

Fall 2025

ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE

Happy Tails

"Pets are Life's Greatest Gift"



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Mailed to 3,629 Mailboxes
Serving Kosciusko County
for 36 Years

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The Animal Welfare League is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization **serving all of Kosciusko County**



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AWL answers the call to protect animals in hoarding, abuse situations

By Lauren Zeugner | Staff Writer, The Papers, Inc.

We see them all the time — social media posts or televised news reports of how the local animal shelter has been called in to rescue a large number of animals due to hoarding or animal abuse. These types of calls always seem to take place when the shelter is full to capacity.

Tonya Blanchard, executive director of the Animal Welfare League of Kosciusko County, explained the shelter is called in to assist local law enforcement, code enforcement or the health department in such cases.

In the case of animal abuse, the police will either bring the animal to the shelter or if there are too many, shelter staff will go out with a van stocked with carriers, catch poles and other equipment to capture the animals so they can be brought to the shelter.

Once at the shelter, a state veterinarian is called in to evaluate each animal. Usually what the state vet is looking for is the body mass of the animal and a general health check.

“You can’t miss anything or they (the offender) can walk,” explained Jill Smith, a dog kennel technician at AWL.

During the exam, the state vet will also look at the animal’s teeth to try and determine its age.

After the state vet looks the animals over, local veterinarians will come in to assess each animal and come up with a treatment plan.

“Pictures are invaluable in cases like this,” Smith said. “They are photographed to death.”

Photos are taken at the scene and of the animals condition as evidence in the case.

As the local vets do their assessments, staff take detailed notes on what they find and treatments are started.

From the time the animal is pulled from an abuse situation until the case goes to trial can take upwards of a month. During that time, the animal must remain in the custody of AWL. Blanchard explained the shelter usually has fosters, who take these animals in and cares for them. Often it becomes a foster fail situation where the animal is adopted once the case is resolved.

Getting the animals rescued from these situations back to health also takes time. Animals that are underweight need more smaller meals to put the pounds back on.

“Usually the smell of the place, the sight of the animals, you don’t forget,” Blanchard said. “That’s hard on us.”

What tends to happen is the shelter is called in for a hoarding or abuse case when it’s at capacity. When that happens, the shelter turns to the public for help. That assistance can range from people coming in to adopt or foster animals already at the shelter to help make room to donating necessary supplies.

AWL has been at capacity for a while, to the point it has offered sponsored adoptions for several months.

AWL has about four to five hoarding cases a year, which could be anywhere from having six to eight dogs to something much more extreme. Staff are working to educate the community about animal abuse and hoarding situations.

“A big thing in animal welfare is capacity awareness,” Sydney Langhorn, director of the AWL’s cat house, said.

Another issue is people pick a particular dog or cat without researching the breed and learning what behavior is “normal” for that breed.

“You need to be an involved owner,” Langhorn stressed.

AWL staff wish people would have a plan when it comes to adding a pet to the family, rather than acting on impulse.

The penalties for hoarding depends on how many animals are involved and their physical condition when they were seized. Smith said it’s usually a fine and community service hours.

“I think there needs to be harsher penalties,” she said.

AWL staff would like to see animal abuse punished by actual jail time.



OVERLOADED — The Animal Welfare League recently sent a call out after having to take in 37 cats and a dog due to a hoarding situation. The shelter was already overcapacity with animals when it needed to seize the additional animals.

Shown are the kennels where some of the cats are being housed until fosters can be found to care for them while the case works its way through the judicial process. Photo provided by Sydney Langhorn.



Documenting His Condition — Brooklyn Lyon, takes photos of a pup named Ralph, while Ashley Vanderpool holds him. Ralph came into the AWL dirty, covered in fleas and with a skin condition which has caused large bald patches. Lyon is documenting his condition should his owner try to claim him later. Photo by Lauren Zeugner.

Courtesy of The Papers, Inc.

1st Annual AWL “Companion Pets for Veterans”



On Saturday, September 5th, the Animal Welfare League held their first annual event to provide free shelter pet adoptions for Kosciusko Veterans. Generous donors sponsored adoption fees.

