

# Critter Chronicles

Summer 2020 | Vol 37 Issue 2

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**The mission of the Wisconsin Humane Society is to build a community where people value animals and treat them with respect and kindness.**

www.wihumane.org 414.264.6257

milwaukee | ozaukee | racine | green bay | door county | spay/neuter clinic

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*Dear friends,*

**Thank you.** Despite the chaos and uncertainty over the past several weeks, you have continued to support our essential work for animals and the people who love them. I am profoundly grateful. It's made a difference and we will continue to work hard to support the new needs of the communities we serve. As our revenue from programs such as spay/neuter services, retail sales, adoption fees, and children's programming has significantly fallen, your gifts have never been more important to continuing our lifesaving work, and I'm deeply thankful.



*Photo by Nicholas Pipitone*

To catch you up to speed, we've been able to continue critical services that only your support could make happen. Our work for animals and their families evolved in unprecedented and innovative ways.

- We are **hand-delivering pet supplies** to low-income families who are high-risk and can't safely leave their homes.
- We are **partnering with local food banks** to keep their shelves stocked with pet food so no one has to make two stops just to feed everyone in their family.
- We are **caring for roughly 300 dogs, cats, and small animals** on any given day, ensuring they're getting proper medical care and attention as we prepare them for their next chapter in life. About 75% of them are in foster homes, which we're working hard to support.
- We launched **a veterinary telemedicine partnership** with the University of Wisconsin Shelter Medicine program, offering medical advice via phone, video, or text for pets on Milwaukee's north side, which was deeply affected by high rates of COVID-19.
- We **moved into our new Racine Campus** in Mount Pleasant when this first struck, literally in 48 hours, knowing that the animals in our care—and our staff—would be better protected in the new facility.
- Our **Wildlife Rehabilitation Center remains open** in Milwaukee for the many injured wild animals who are brought to us each day. They have nowhere else to go, so we're doing our best to stay open to save them.

Like many of your workplaces, our work changed seemingly overnight. As difficult as it has been, our staff and volunteers have risen to the new challenges with positivity, kindness, professionalism, and an even stronger sense of community. We've embraced new tools, processes, and even philosophies that we're excited to carry into the future – they've made our work for animals better, stronger, and more impactful.

We're in this together, and I'm proud to be a part of this organization. I hope you are too.

*With deep gratitude,*  
Anne Reed

# Community Fundraising Goes Virtual

We're all missing our favorite charity events and activities, but animal lovers in our community are still finding creative ways to give back. If you're looking for ways to support WHS during this time, below are a few examples of how others have come together, from afar, to support animals:

## *Selling something? Consider donating a portion of proceeds.*

- Donate a percent of sales of a particular item, or all sales for the day, week, or even month. Partner with other local businesses to make an even bigger impact!
- Calling all crafters! Share your homemade goods with friends and family on social media and promote that a portion of all sales will support animals.

## **Fundraise online with EverydayHero, our online fundraising platform!**

- Birthday coming up? Set up an online webpage for your birthday and, in lieu of gifts, ask friends and family to donate to pets in need!
- Looking for a new fitness goal? Training for a 5K? Set up an online fundraising page and ask others to donate for every mile you run or for every day you workout for that month. You'll not only support the animals, but sharing your goals with others can keep you motivated and accountable.
- Wedding plans changing? Ask guests to give back to the animals in your honor instead of sending gifts!



## **Use video calls and virtual hangouts to give back!**

- Turn that trivia contest, group video game, or virtual game night into a giveback night! Everyone pays to play and half the "pot" gets donated to the animals at WHS. It's a win-win!

## **For help with your community fundraiser, contact:**

Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine: Ruadhan Ward | [rward@wihumane.org](mailto:rward@wihumane.org) | 414-431-6122

Green Bay, Door County: Lori Nachtwey | [lnachtwey@wihumane.org](mailto:lnachtwey@wihumane.org) | 920-469-3110 ext. 2119

## **A Birthday Gift from the Heart**

Lentil is one of a number of animals who came to WHS after being brought to the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC) as strays. Supporting stray animals in the Milwaukee community has become a birthday tradition for a caring man who wants to make a difference in the lives of local animals. In honor of his own birthday, this amazing friend sponsored the care of Lentil



and more than a dozen other animals throughout their stay at WHS. This generosity paid for food, shelter, medical care, and behavior support. His only birthday wish was to help homeless animals in our community. Lentil and her friends from MADACC & WHS could not be more grateful for such a selfless act of kindness!



# THE RACINE CAMPUS HAS MOVED!



**Thanks to the boundless support from our community, we reached a major milestone in WHS history.**

On March 18, the Wisconsin Humane Society Racine Campus officially moved into its new home. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Racine Campus suspended adoptions and other services, and we quickly realized that it was an optimal time to move into the new 16,000 square foot shelter located at 8900 16th Street in Mount Pleasant.

