New Year, FVHA Continues Making Improvements!

If you haven’t been able to stop out at the shelter within the past year, we have made a TON of improvements around the facility. Some things that we have added or improved upon:

- Lifetime Giving Wall
- New phone system
- Fresh paint in many of the rooms
- Updated front lobby desk
- Added additional surgery equipment to enhance number of surgeries
- Updated mission and vision statement, as well as the logo and colors
- Installed kennel portals for improved cat housing
- Created a more user friendly website
- Reduced our debt significantly through the Capital Campaign and generous donors
- Enhanced our play yard by incorporating more fencing so that more dogs could be out at a time
- Resealed the parking lot to give it a fresh look
- First annual event, Unleashed: Paws for a Cause

We are so grateful for the support of our community. It’s donors, volunteers, staff and board members that allow us to continue this great work. Plans are in the works for 2023! We will continue on the path of doing better each and every day for pets, and their people.
Howliday Sleepover Recap

Natasha Kim

2022 Howliday Sleepover Success!
Fox Valley Humane Association offered our second annual Howliday Sleepover Event over the Christmas holiday.

Our kennels were completely full at the beginning of the event. Twelve eager dogs with wagging tails were waiting for the public when our doors opened at 1 pm on December 22nd. We successfully sent home most of our dogs for the weekend, leaving just four dogs in the building over the holiday. With only four dogs in the building our staff was able to spend extra time with them, giving them time to run and play in our lobby with the cold temperatures and receive enrichment treats. With the kennels empty and quieter the remaining dogs were also able to get some much-needed rest.

We had five successful adoptions directly from the event, and a few dogs were able to find their perfect matches after coming home from their sleepovers as we were able to learn some vital information from their sleepover hosts!

Maple; Successful Adoption

Marco, a recent transfer from Texas, had been waiting at the facility down there since September for the perfect home. His cute face captured the hearts of his host family immediately and they could not help but keep him! He only had to live in our facility for two days!

A huge thank you to our community for giving our dogs a chance to spend the holidays being loved in a cozy home. This also provided the dogs that didn’t get to go home the opportunity for plenty of one-on-one time with staff! If you didn’t get the opportunity to participate, but wanted to, be sure to keep an eye out on our website at the end of December. We will be doing this again for 2023!
Animal Hoarding
- Dr. Ziegler

Animal hoarding events seem to hit the media on a fairly frequent basis. It seems that there are always situations of many pets being found in crowded, unsanitary conditions with the involved animals often being malnourished. This can include many species, but we primarily hear about the cases involving cats and dogs. Nothing is exempt, however.

The interesting thing about hoarding is that it takes on many faces. Almost all hoarding situations start off with good intentions. An individual or group simply wants to help, and cannot say no to any animal they feel needs their help. When the capacity to care for a group of animals cannot be met, that is when things deteriorate, and a true hoarding situation exists.

Surprisingly, there are rescue groups guilty of hoarding. With the never-ending number of animals needing help, taking on more than can be managed is an easy trap to fall into. As a matter of fact, when FVHA started consulting with UW-Madison on shelter management in 2020, when they found out about our situation at the time, they referred to us as an “institutional hoarder”. That was quite a wakeup call. Since then, we have worked hard to manage a population of in-house animals that does not exceed our ability to care for them. This is not always the norm in the world of rescue, however.

The interesting thing about hoarding is that it does not always have to involve a large number of animals. I knew a client once who had many cats. They were all well taken care of, they received regular veterinary care, and her house was as clean as could be. Someone with half as many cats may not be able to care for them, and they could be underfed with a house that was dirty and unkept with overflowing litter pans and inadequate food and water present. Hoarding is more about care than it is about numbers. Hoarding is not always a socio-economic or educational condition. Anyone can get caught in the downward spiral of trying to care for excessive animals. I knew someone who was intelligent, outgoing, and always presented herself well dressed and clean. When she was admitted to the hospital after a stroke, I was asked to go to her house to check on her animals. What I found was beyond comprehension. It was not only cats, but newspapers, magazines, and an assortment of other things collected over years and piled high everywhere. The air was so thick with the smell of feces and urine that it was hard to breathe. I never had a clue. No one did.