Attendees enjoyed patriotic cake, Emotive coffee, free military backpacks and flag pins.

“Every AWL pet has all vaccines, are spay/neutered and already micro-chipped,” said John Lantz, Board president. “We wanted to partner with the women and men in our community that served in our military, protecting our country. Just a small way to say thank you to our veterans”.

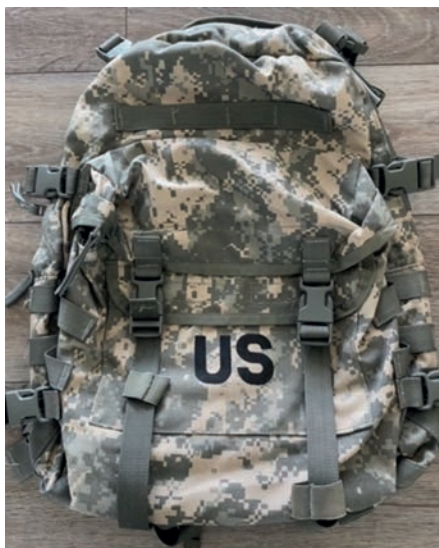
Shelter pets provide stress relief, alleviate loneliness, improve mental health, and encourage physical activity.

Special Thanks to:

- Glenn Mulette, owner, provided free Emotive Coffee and gave a Donation
- Jill Powers, Goodwill Veterans Resource Network for military backpacks
- Rebecca Smith who donated patriotic cakes for everyone to enjoy.
- MAJ (R) Friedrich Josellis, SAI, and the Warsaw Community High School JROTC Color Guard
- Adoption Fee Donors



Warsaw Community High School
JROTC Color Guard



L - Rebecca Smith and R - Diane Zimmerman Served cake to attendees

“It's been a passionate journey for me”



By John Lantz | Board President

See you around . . .

Last week was 5 years since we moved to this wonderful community. It's been almost 10 years now for me retired and volunteering in the nonprofit world for pets.

I spent many wonderful years volunteering with the Fort Wayne Pet Food Pantry, almost 4 of those years as board president (a heart tumor slowed me down towards the end). We gave out free pet food to those struggling financially. This helped keep pets from being turned into shelters.

For the last 4.5 years I've been volunteering at AWL, almost 4 years as board president. It has been a very passionate journey for me personally. A very rewarding time in my life. It has been an honor to serve this nonprofit organization. To be a part of its growth and its mission by helping to save lives of shelter pets.

Those who know me like to tease me about how I tend to be hypersensitive when speaking about the shelter. I'm sentimental now as I write my last letter to all of you. My time is over as I have stepped down early as president and leave the board.

Thank you, Donors, Volunteers and Foster Homes

Without you all, AWL could not have grown over the past few years. I deeply value your strong connection for helping shelter pets that come from every corner of Kosciusko County. Your support has been powerful!

Thank you, Kosciusko Veterans:

On this page you will read about our 1st Annual Companion Pets for Veterans events. This year I wanted to connect shelter pets with our county's women and men who served in the military protecting our country. Funds were raised — thank you donors — to provide free adoptions for veterans during the event. Besides our shelter event, I have been out speaking to veteran's groups and had an information table at this year's veterans “Stand Down” event at Grace College.

I spoke to 17 veterans a couple weeks ago, a monthly morning coffee group. There were 2 veterans, both 103 years old, that were in the Battle of the Bulge. Amazing! Everyone got a military backpack and a flag pin from me. Personally, very rewarding for me to be with that group. I will continue to support Kosciusko Veterans.

This is my last newsletter

I grew up in a printing family, earning my first \$4 paycheck in 1963 at 9 years old with my father's printing company — I still have the check. As I am quite a bit older now, I did really enjoy the challenge of putting together these newsletters and annual reports. Probably will miss this...

A very rewarding time in my life and an honor to serve this nonprofit organization. To be a part of AWL's growth and its mission by helping to save lives of shelter pets.

These pets didn't choose to live in our shelter.