The former shelter on Chicory Road served our animals and community in significant ways, but the facility—originally constructed as a potato barn—lacked adequate space, resulting in a stressful environment for animals, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

Starting from the ground up, the new building was uniquely designed for the current and future needs of animals. From separate entrances for adoptions and strays/surrenders, an open concept lobby, increased and flexible animal lodging, a socialization room, outdoor play yard, and walking path, to surgical and dental suites, a pharmacy, isolated recovery rooms, separate space for laundry and food preparation, additional office stations, and a learning center for community programs, staff and volunteers are now able to better serve animals and the people who love them.





In addition to a larger footprint and distinctive rooms, the building includes features such as non-slip floors, hoses in each lodging room for easy cleaning, and a hospital-grade heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, providing quality air for animals and preventing disease.

Since our move, we have reunited dozens of animals with their families, found foster care for nearly 100 animals from Racine County, transported animals for adoption to the Milwaukee and Green Bay Campuses, and even helped two pregnant cats give birth to kittens at our shelter.

Since the announcement of our shared vision for a new animal shelter in Racine, we have raised more than \$6.6 million toward our goal of \$6.8 million, but we still need your help. For additional information about contributing to the capital campaign for the new Racine shelter, we invite you to visit [www.unleashthepotential.net](http://www.unleashthepotential.net) or contact Stephanie Nespoli at 262-554-6699 ext. 5009 or [snepoli@wihumane.org](mailto:snepoli@wihumane.org). With the matching campaign through the end of the year, you'll have double the impact for animals in need!

**Thank you for helping animals and making our vision a reality! We hope you can visit us soon. To find current hours of operation and available services, please visit [www.wihumane.org](http://www.wihumane.org) or call 262-554-6699.**

## RUUD-SOKOLY MATCH ANNOUNCEMENT

Inspired by the new shelter, the Ruud Family Foundation and Ted Sokoly have created a Match Challenge in support of Racine animals. All gifts made to the Racine Capital Campaign and the Racine Campus now through December 31, 2020 will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000!

Like you, the Ruud Family Foundation and Ted Sokoly are lifelong animal lovers, dedicated to making a difference alongside the Wisconsin Humane Society. Every gift matters and now your donation will make twice the impact helping so many animals with urgent needs. We hope you will join us in rallying behind animals and our Racine community by making your gift today!

**For more information and to double the impact of your generous support, please contact:**

**Stephanie Nespoli | 262-554-6699 ext. 5009  
[snepoli@wihumane.org](mailto:snepoli@wihumane.org) | [www.unleashthepotential.net](http://www.unleashthepotential.net)**

# Youth Programs Engage Young People at Home

While we haven't been able to welcome guests into our shelters, we want to ensure we continue to connect with the more than 8,000 young people we serve each year, especially as families are in new and challenging situations with kids home from school. Our Youth Programs team has worked tirelessly to find creative ways to engage kids and families from their homes. We quickly began recording virtual story times featuring a book about animals, as well as one of our staff members' own animals for young people to "meet." We also offer an "animal assignment" once a week, featuring an activity that animal lovers of all ages can do to learn about, celebrate, or help animals.

The engaging content has included a video demonstrating how to make a dog/cat toy from toilet paper rolls, a virtual memory game featuring animal body language, interactive stories, opportunities share animal artwork, and more. To follow along with the new opportunities available to kids and families, check out our story times and "animal assignments" on the Wisconsin Humane Society's Facebook page.

It's hard for families to make birthday celebrations special when typical gatherings can't occur, so we are offering virtual birthday parties for kids turning 4-14! Our staff virtually introduce guests to pets, host an interactive game, and even sing happy birthday to the birthday child – all through a digital platform. As a digital party favor, each party guest receives a link to download and exclusive WHS birthday coloring sheet. We've had so much fun sharing in kids' special days!

Out of an abundance of caution to keep the young people we serve healthy and safe, we have shifted June camps to an online platform and are offering our first-ever virtual camps for young people who have completed grades 1-9. Our Off-leash Virtual Camps feature interactive and fun activities that will get kids up and moving, while learning about animals. In addition to the time spent live with kids virtually each day, we provide fun content and activities for kids to check out outside of those scheduled camp hours, too. We even offer camp kits that include a t-shirt and supplies shipped to camper's homes!



To check out online camps, birthday parties, and virtual programs available for kids, visit:  
[www.wihumane.org/for-kids](http://www.wihumane.org/for-kids)

## Can You Spare a Gift Card?

Were you given a gift card for a birthday or celebration that you won't be using? Whether it's a \$10, \$25, or even \$100 gift card, consider donating it to WHS for one of our upcoming auctions! They can be for stores, restaurants, cafes, spas, experiences, or anything in between. With so many events canceled in recent months, our auctions are more important than ever.

**ALL proceeds from WHS events support the animals in our care – and donations are tax deductible!** If you have gift cards that you're able to donate, you can mail them directly to our Milwaukee or Green Bay Campuses (just include "Attn: Events"). For questions, please email us at [events@wihumane.org](mailto:events@wihumane.org).

