

Capital Pet



Transforming the lives of animals and people through partnerships, protection and hope

The Betsy Club

Betsy came to us very pregnant and in need of help. In a foster home, she gave birth to seven beautiful puppies. They quickly found families, but over a year and a half later, Betsy was still waiting for hers.

Betsy was nervous in the kennels, so for many months she lived with Placement Manager Jillian Leibach, who considered her the perfect office mate.

"She spent most of her time with me snoring in her bed and occasionally demanding pets. She loved to snuggle and would jump in my lap if I invited her," said Jillian.

Sweet, calm, affectionate, and smart, to know Betsy was to love her. However, Betsy's unknown past made her uneasy and reactive to strangers and other dogs. Betsy wanted to trust and once she accepted you, the friendship was forever. One by one, new shelter friends became part of "The Betsy Club." Yet because she needed a quiet home with no other pets and an experienced owner, Betsy was repeatedly overlooked.

Meanwhile in June, Nickole H. lost her dog Zeke suddenly. Though she wasn't ready to bring a new dog into her life, she couldn't resist looking at pups on rescue sites.

One day she and her 2-year-old niece, Eliana, were on our

website when Eliana pointed to Betsy's picture and exclaimed, "Zekey!"

"It was like looking at a female version of him," Nickole said.

She read Betsy's bio, including the part about no other pets. Zeke had been the same way. She waited a week, then decided to ask to meet her.

As chunky Betsy came bounding out of the building, Nickole's heart leapt. During their visit, Jillian threw a ball and, without any encouragement, Betsy brought the ball to Nickole. And that was it.



Betsy enjoys play dates (and naps) with her new family.

Nickole says Betsy is gentle, sweet, and protective in the most caring way, especially with her young nieces, who often include Betsy in their play dates.

"I could not have asked for a better dog," said Nickole.

She's gaining confidence and The Betsy Club grows all the time. Your support makes "happy tails" like Betsy's possible!



Therapy Dogs Ease Courtroom Stress

Retired Albany City Court Judge Rachel Kretser is doting mom to a perky therapy dog named Woodstock. She has seen Woodstock work his magic, bringing joy to everyone he meets. After learning about court therapy dog programs elsewhere, she approached Supreme Court Justice Gerald Connolly, administrative judge of the Third Judicial District, with the idea.

The concept was enthusiastically embraced and soon the District's Gender Fairness Committee went to work. Committee members partnered with our Director of Behavior and Enrichment Nancy Haynes and a pilot program with six therapy dogs, including Nancy's dog, Bane, began in May.

Judge Debra Young's Adult Drug



Director of Behavior and Enrichment Nancy Haynes and therapy dog Bane; members of the Third Judicial District Gender Fairness Committee Anna Wilkinson and Jessica Douglas; CEO Ashley Jeffrey Bouck; Judge Rachel Kretser and therapy dog Woodstock

Treatment Court in Rensselaer County was the first to participate. This intensive program allows nonviolent drug offenders to choose treatment instead of incarceration. As participants appear weekly before Judge Young to report their progress, a dog is available to sit by their side.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants and court staff alike report that the dogs' presence brings a sense of calm, making for a much less stressful process for everyone.

According to Judge Kretser, the hope is to expand to other courts, in particular to family court and criminal court for child abuse victims.



Ashley and adoptable Harvey

A Message from CEO Ashley Jeffrey Bouck

As I look at the white board in my office, filled with objectives for 2022 and beyond, I am grateful to say that so many of MHHS' goals have been achieved or set in motion for success. A few of them are highlighted in this newsletter.

I'm so proud of all of our staff members who have completed a rigorous course of training to become peace officers. The addition of our first Director of Community Outreach and Humane Law Enforcement will advance our work to become a more active and visible community resource and to more effectively support law enforcement with cruelty and neglect cases.

Our staff and volunteers continue to be relentlessly committed to giving our animals every chance they deserve to live their best lives, like Betsy, who spent 567 days with us, and Eden, who found her true joy as a service dog.

Through our cemetery restoration project, we have renewed our promise to those who long ago entrusted us to provide a forever resting place for their cherished pets.

We're building new and novel partnerships with those who share our belief that animals simply make life better for us all. Our therapy dog program with the Third Judicial District, the first of its kind in New York State, is a great example of this.

Of course, underlying all of this progress is our amazing community of supporters. This year, we received a historic \$1 million gift toward our building capital campaign. We are so proud for our facility to now be known as the Lisa Mitzen Animal Care Center, after the co-founder of Business for Good. Far more than a means of recognition, the Mitzens' commitment demonstrates a humbling level of trust and confidence that we hold precious.

However, I want you to know that our deep appreciation for our donors is not defined by dollar amount. We want every person who sees fit to give their hard-earned dollars to us – whether \$10 or \$1 million – to have confidence in us and to be proud to be part of what we do.

You have given us the opportunity to be here for 135 years and we are honored to have you with us on our journey to a community where all animals are loved for life.

With Gratitude,

A 'Once in a Lifetime' Dog

Though we can never be certain of breed, as this can only be determined through a DNA test, Eden looked like a Belgian Malinois and acted like one too. The breed is known for its keen intellect, great work ethic, and protective nature. Highly driven and energetic, it's not a breed that handles time in a kennel very well. As our Behavior & Enrichment staff and volunteers worked with Eden, a young stray, they quickly saw her need for a job.

A dog like Eden is perfect for police or search and rescue work, so we reached out to contacts with State Fire, a division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. They did an assessment with Eden. While she wasn't just what they were looking for, they knew she was special.