With appreciation and respect,

John Lantz, Past President

AWL 2025 Board of Directors



LEFT TO RIGHT: Front Row - John Lantz, Mike Smith, Melinda Coleman, Savannah Lopez, Liz Harkness, Tonya Blanchard. **Back Row** - Dave Kintzel, Animal Control Officer Kyle Denton, Dan Woods, John Hall, Tom Tearney. Not pictured Carla Carlton.

HISTORY TIMELINE

“Serving Kosciusko County for 36 Years”

- 9/28/89 AWL Incorporated
- 1/29/92 IRS Recognizes AWL as a 501(C)(3) nonprofit
- 10/4/13 Building Campaign Begins
- 7/1/15 Older Building & 5.01 Acres purchased at 1048 S. 325 E., Pierceton, IN
- 5/3/18 Original Design / Build proposal from Robinson Construction
- 8/20/18 Revised Design / Build proposal from Robinson Construction (\$2,143,566) Total Square Feet - 12,872
- 10/19/18 Ground Breaking Ceremony
- 9/27/19 Moved into new facility
- 9/30/19 Sold old AWL building (\$149,000)
- 7/28/20 Mortgage Secured - \$545,000
- 7/10/22 AWL Wins Best Friends Animal Society “Touchstone Award”
One of just Five Shelters in the Country to win this Award
- 6/1/23 Ribbon Cutting for AWL Cat House
- 10/10/24 Mortgage Balance paid off

Dog Pens Get Concrete Upgrade



A generous couple who are longtime supporters and amazing donors for AWL shelter pets, gave funds to add much needed concrete to our outdoor dog pens. From the beginning of discussions for this project, the staff maintained that grass needed to be included in the center of the pens. Dogs who are guests at AWL spend much of their days and night on concrete. Having grass in the pens provide much needed relief for their paws.

A Message from our Executive Director

To the Wonderful Staff and Supporters of the Animal Welfare League



Tonya Blanchard

I'm back — and I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone at the Animal Welfare League. The cards, phone calls, flowers, thoughts, and prayers I received over the past few months truly kept me going. I sincerely believe I could not have made it through without your support. I simply cannot thank you enough for all your kindness and compassion — that includes our entire dedicated staff at AWL.

A special thank you to President John Lantz for stepping in to handle the day-to-day operations during my absence and giving me the time I needed to heal. I would also like to thank Toni Walker, our Finance Manager, for “grabbing an oar” and helping to fill the gap. I truly appreciate their teamwork, leadership, and respect throughout this time.

I often speak about the profound impact pets have on our health and well-being, and I experienced that firsthand during my recovery. Being separated from our beloved pets for over a month was incredibly hard, but when we were finally reunited—thanks to dear friends who arranged a special hospital patio visit—the joy and tears were beyond words. Since returning home, they have barely left my side, sensing my emotions and offering comfort in their own loving ways. The healing power of their affection has brought me peace, hope, and plenty of smiles.

Looking ahead, I'm already working on goals for 2026, including a new

community initiative in collaboration with our Animal Control Officers. We are addressing the growing overpopulation of cats and kittens in local mobile home parks through a humane trap-neuter-return (program. friendly cats will enter our adoption programs, while others will be placed in barn rescue programs. This is an exciting new effort for AWL, and we're eager to launch this much-needed service for the public.

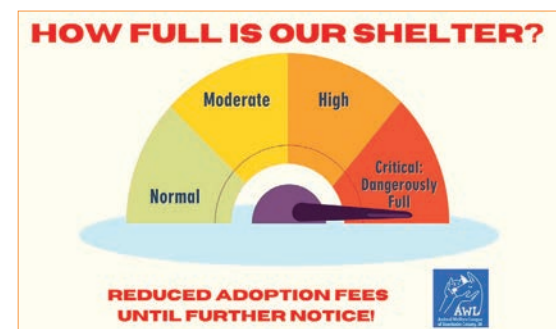
In addition, we've arranged for a low-cost spay and neuter-mobile veterinary clinic to visit our parking lot once a month, making affordable care accessible to more pet owners in our community.

We have several more exciting ideas in development and look forward to sharing them with you in 2026.

Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the outpouring of love and support over the past few months. It truly means the world to me.

