



Our Holiday Message for You

Have you been watching any of those "home" shows where people are looking for a new home because their old home is too small, doesn't have an "open" design concept, doesn't provide enough entertainment area...the reasons go on and on for getting rid of the old and getting the new "home."

What is a real home? It's a place where you feel wanted and loved and safe...you know you belong there. A home can be one room, or it can be a mansion; it can be decorated with priceless antiques or with thrift store treasures. Regardless of its monetary value, or its decorations, it is a place where you can go to bed and sleep at night, without fear or watchfulness. You are at peace there.

For many animals at Animals in Distress, our Kennel of Hope is the first, the only "real" home many of its residents have known. Here, they know that they have food, shelter, and, most importantly, kindness, every day, every night, for as long as they need to be here. When new animals arrive at our doors, they often reflect their lack of a real "home"—they don't trust anyone...they grab food as if they will never get fed again...and they cringe at the prospect of being hit when a human hand reaches toward them. For such animals, Animals in Distress is a wonderful place—once they realize that they are safe, and loved, and cared for.

As you share holiday festivities with those you love, take a moment to reflect on Animals in Distress, a home for hundreds of animals who would have no joy, no holiday, and no future without our Kennel of Hope. May the blessings of the season be yours in abundance. Thank you for caring about those forgotten by others. Thank you for your support over the past year or years. Without YOU, thousands of animals would never have known what a home is and would have perished alone, in fear and pain.

As we count our blessing this holiday season, we say a special prayer for all our friends and supporters. Although you may not be physically present in our shelter on Christmas Eve, or any other day of the year for that matter, you are there—in every heart that breathes, in every animal that sleeps in peace, in every act of love and kindness that is offered countless times each day to the animals who call Animals in Distress their "home" at any given time.

Nothing sold in stores could be as precious or more reflective of the true spirit of this holiday season than the wonderful second chance that you have given to animals whose faces you may never see in person, but whose welfare you care about in your heart.



Open House: A Family Gathering

Our open house was wonderful, with people and pets filling the Hospitality Center with music, happy greetings, and festive spirit. Adopted pets returned to share in the event, and many volunteers prepared and served food that rivalled catered events in quality and taste.

Several people commented that they had been feeling tired and sort of "down" until they came to the shelter. After a short time, they felt upbeat and joyful, their spirits lifted by the positive and loving energy surrounding them.

The poinsettias, ornaments, and wreaths bearing the names of people or pets being honored or remembered filled the room

with gentle memories of those who could not be present physically, but who were remembered with Love. Some of you send in such tributes year after year, keeping the memory of loved ones alive—and honoring those still living by sharing your love with our shelter animals.

Anita Bielecki captured some of the special moments with her camera, and we share those moments with you in the collage on the following page.

A new, fun event this year was an ugly sweater contest. Santa Paws and the audience had a tough time deciding the winners but finally picked Sandy Seng, Macy (beloved dog of Karen Winston), and Cameron Maisonet.



A Special Group of People

We are especially grateful to the volunteers who make such events possible. Preparing the food, making and displaying baskets for the Basket Social, making certain the shelter is adorned with festive and fun decorations, playing music, serving and cleaning up afterwards.....the list goes on and on.

These people, coordinated by Kelly Hartnett, work so hard because they want all our friends to feel welcome and appreciated and loved. We have included pictures for those who could not attend. We want you to know that you are part of the Animals in Distress family and that your love and support make everything we do possible.

The Shelter Residents Celebrate Too!!



The cat and dog kennels were also decorated. Overflow from the basket social filled several tables in the cat wing, Purrfect Place. And xmas stockings hang in the dog wing, Hopeful Hall, bearing the names of dogs still with us, as well as names of those who have passed away.