Animal hoarding is something that will unfortunately never go away. In consulting with UW Madison (Shelter medicine) on the topic, they report a 100% relapse rate in this behavior after animals are removed from an owner’s care. That is pretty definitive. It seems to be a mindset that is difficult to change.

The frustrating reality of dealing with these situations is that for every one that is uncovered, we know that there are many more out there that simply have not been discovered yet. It is a sad truth. Whenever a hoarding situation is discovered and the animals are removed, it puts an incredible strain on the organization receiving the pets. These animals typically need a lot of care before becoming ready for adoption. This can include medical, nutritional, and surgical care that can be anywhere from straightforward to being quite involved. No matter what it takes, the goal is always to get the pets healthy and into a good home.

FVHA is very fortunate to have a great staff and a wonderful medical team to make this happen when these situations arise. Everyone steps to the plate to help ensure the best outcome possible. It is a costly service that requires the support of the community, but it is important work to do for the sake of the animals involved.

Holiday Appeal

The Holiday Appeal is OUT!
This past year, we set new records in lives touched by caring for nearly 6,000 pets and their people! The needs of our community continue to rise. A trend we don’t see going away any time soon. We are here to provide a progressive approach in shelter medicine and serve as a holistic resource while also providing affordable veterinary care, community outreach and education.
If you weren’t on our mailing list, but still want to donate ->
https://www.foxvalleypets.org/get-involved/donate/

**Make sure you select “Holiday Appeal” so we know that it’s a part of our matching program! Every dollar you share with FVHA will become two thanks to a $25,000 matching donation graciously provided by an anonymous donor:**
Rocky Finds A Home
- Kaylie Schilhabel

Rocky came to us on November 16th when his owner fell on hardships and was no longer able to care for him. Rocky is a 10-year-old chow mix who is a very smart boy. He brought joy to everyone when he would pull out all his tricks! Rocky was not getting much interest from adopters which we can only chalk up to his age. He had a sweet demeanor and seemed to get along with just about everyone! Rocky was growing more and more stressed by the day as he was coming up on his one month mark in our care. He was declining quickly and was doing his old man bark all day and didn’t like his kennel neighbor too much.

Just when we were starting to get worries about Rocky, a previous adopter emailed us and had informed us that their dog had passed away and they were interested in Rocky. They had experience with more sensitive dogs, and we knew right away they would be the perfect match for him! They came in and met him, and it was love at first sight for the family! Rocky now lives with kids and adults, and is the center of their universe!

Lancer’s Healing Journey
- Kaylie Schilhabel

Lancer came to us with another dog from a bad situation on October 14th. When Lancer first arrived at FVHA she was very fearful and malnourished. Her previous home fell on hard times and was not able to provide for her and her doggy siblings, one of whom passed away from malnutrition. Due to the hard living situation, she was also picky about her doggy friends. With a lot of patience and treats, Lancer was slowly won over by staff. She showed us her sweet and goofy side and loved to give kisses to all of her friends.

Lancer did have some interest with adopters, but was having a hard time showing them her sparkling personality. We learned that Lancer is very fearful of men, and would often times refuse to go into a visiting room if a man was in there. Lancer was beginning to become a long-term resident and we were starting to worry that she was going to decline in the busy shelter environment.

On November 30th, almost two months since Lancer entered our care, a family walked in and wanted to visit with Lancer. This family had previously adopted from us, and due to no fault of their own, they had to return him. The woman met Lancer; she fell in love! The husband then came to meet Lancer, Lancer barked a bit, but settled down. It seemed like everything was falling into place for both Lancer and the family! Then they brought in their other dog for a meet and it went wonderfully! We dressed Lancer up in her new collar and jacket and off she went to her forever home!

Lancers’ family sent us an update that she’s doing great! She slept on their bed the first night with the cat and cuddled all night! She enjoys playing with the other dog and cuddling with her mom and dad.