With heartfelt gratitude, Tonya Blanchard | Executive Director

Tonya Blanchard



2025 AWL Staff



Front Office & K-9 Staff:

Front Row L to R: Jordyn, Miquela, Emily, Hannah

Back Row L to R: Tonya, Ashley, Josh, Brooke, Jill, Katie



Cat House & Maintenance Staff:

Front Row L to R: Tressalynn, Emily, Beth

Back Row L to R: Brandon, Noor, Jordan, Kathy, Rae, Jayme, Sydney, Mark



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Long Term Pets ~ Reduced and Sponsored Fees



Goldo – 2 year old American Staffordshire Terrier mix, 1 year in the shelter

Meet Goldo, a 2 year old sweetheart with plenty of energy and love to give! Though he can be shy at first, once he warms up, he's a loyal lap buddy who enjoys walks and quiet affection. Goldo is still learning the world around him after a rough start, but shelter staff have worked hard to help him gain confidence with new people, dogs, and places. After spending over a year at the shelter, he's hoping someone will finally see him for the amazing dog he is and give him the loving home he deserves.



Ariel – 4.5 year old Domestic Shorthair, 9 months in the shelter

Meet Ariel, a 4 year old beauty with a dazzling coat and a gentle soul. She's a shy girl who needs a patient, understanding home where she can feel safe and loved. Ariel isn't a fan of being picked up, but with time and kindness, her sweet personality will shine through. She's good with other cats and children over 5, and she's hoping someone will look past her shyness and give her the loving home she's been waiting for. Can Ariel be apart of your world?



Beretta – 5.5 year old American Staffordshire Terrier mix, 10 months in the shelter

Meet Beretta, a 5 year old sweetheart who's been at the shelter for 10 months and hopes to find her forever home before her 6th birthday! She's playful, affectionate, and smart, already knowing "sit," "shake," and "place." While she can get a little rowdy with her play and pulls on the leash, she just needs a patient owner willing to help her polish her manners. Beretta is full of love and personality, and she can't wait to celebrate her next birthday with a family of her own.



Smudge – 4.5 year old Domestic Shorthair, 8 months in the shelter

Meet Smudge, a resilient 4 year old beauty with a heart full of love ready to bloom. After spending three years confined to a crate due to an accident as a kitten, she's finally ready for her second chance. Though she has minor hip issues from her past, Smudge is otherwise healthy and eager to start fresh in a patient, loving home. With gentle care and time, she'll become the loyal, affectionate companion you've been dreaming of.



Bruschetta – 2.5 year old American Staffordshire Terrier, 7 months in the shelter

Meet Bruschetta, a 2.5 year old beauty who's been waiting 7 months for her perfect match. She's a playful, energetic girl who loves tug of war and roughhousing with people, though always gentle and respectful when told to stop. While she'd do best in a cat-free home, she'd love a dog friend who can keep up with her spirited energy. Bruschetta has so much love to give and just wants someone to finally meet her and see how special she truly is.



Manny - 8.5 year old Domestic Shorthair, 8 months in the shelter

Meet Manny, an 8 year old professional napper and master of relaxation. This sweet senior cat lives for life's simple pleasures - soft pets, sunny spots, and cozy naps. He's the perfect companion for anyone looking for a calm, loving friend to share quiet moments with. Manny would prefer to be the only cat in the home, where he can soak up all the love and comfort he deserves.



Maverick – 2 year old Black Mouth Cur mix, 7 months in the shelter

Meet Maverick, a fun loving, energetic 2 year old boy who's been waiting far too long (7 months) for his forever home! He may get a little bouncy and barky in his kennel, but it's only because he's so excited to meet new people. Maverick loves walks, playtime, and soaking up all the affection he can get. He can feel a bit anxious when left alone, so a home that's willing to crate him and help him feel secure would be perfect. Take a little time to get to know him, and you'll see just how much love this sweet boy has to give.



Mac – 2.5 year old Domestic Shorthair, 7 months in the shelter

Meet Mac, a 2 year old sweetheart with a soft heart and a story of resilience. After suffering a serious leg injury, he spent months healing both physically and emotionally. Though still a little cautious, Mac is learning that love can be gentle, and he's ready to trust again. His love language? Wet food! With patience and a calm home, this brave boy will blossom into the affectionate companion he's always wanted to be.