# Pets for Life Update



Our Pets for Life program serves families with pets in underserved communities through door-to-door outreach, and our typical ways of connecting with families in their homes has not been possible due to COVID-19. The neighborhoods we serve on Milwaukee's north side already face significant barriers to accessing pet care resources, and COVID-19 adds another real and dangerous barrier, so families and animals have needed our support more than ever.

Our team has worked to find new ways to connect with the nearly 8,000 families and more than 14,000 pets we have met through our program. We're connecting by phone and text, focusing on reaching out to our older clients and those with health conditions that may make them vulnerable to COVID-19, dropping off important supplies like food and litter on porches for contact-free assistance. Many of the families we serve are struggling with financial impacts of the crisis or are not safely able to leave their home, so dropping off supplies eases their worry about providing for the pets they love.

There is not a single veterinary clinic in our entire Pets for Life focus community. For the last several years, we've partnered with the University of Wisconsin's Shelter Medicine program to provide

in-home visits to treat minor medical conditions for animals in our program, supporting quality of life for both the pets and families we serve. Recently, it has not been safe to visit clients in their homes to provide this care at a time when families face even more barriers to accessing veterinary care. In early April, we began offering telemedicine appointments, providing free consultations via video, phone call, or text. For animals who need to be seen in-person by a veterinarian, we've been able to provide limited appointments for Pets for Life animals at our Spay/Neuter Clinic while it's been closed to the public. Our team provides transport for animals to and from the clinic to keep their families safe at home, and we even drop medication off at clients' doors.

We know that the needs in our community will continue to be great and our team is committed to continuing to find creative and impactful ways to support the families and animals we serve.

Special thanks to HSUS for providing a COVID-19 Emergency Animal Care Grant to help support our PFL work in the community.

# Ask the Expert!

## What is Separation Anxiety?

Many of us have spent a lot more time at home over the past few months – much to the delight of most pets! – but what happens when work resumes and we have to spend more time apart from our four-legged friends? With the subject of separation anxiety on many pet owners' minds, we wanted to share some advice from the behavior experts at WHS. This article is a brief overview of the matter; for more information on separation anxiety and many other topics, please visit [www.wihumane.org/behavior/ask-the-experts](http://www.wihumane.org/behavior/ask-the-experts).

### What is separation anxiety?

Separation anxiety is the physiological and behavioral response a dog experiences when separated from his guardian, resulting in panic and destructive behavior. While many dogs exhibit some form of anxiety, true separation anxiety is fairly rare.

### What does separation anxiety look like?

Your dog may show their anxiety when left alone by whining, barking, howling, or destructive behavior such as chewing or digging. They may also take extreme measures to try and escape their environment, soil the house, pant heavily, or show signs like dilated pupils, excessive drooling, and/or sweaty paw pads.

### How do I know if my dog has true separation anxiety?

If you answer "yes" to most of the following questions, your dog may be experiencing separation anxiety. When your dog is left alone, does he scratch, chew, and paw at the doors and windows? When you are home, does your dog follow you from room to room? When you get home, is your dog frantic with excitement? Does your dog become nervous or excited when you grab your shoes, coat, or keys? Is there a puddle of saliva in the crate where your dog was left? Does your dog try to escape from the crate?



### How can I help alleviate my dog's separation anxiety?

- Keep your arrivals and departures as low key as possible. When you come home, make brief eye contact or give a short verbal greeting, then try to avoid anything your dog finds exciting for the next 10 minutes or so (like taking a walk, playing fetch, or excessive petting). If you get very excited about coming and going, your dog will, too.
- If one event seems to trigger your dog's anxiety, begin desensitizing him to that trigger. For example, if picking up your keys causes your dog to become anxious, periodically pick up your keys and move them around the house throughout the day when you are going to be home. You can also pick up your keys and give your dog a yummy treat. This will signal to him that "bad things" don't always come from keys clanging.
- Practice mock departures of varying duration (from 1-10 minutes). Use different stimuli such as grabbing your keys or starting your car to let him know that when you leave, it's not forever. When you return, make brief eye contact and then ignore him for a couple minutes.
- Vigorously exercise your dog for at least 15 minutes twice daily. The most important time to exercise is in the mornings before you leave. However, be sure you have planned at least 30 minutes from the end of the exercise session to your departure to give them adequate time to relax and return to a normal baseline. Exercise alone will not cure separation anxiety, but it can save your house from a bored dog with lots of energy.
- Provide your dog with a special toy when you leave, such as a KONG stuffed with yummy treats and a bit of peanut butter. The goal is to associate positive things with your departure.
- Use pet sitters, doggie day care, neighborhood friends or someone who can be trusted to play, exercise, and let the dog out during the day.

If you would like to work with a WHS behaviorist one-on-one regarding this topic, please call 414-431-6173 or email [behavior@wihumane.org](mailto:behavior@wihumane.org) to schedule a consultation.