From that meeting came a referral to Pennsylvania Wilderness Search and Rescue (PaWSAR), an organization dedicated to finding missing persons and victims of natural disasters. They

viewed Eden's assessment videos and immediately saw her potential. Soon Eden was headed to PaWSAR with trainer Vicki Sims.

From the very start Eden, now Jaxx, was ready to train – solid in her confidence and focus. Even more amazing to Vicki was the fact that she came with no fear or bad habits of any kind. She was completely house trained and had perfect manners. On top of all that, Jaxx blended into Vicki's pack of six easily and was just as great with people as with dogs.



Trainer Vicki Sims says Jaxx is brilliant!



Jaxx is excelling in her training, which now includes scent detection work and competition obedience.

"We don't know everything we will train her on yet, but we do know the possibilities are endless. She takes to new tasks quickly and eagerly and is a true problem solver," said Vicki. "We adore her and I call her my 'once in a lifetime' dog."

Vicki says Jaxx is proof that working dogs don't have to start out as purebred puppies. She's enormously proud of Jaxx, not only because she's a star, but because she's a shelter dog.

Mark your calendar for our 2023 signature events!

Gala for Animals: Saturday, June 3, 2023 • Oktopurrfest: Thursday, October 12, 2023

Humane Law Enforcement Team Now Eight Members Strong

In June our Humane Law Enforcement program took big strides forward. Andrew Fiumano was named Director of Outreach and Humane Law Enforcement and four staff members were sworn in as peace officers by Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple. This brings the number of MHHS peace officers to eight.

As the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) for Albany and Rensselaer Counties, our peace officers work in collaboration with municipal animal control and law enforcement to provide animal handling, case documentation, and animal law expertise. But that's not where our work ends.

In most of these cases, MHHS becomes responsible for the housing of animals, which has been a challenge when farm animals have been involved. We're thrilled to announce a new partnership with Albany County which will provide a safe, rural location for the shelter and care of large animal victims of abuse and neglect.



Community Outreach Manager Nikki Gagnon, Veterinary Services Coordinator Bree Seltzer, Placement Coordinator Katya Hartzell, Seizure and Disposition Coordinator Tegan Barron-Shashok, Director of Outreach and Humane Law Enforcement Andrew Fiumano, Sheriff Craig Apple, CEO Ashley Jeffrey Bouck, Senior VP for Operations Gail Hughes-Morey, Director of Behavior and Enrichment Nancy Haynes, and Placement Manager Jillian Leibach

New Learning Opportunities for All Ages

MHHS introduced three new humane education programs this year. This summer, **Paw Pals** participants in grades K-5 learned about behavior, care, and safety for cats, dogs, small animals, and farm animals. The program featured hands-on activities and a chance to meet many different types of animals. **Humane Heroes** for grades 6-12 was a hybrid summer camp/volunteer program that provided hands-on experience with animal care and insight on shelter operations. Participants worked alongside our staff and provided helping hands at a time when the shelter was at its busiest.



Telling Tails is our reading program with pets.

Telling Tails is a year-round reading program for kids ages 5-17. Participants can sign up to read to our shelter pets. Benefits of the program include enrichment for the animals and confidence boosting for kids.

We have great seminars for adults too! Learn more at mohawkhumane.org/community-education.



Animal food prep was one of the hands-on activities for Humane Heroes participants.

Honoring Pets from Decades Ago

MHHS opened a pet cemetery on its grounds in the 1940s. We promised the community to honor and care for their beloved companions as they were laid to rest. While the area was preserved, over time the stones receded into the ground to the point that they became invisible. Unfortunately, documentation was also lost over the years.

This year, we have undertaken an ambitious project to reset and restore the stones and map them so they are all visible and identified. We have unearthed a few hundred so far, but we estimate there are more than 2,400 stones in total. As part of the project, we have also added a memorial pathway leading to our garden, which will allow for people to add engraved pavers in memory of their pets. Learn about purchasing tribute stones on the back page.



The MHHS pet cemetery circa 1950 and some of the more than 2,400 stones we are working to restore.

Happy Tails



We love updates! Send to: happytails@mohawkhumane.org



Apawlo

Not a day goes by that we aren't thankful for our fluffball.
- Taylor S.



Bob

He calls out to me, purrs and kneads his paws as I pet him.
- Bruce C.



Driver

Even after 13 years, Driver is still the G.O.A.T.
- Douglas L.



Beatrice

Thank you for your great care of her and entrusting her to me.
- Mark H.



Milton

Everyone who meets him instantly falls head over heels.
- Stacey L.



Mocha

Thank you for giving me my best friend!
- Sarah G.



Tilly

She has filled our lives with so much joy!
- Bri F.



Leonardo

He's always at the door with his whole body wagging when we come home.
- Robin & Dennis K.



Memorial Pavers

Our new memorial path is a place for people to honor and remember beloved animal friends that have crossed over the Rainbow Bridge.

Pavers are \$135 and can be personalized with a message and

one of many graphic options. Pavers purchased now will be installed in the spring. Learn more at polarengraving.com/mohawkhumanesociety.

Give a Gift of Love this Holiday Season

Looking for the perfect gift for the animal lover in your life? Make a donation in their honor to MHHS and send a personalized e-card. It's quick, easy, and the perfect fit for all. There are more than 30 adorable designs available for the holidays and many other occasions too. Visit mohawkhumane.org/ecards.



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