10 Reasons to Adopt a Senior Pet

1. Senior dogs need homes, too.

Adult dogs are often passed over by potential adopters for puppies and younger dogs. Many senior dogs available for adoption were once owned and loved but, for one reason or another, found themselves in our care and in need of new homes through no fault of their own. They're just as loyal and loving as younger pups...and they'd love to prove it.

2. Old dogs can learn new tricks.

Dogs can be trained at any age, and older dogs are just as smart as younger ones. In fact, they can be easier to train because they're calmer and have a greater attention span than a puppy.

3. Your furniture...and carpet...will thank you.

Older dogs are more likely to be housebroken and have doggie manners. If their training is still a bit lacking, they have the physical and mental abilities to pick up skills fast, unlike puppies. Senior dogs also are much less likely to be destructive chewers.

4. Years of fun and love are still ahead.

Don't pass up that 5-year-old dog just because she's older. Dogs live 10-15 years, and many can live even longer depending on the dog. Talk to your veterinarian about ways you can help keep your adopted senior dog happy and healthy.

5. Experience laid back four-legged living.

If you're looking for a couch potato, an older dog might be right for you. Senior pups still need regular exercise, but they won't want to run a marathon every day and are often content taking it easy.

6. With senior dogs, what you see is what you get.

Adopting an older dog gives you instant knowledge; you'll know from the start important things like their full-grown size, personality and grooming requirements. This can make it easier to pick the right dog. If you're not into surprises, adopting a senior dog might be right for you!

7. Older dogs require less time and supervision.

Everyone loves puppies but not everyone is equipped or willing to take on a bundle of energy that can't make it through the night without a bathroom break and who requires hyper-vigilance during the house-breaking and teething stages, along with hours of training. Senior dogs are instant companions, ready to go on a long walk or to be the snuggle buddy or workout partner you need from the get-go.

8. Senior dogs are appreciative.

Many of our adopters strongly believe that senior dogs who they've adopted know how fortunate they are and that they greatly appreciate the second chance at happiness that their new person has given them. From their perspective, life is good, and they are grateful for cuddle time, an extra treat, and — most of all — extra attention.

9. Older dogs are adorable.

Dogs retain their cuteness no matter what their age. Also, pretty is, is pretty does. Older or senior dogs seem eager to bond and settle into a new, loving home.

10. Select residents can score discounts on adoption fees for older dogs (and cats).

Here's what The Animal Welfare League Offers:

If you are 60 years or older, AWL senior pet adoption fees will be sponsored. Families with a special need in their home will also have sponsored adoption fees.



BISSELL PET FOUNDATION'S
emptythe
shelters™

Special thanks to the BISSELL Pet Foundation's Empty the Shelters Adoption Event. AWL reduced adoption fees to help more pets find their forever homes!!!

Thank you to the many new pet families that adopted a shelter pet!

You are SAVING lives!

AWL participates in this event 4 times a year.

#BissellPetFoundation #EmptyTheShelters #CathyBissell



Heart Warming Dog Rescue

These bonded male and female dogs were rescued in our community by one of our wonderful AWL donors. They were both abandoned in a retail center parking lot tied to a tree in the very early morning hours.

Our thanks and appreciation to long time pet supporter Stacey S. for rescuing these pups and bringing them to our AWL shelter.

These beautiful dogs were adopted buy a wonderful family that already had adopted dogs 2 dogs from AWL. All 4 dogs get along great! The female does have Heartworm, and the family brings her back to AWL for ongoing treatment.

Indiana law outlines specific rules and penalties for abandoning or neglecting an animal:

Abandonment or neglect: Any person with a vertebrate animal in their custody who "recklessly, knowingly, or intentionally abandons or neglects the animal" commits cruelty to an animal, a Class A misdemeanor.



Donate today!