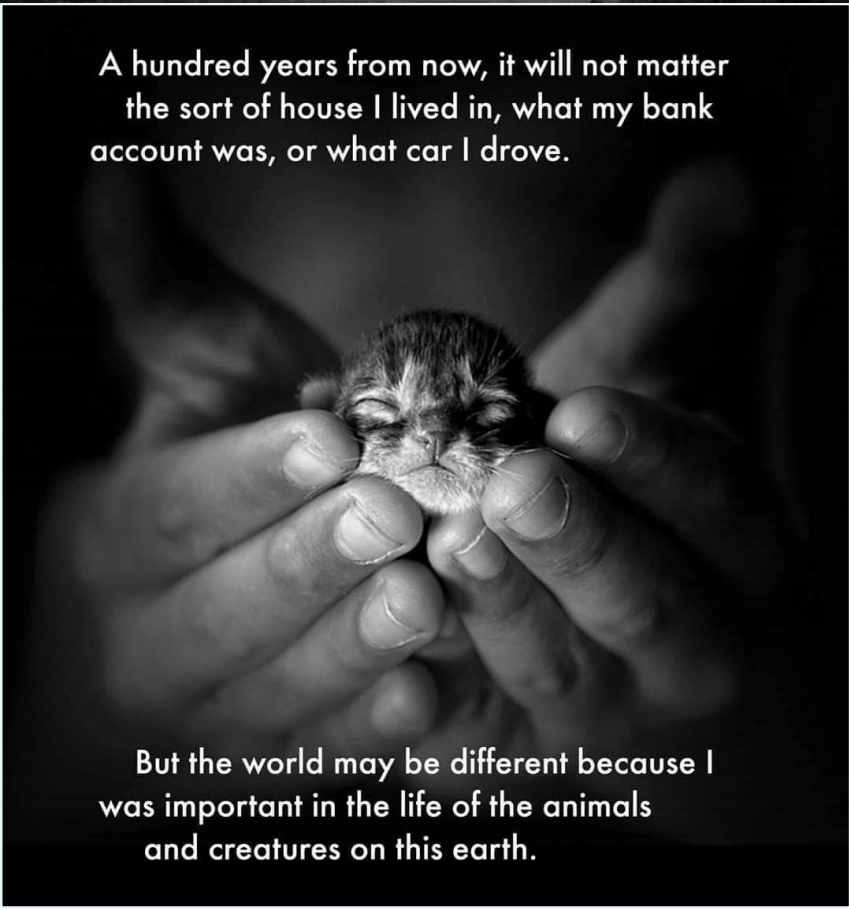


A Good Time Was Had by All!

Speaking of exceptional effort, thanks to all who participated in our annual Wag Walk at Lake Nockamixon. We raised over \$7,300 of much needed funds. Fabulous Brenda Bolster was again the leader in soliciting sponsorship money—we don't know how she does such a great job, year after year, but are sure glad she does! Karen Winston was second. The top donor in the Under 18 category was Kayla Hinckle. Best of all, the dogs –and Anton the wonder cat—seemed to be having a great time: it was fun for them and their humans too.

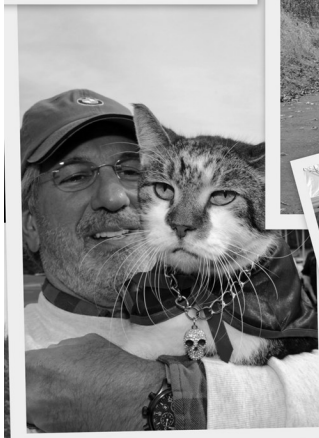
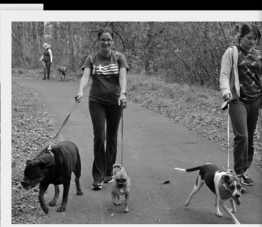
A new feature this year was a Halloween costume competition. Lots of people and pets participated, in costumes ranging from clowns to super heroes. The weather was perfect, and we had a record number of participants. Many of them were new .

Special thanks to the volunteers who did all the work for this event: prize soliciting, set-up of tents and tables, food preparation, registration, bookkeeping....the list goes on and on. Sometimes, we stop to reflect on the endless generosity of time and money that our volunteers show. Most of them are at the shelter and see, firsthand, what all their efforts are for; they see the sweet faces of our animals, they pat their heads, they feed them treats, they speak kind words to them: it's not difficult to understand why the volunteers try to do their very best: they know that many other lives depend on them. On the next page are several pictures of this fun and happy event (thanks to Lowell Linde for these shots of a day well spent).



A hundred years from now, it will not matter
the sort of house I lived in, what my bank
account was, or what car I drove.

But the world may be different because I
was important in the life of the animals
and creatures on this earth.



The Holiday Spirit is alive and well every day of the year at Animals in Distress ...A Sanctuary of Hope and Unconditional Love for those without hope

As you reflect on the year that is past, and on the upcoming year, take a moment to reflect on what your love and support have meant to the cats and dogs who find refuge at Animals in Distress. Nothing happens by just hoping it will. Hard work, dedication, prayers, AND money allow us to do the work that we do. Every dollar is precious, every dollar counts. So, you won't be getting any mailing labels, calendars, and other "gifts" in the mail from us. We need the money those items cost to save lives. However, we decided to send you a different kind of "gift"—one that you can't buy in stores, one that you don't return because it's the wrong size or color. Our gift to you is the many happy animals living at our shelter. They would not be alive today if not for YOU. A few of them are profiled in this Holiday Newsletter to reflect the kind of "gift" you make possible.

