number increases drastically. Spaying your female pet will prevent a life threatening condition called pyometra where the uterus fills with infection, the pet becomes very ill, and without surgical intervention, the pet may die.

Neutering your male pets will eliminate the chance of developing testicular cancer, and will make them better pets. They will not have the desire to roam, they will not become destructive while trying to get to a female in heat, and they will not mark on every surface they can find.

Many people want to teach their children about the miracle of birth by having a litter of puppies or kittens. This same lesson can be taught by visiting the animal shelter to see a mother and her babies. The visit can lead to family discussions about pet overpopulation, owner responsibility, and also ask frank questions, such as, "How are all the animals going to find homes?" "How is the mother (who is not as cute as the babies) going to find a home?" and "What can we do as a family to help prevent more litters?"

Spaying or neutering your pet will give your companion animal a healthier life and will help

control the overpopulation problem. Spread the word and educate as many people as you can.

SPAY NEUTER NEWS

For those who don't know, JCHS has for many years administered the Florence Unash Neuter Program. The funds in this program are available to any Johnson County resident who qualifies for financial assistance to spay/neuter their cat or dog. Residents fill out an application, return it to JCHS, are screened by a board member, and are allotted an amount consistent with their need. In virtually all cases, residents are responsible for at least part of the veterinary bill, with funds from the Unash Program covering the remainder. This fund is totally market-driven, so the amount we can provide is completely dependent on the financial markets. The fund is held by the Cedar Valley Humane Society, which receives remuneration for its efforts in financial oversight. Applications may be picked up at the Iowa City Animal Center, or obtained by calling Spay Iowa --- 888-977-2942, ext. 1, or by contacting JCHS through e-mail or by post. Local veterinarians who work regularly with JCHS also may have forms on hand. So far in 2012, the Unash Program helped subsidize the spay/neuter of 8 dogs and 15 cats.

In addition to spays/neuters subsidized through the Unash Program, JCHS sponsors spay/neuter events throughout the year. At the April event at Oxford Veterinary Center, JCHS helped pay for the spay/neuter of 16 cats. More recently, JCHS supported spay/neuter days working with Iowa Humane Alliance. Through IHA's coordination, JCHS subsidized the spaying of 34 female cats and the neutering of 5 male cats. We're also very happy to announce that Bright Eyes and Bushy Tails Veterinary Hospital will be helping us with a dog spay/neuter event in July! And JCHS will again sponsor a spay day for feral/barn/colony cats in October, to coincide closely with National Feral Cat Day.

ADOPTABLES!

Visit our latest additions at the Coralville Animal Clinic, Lenny, Trouble, and Lilly! Lenny is a 2 year old, black, short-haired cat, and Trouble and Lilly are "robust," declawed, short-haired gals. Lenny, from a multi-cat household, was lowest in

the pecking order, getting harangued right and left. He also lived with a very big, friendly, dog. Despite his friendship with his dog pal, it was in Lenny's best interests to remove him owing to the other cats. Lenny is doing really well at the Coralville Animal Clinic, blossoming into an all-around great guy. He would do best in a household with one or two laid-back cats, and would probably be fine with a cat-friendly dog. Lenny loves wand toys and his vertical leap is Olympic quality! Trouble and Lilly's human companion passed away, so these gals need to find a home, preferably together. They would do best in a relatively quiet household, and though they are used to Lenny, it might be easier to introduce them into a new situation without another animal already there. As when introducing any new animal to a household, an adjustment period should be expected. Please drop by the Coralville Animal Clinic and visit our residents! Saturday morning is the best time, but feel free to call ahead, 319-351-6848.

FUNDRAISING!

Ideas?

The JCHS Board is anxious to hear from anyone with an idea for a fundraising event—especially if you're willing to chair it! If you have an idea and energy to lead the project, we'd love to hear from you. Please drop by our monthly meeting, the second Monday evening of each month, 7pm, at the Iowa City Public Library, or contact a JCHS Board Member with your thoughts.

Donation Jars!

Fill those donation jars! We'd like to thank Don and Janet McClain, who for many years have been trekking around town to collect donations made to JCHS in donation containers. If you frequent the New Pioneer Coop at its downtown location, you'll see containers on every checkout counter. New Pi has been really generous through the years in allowing us this space, and we are really (really) grateful. We'd also like to thank the following businesses for their continuing help: Brenneman's Pet Grooming, Hamburg Inn #2, Heyn's Ice Cream, Leash on Life, Varsity Cleaners, North Liberty Pet Clinic, Animal Kingdom Veterinary Care Center, Eastside Pet Clinic, Veterinary Associates, and Coralville Animal Clinic. (My apologies if I've missed anyone!) If you have a business and would like to have one of our lovely new containers at your counter, please contact us!

Iowa Shares

JCHS has been a member organization of Iowa Shares, a federation of state-wide and local non-profits, since 2007. In those years, we have received thousands of dollars through Iowa Shares' workplace giving campaigns. The Iowa Shares Board is an all-volunteer working board, supported by only one half-time employee. JCHS's current representative to the IS Board has been serving in this capacity since 2007 and would like to step down. We have had a great association with Iowa Shares and would like it to continue, so we are looking for an individual who can represent JCHS on the Iowa Shares Board. If you are interested in representing JCHS on the board of Iowa Shares, please contact Amy McBeth.

Employees of the University of Iowa can start a monthly donation to JCHS anytime through Iowa Shares at the UI HRIS self-service website. Employees of ICCSD, City of Iowa City, Johnson County, City of Coralville, City of North Liberty, etc., may sign up to make a monthly donation to JCHS through your employer during their respective Fall Workplace Giving Campaigns. Watch for your workplace campaign this Fall!

Book Sale

We are penciling in a BOOK SALE in early October, so watch for updates through Facebook and our webpage!!

SPECIAL THANKS TO...Coralville Animal Clinic, Oxford Veterinary Center, Animal Kingdom Veterinary Care Center, Animals All About, North Liberty Pet Clinic, Vet Associates, Eastside Pet Clinic, Solon Veterinary Clinic, Davis Veterinary Clinic, Animal Haven Veterinary Hospital, and any other clinics that regularly work with us through the Unash Program. (Sorry, if we forgot you!) Also thanks to IHA for lining up those Spay Days!—we can't wait until the IHA Regional Spay/Neuter Clinic opens! ...and **THANK YOU** to all our donors!!!

JCHS Board: Teresa Kopel, President, Janet Ashman, Vice-President, Amanda Clark, Secretary, Amy McBeth, Treasurer, RoZella Sorrenson-Grabin, Board Member At Large, Mary Blount, Board Member At Large



Johnson County Humane Society has been a proud member of Iowa Shares since 2007.