Support our lifesaving mission for Shelter Pets

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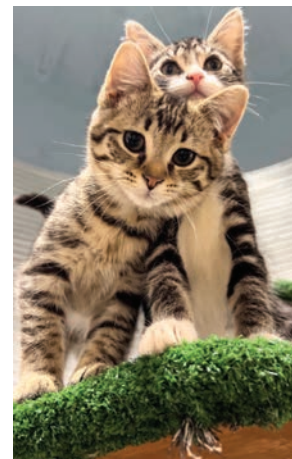
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☐ Utilities _____

☐ Vaccines _____

☐ Dog Collars and Leashes _____

☐ Other _____



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Zimmer Biomet Packaging and Labeling Donates



Our Packaging and Labeling Department held a Pickleball Tournament to raise funds for Animal Welfare League this past weekend. Packaging Engineer Angela Raspor managed the event that raised nearly \$500 from the Zimmer Biomet employee event. Zimmer Biomet Foundation will match their employee's donations making twice the impact!



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PIZZA 4 PM - 8 PM

SUNDAY - 7 AM - 12 PM Breakfast Only

STORE HOURS:

MONDAY - FRIDAY 6 AM - 6 PM

SATURDAY - 6 AM - 8 PM

SUNDAY 7 AM - 3 PM

Saturday Nights Only
4 pm - 8 pm
Pizza



* Pop
* Bread
* Beer
* Specialty Burgers
* Firewood
* Groceries



* Milk
* Wine
* Donuts
* Ice
* Daily Specials



The 3 - 3 - 3 Rule of Pet Adoption

		
3 Days to decompress	3 Weeks to learn your routines	3 Months to start feeling at home
- Feeling Overwhelmed - Scared and unsure of what's happening - Not comfortable being themselves - May not eat or drink - Shuts down and wants to curl up or hide - Testing boundaries	- Starting to settle in - Feeling more comfortable - Realizing this could be their forever home - Figured out environment - Starting to get into a routine - Personality and behaviours start to show	- Finally feels comfortable in their new home - Building trust and a true bond - Gained a sense of security with new family - Settles into a routine



Adoption Tech: AKA Professional Matchmaker

By Rae King, Adoption Tech

"Hello, how may I help you?" "What brings you in today?" "Are you here to adopt or just hanging out?" If you've entered our Cat House within the last couple months, you've heard me ask some variations of these questions. I am the face you see when entering the Cat House. Hi, I'm Rae, the Adoption Tech.

I recently gave a tour where I was asked what my job entailed. I described my job as playing professional matchmaker. At that moment, that woman and I shared a good laugh. As goofy as it was, nothing else has related to my occupation so perfectly. When trying to adopt out an animal, I have a series of questions I always ask. These questions are the foundation to what could possibly be an amazing relationship between human and feline. Those few questions are my way of flipping through the pages of my mind. Narrowing down the list from hundreds, to a simple few perfect matches. Whether you are looking for a quirky kitten, or an old soul full of wisdom, I'm your Gal.

My favorite part of this job is seeing all the angles. I get to be the friendly face the cat sees when they enter our doors, and the familiar face that waves them goodbye as they leave them one last time. I get to be part of a little kids dream of owning their first kitten. I get to help a couple find comfort through the loss of a previous pet by matching them to the cat they never knew they needed. I get to assist an elderly woman in adopting a senior cat to live out their golden years together. Every adoption feels like a new milestone reached. I have contributed to someone's family in my own way. Hi, I'm Rae, the Professional Matchmaker.



Wishlist

Dogs / Puppies:

- Good Friends Brand Dry Kibble
 - Wet Food (Any Brand!)
- Dog Toys (We love Kong toys!)
 - Treats (Any Brand!)
- Med / Large Sized Collars
- Med / Large Size Leashes
- Enrichment Toys / Activities
 - Slip Leads
- Peanut Butter / Whipped Cream

We Do Not Accept:

- Rawhides • Milkbones
- Toys With Yarn or String
 - No Sheets & Clothing
- No Towels • No Sanitizer Wipes
 - No Pillows

Cats / Kittens

- Kitten Food (Dry & Wet)
- All Life Stages Dry Food
- Adult Cat Wet Food (Any Brand!)
- Scratch & Stretch Mini Scratchers
 - Wood Fuel Pellets (Non-Pine)
 - This is our cat litter!
 - Toys & Treats
- Breeders Edge Foster Formula

Other Necessities:

- Bleach
- Paper Towels, Toilet Paper
- Hand Soap, Dawn Dish Soap
- Glad Automatic Spray Can Refills
- Dog Crates & Cat Carriers

ADULT CATS

THEY DESERVE A SECOND CHANCE!