One such animal is Theresa, a dog who is part of a great love story. As you may remember, Theresa was a stray in the remote area of a public park for over 8 years, along with a companion dog we named Hero. Attempts to capture them were unsuccessful for 8 years until one day, they and their litter of puppies were caught. The puppies were little and cute, so they were placed by the people who trapped the family. But no one wanted Hero and Theresa. They were older, they were not well socialized, and they weren't the kind of dogs deemed "adoptable." Of the 57 animal shelters and rescues contacted, ONLY Animals in Distress agreed to save their lives.

Most people aren't as devoted to each other as these two were. For 8+ years, Hero had protected his family, even chewing off his gangrenous leg after being hit by a car. When Hero passed away. We all worried about how Theresa would react to losing her companion and protector. Our staff and volunteers have made a huge effort to spend time with her, to let her know that she is not alone or forgotten. She is spending the holidays—and the rest of her life—with us, loved and protected, thanks to those who make our sanctuary possible. She embodies the commitment of Love and Devotion better than many people do.

In the past few months, Theresa, now 18 years old, has been diagnosed with bone cancer. She was not given much time, maybe to the new year. When her time comes, she will be in the loving and devoted arms of the people who have cared for her for over a decade. She will not be alone or afraid or in pain: she will be loved and respected right up to her last breath. She will know unconditional Love until she is reunited with her Hero.

May those of you who have lost a loved one whose presence will be sadly missed this holiday find comfort in knowing how many lives you have helped to save.

Focusing on the good that we CAN do helps us to cope with the pain of loss when there's nothing more that can be done.



Theresa



Update on Ginger

The kitten featured in last month's newsletter—the one needing surgery to fix a prolapsed rectum—is doing very well. No one would ever guess how close Ginger came to dying! He will spend this holiday season in our sanctuary, free of pain, clean and well fed, surrounded by Love. YOU made that "gift" possible, and our gift to you is letting you know what a huge difference you have made in the lives of many animals like Ginger.

Another Rescue.. Another Gift of Life

A recent rescue involved a tiny dog found disoriented and scared on a country road where she had been abandoned. We named her Karen, after the wife of the man who rescued her from certain death.

Her mouth had a horrible odor, and her teeth were caked with decay and infection.

Our veterinarian removed 24 rotten, broken, and infected teeth. She is doing very well and seems quite appreciative to have no more excruciating pain every time she tries to eat something.

YOU made this possible through your love, prayers, and support.



.....Detach coupon here and return to: **Animals in Distress, P.O. Box 609, Coopersburg, PA 18036...**

Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ to keep Hope and Love alive at Animals in Distress, for pets like Theresa, Ginger, Karen, and many others.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Check this box if you do NOT want a receipt mailed to you.

*Thank you for answering our prayers
on behalf of creatures without a voice.*

Credit Card Info:

Number _____

Name on card _____

Expiration date _____

Signature _____

There's a wooden plaque in the entrance to our shelter that reads "Peace to all who enter here." Such a simple statement and yet it is so meaningful. Without peace, we suffer physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. The relationship between stress (lack of peace) and all of those problems has been proven over and over.

During the holidays, we celebrate family, community, good will, kindness, generosity—all those qualities that make everyone feel good about life in general and about others. Some people exploit the season by encouraging people to overspend, over indulge, over everything. And many charities seek donations by mass marketing, TV and print advertising, free gifts, and many other ways. This time of the year can be anything but peaceful.

Imagine what kind of stress is experienced by shelter animals who have lost homes, family, even their names. If they wind up in some sort of animal organization, their ability to recover from their ordeal is in direct relationship to the peace they can find after being "rescued." It takes time, often a lot of it, for them to get past their sadness and fear. To heal, they need peace (as do all of us).

At Animals in Distress, our commitment to each animal we rescue is that they will find peace here. We make the same promise to all who enter our little "world."

This prayer is shared with you as a manifestation of our firm and unwavering commitment to the pets who will be spending the holidays (and much longer, in many cases) with us. YOU have made our sanctuary possible. YOU have made peace possible.



We thank you Lord for bringing us together in the common bond of our love of animals. We ask your blessing for our staff and the many volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents. Thank you also for the many people who support our organization in so many ways. Please watch over and keep safe all the animals who call our shelter home as well as the animals who share our own lives and who bring us so much pleasure. We hold dear in our hearts those pets who are no longer with us and who are now at your side. A special blessing for all creatures who are homeless, abused, and unwanted.

We pray for your continuing guidance in the coming year. There is still much to be accomplished and we know all things take time.

We are such a small part of this big wide world: help us to continue to make a difference in the lives of so many unwanted, deserving animals. And in the lives of so many caring people. Amen.

ANIMALS IN DISTRESS

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Current Resident

Let there be Peace on Earth



And let it begin with all of us