Experienced & Low Maintenance, already litterbox trained,
and full of LOVE.

They deserve a second chance!

Good with cats, good with kids over 12, housetrained



Hi I'm Quinta! I am a **shy senior girl** who likes to hide, but also really loves chin scratches. **My owner passed away**, and I have a hard time coming out of my shell with new people. I may look big and mean, but I promise at heart I am just a scared girl who doesn't know how to ask for love quite yet. **I love to have chin and ear scratches!**

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Medtronic Ladies Donate



Left to Right: Audra Farner - Medtronic, Sydney Langhorn - AWL, Mandie Miller - Medtronic, Brooklyn Lyon - AWL, Christy McGuire - Medtronic

Medtronic women's group hosted a pet food and supplies drive for all of our furry friends here at the AWL and look at how much they gathered to donate!!

The Medtronic ladies are part of the Medtronic's EPIC Committee, Engagement People, Inclusive Culture committee. They also donated \$1,000 raised from their Cutest Pet Contest.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!! We cannot do what we do without the support of our community, and we (and our pets enjoying the goodies) appreciate this so, so much! **You have made a difference!**



Do you have a passion for animals?
We accept volunteers during open hours every day we're open!

WHAT SKILLS CAN YOU OFFER?

Individuals or Groups:

- Walking Dogs
- Cuddling Cats
- Making Pupsicles



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awlwarsaw.com

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Jason Gergely, CFP®,
CRPC® Partner,
Managing Director

William (Will) Day,
CFP®, ChFC® Partner,
Senior Wealth Advisor

Michael Bergen,
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Experts say most Indiana animal shelters are at or over capacity. Here's why:

By: Allie McKibben | Courtesy of WANE 15

NORTHEAST INDIANA (WANE) – Animal shelters are pleading for help as they face overcapacity. Some experts say the final solution is to prevent extra animals from being born.

“If you find [an animal shelter] that isn’t at capacity, then that is a rare gem,” Rhi Johns, marketing and communications director for Pet Friendly Services of Indiana, said.

Last month alone, WANE 15 reported several animal shelters around North-east Indiana being at or over capacity. This month alone, the **Animal Welfare League of Kosciusko County**, the DeKalb Humane Society, and the Whitely County Humane Society Animal Shelter have all stressed in Facebook posts that they need help managing their full shelters.

Pet Friendly Services of Indiana is trying to address the root of pet overpop-ulation. The non-profit provides free and discounted spaying and neutering across the state, mostly partnering with veterinarians and animal shelters. Johns said getting all pet owners to fix their animals is the only humane way to control the pet population and save shelters from anguish.

But not all Hoosiers have the means to fix their pets.

“There are challenges to [spaying and neutering],” Johns said. “There is a nationwide vet shortage, and, within Indiana, there are vet deserts. We’re a non-profit. Most of these shelters and rescues are non-profits, so we do as much as we can, but there are limits to what we are able to provide.”

Johns said many people want to help control the pet population, but because

of finances or access, will choose not to. Reiter said there are other ways to be a responsible pet owner. Namely, getting animals that are already spayed or neutered, as well as avoiding breeders which produce an exorbitant number of animals.

Expanding veterinary resources and knowledge to help Hoosiers fix their pets may be the solution to shrinking shelters.

“We’re not going to adopt our way out of this situation,” Johns said. “We really need to hammer home that spay neuter is essential, that’s the only way we’re going to find our way out of this.”



Esra - A Gentle Blind Girl

(formerly Esmay)



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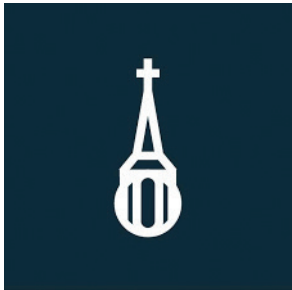


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