



March 2007

The Watchdog

Neuter and Spay Should Be the Only Way for All Companion Animals!

In recent years, the fact that the single most important procedure individuals can do to ensure a healthy and manageable companion animal population is to spay and neuter all pets has become widely accepted. There is a common misconception that altering pets will result in a shortage of companion animals, but nothing could be further from the truth.

"The number of animals competing for safe, loving and responsible homes is staggering, especially when one considers that, on average, female cats can pro-



Ghost was turned in -unspayed- to SSHS in January because she kept getting out of the house. Spaying or neutering your pet helps reduce unwanted behaviors such as escaping.

duce 12-18 kittens per year and a female dog can produce 12-20 offspring annually. Bear in mind that these statistics do not take into account how many young an unaltered male dog or cat can sire," said Kathy Contino-Turner, Executive Director of the Stevens-Swan Humane Society. She continued, "According to the Humane Society of the United States, in any given year between six and eight *million* animals are brought to shelters across the country. Because of the lack of homes for them, approximately three to four million of these are euthanized – that is one animal every eight seconds, of every day, of every year. We, as Americans, could stop this from occurring in the future by altering our animals **today**. In a world where the breeding of companion animals is left to experts who have *responsible* breeding programs and who employ screening processes for their adopters, animal shelters could become obsolete." Additionally, the problem of unwanted animals cost American taxpayers an estimated **\$2 billion each year**, which includes animal control services and

managing animal-related public health threats.

The most common reason given for not altering an animal is simply procrastination. Unfortunately, the determination of unaltered animals to breed is stronger than any door or fence, with a great many escaping their homes in order to mate. Not only can a female bring an unwanted litter into a home, but *any* companion animal that roams – for mating or otherwise – runs a much higher risk of bringing diseases and parasites into the home, many of which can infect or infest humans. Spayed and neutered pets also are less likely to be aggressive toward people and other animals, urinate inappropriately, stray from their home property and develop certain types of cancer while being healthier, more loyal and far more affectionate than their unaltered counterparts.



They sure are cuddly, but these puppies are among the thousands of unwanted animals that are turned in to SSHS annually. One intact female dog and her offspring can produce 67,000 dogs in 6 years; an intact female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 cats in 7 years. Altering pets breaks this cycle of unchecked reproduction.

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Letter From The Executive Director

We began our 97th year with a bang. The 2nd Annual Telethon to benefit the Stevens Swan Humane Society raised close to \$85,000 in pledges. The fourteen-hour event also gave us the opportunity to talk about the benefits this shelter brings to the Central New York Community. I add my thanks to all the businesses who sponsored this event, all the individuals who donated and the many volunteers who made the event such a success.

During the telethon, we had many people ask what they could do to help in the coming year. While we are always in need of dog walkers, and "cat cuddlers", there are other areas where volunteers can make a significant difference. Here are a few ideas;

- Weekly volunteers to package and mail out cell phone donations
- Weekly volunteers to cut and fold sheets and blankets. We have found that cutting a large blanket into 4 pieces makes it easier to wash and stretches our supply of materials.
- Organize a fundraiser or participate in the planning of our signature events, The Wiggle Waggle Walk-a-thon, the 3rd Annual Shelter Telethon and the like. You can even come up with an event of your own that would raise money and awareness of shelter issues.
- Become a foster parent to a mother and her offspring. Thanks to our foster program, many puppies and kittens get a healthier start in life.
- We could use gardeners this spring. We have a garden under our sign out front that was full of weeds last year. It would be great to have flowers instead.
- Volunteers who would like to assist at the front desk, answering calls, greeting visitors, helping them in the adoption process
- Become a member of the Stevens Swan Board of Directors. We have always been fortunate to have dedicated individuals serve in this capacity. Your work and life experience can be a valuable tool as we build our organization into its next century of existence.

These are just a few suggestions on how you can help the Stevens Swan Humane Society continue its mission in this community. In fewer than three years, we will be celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the Stevens Swan Humane Society. With the help and support of all our members, we can enter our second century by being the difference for aban-

Kathy Contino-Turner

Executive Director

doned
and
abused animals in this community.



"Alice," left, came to Stevens-Swan at 2 weeks old. She was fostered, and then adopted into a home where she met her best friend "Jack," right, who came from SSHS as a kitten in 2002.

New Friends and Old Friends Needed to Help Our Best Friends!

The Stevens-Swan Humane Society is looking for individuals who want to volunteer their time to join our fundraising committee. This group will visualize, organize and supervise the major fundraising programs that help raise needed funds for the shelter operations. The events include existing fundraisers such as the Wiggle Waggle Walkathon, and the 3rd annual Stevens-Swan Humane Society Telethon. We are also looking for ideas for other events that will raise money and awareness of the shelter's role in the community. Anyone interested in participating can call Kathy at 735-5339. Our first fundraising meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 17th at 6pm at the shelter. We hope to see some old friends as well as some new ones!



Q. What is "Homer" looking for in addition to a forever home?

A. A few good people to serve on the SSHS fundraising committee!



In March, the Stevens-Swan Humane Society and Utica Animal Control Officer Chris Colver were able to reunite a lost dog with her family. "Ginger" had escaped her fenced-in yard in late 2006, and her family had been frantically searching for her for months. Colver picked the dog up during a routine call, and phoned SSHS with her tattoo number. Staff looked up her tattoo, and contacted her rightful owner; within hours, the family was complete again! Pictured, from left, are Al Winston, Danielle McDonald, "Ginger," Christine Cox and Colver.

If lost or stolen, companion animals that have identification tags, tattoos or microchips are far more likely to be returned to their homes than pets without. For information on tattoos or microchips, contact your veterinarian.

Keep Pets Safe In The Cold Winter Weather!



"Lady Bird" was found abandoned and frostbitten in the woods. Her rescuer brought her to SSHS, where she was nursed back to health.

Don't let their furry coats fool you – companion animals need human help to stay safe in the cold weather. Although indoors is best, the Stevens-Swan Humane Society has tips for keeping our domestic pets safe in the frigid, unforgiving upstate winter.

►Do not leave pets outdoors. You should still take your dog out for a brief walk, but do not let dogs or cats loose, or tie them outside. Animals *can* get hypothermia, and ones exhibiting symptoms such as dilated pupils, extreme shivering, low body temperature and stupor or unconsciousness must be taken to a veterinarian **immediately**. Hypothermia can cause coma, heart and kidney failure, or death.

►Dogs must have adequate housing to protect them from the elements. The house should be at least 2 inches above the ground, dry and free of drafts and covered with bedding such as straw or cedar shavings (do not use blankets, as they tend to freeze). Be sure to keep it turned away

►Keep cats and rabbits inside.

►Be sure to have plenty of food and water available in plastic bowls. Keeping warm takes extra energy!

►To scare away cats and small wildlife that sometimes crawl under cars' hoods to stay warm, bang on the hood before you start a vehicle.

►Wipe your pet's feet after they come inside to remove salt and other de-icing chemicals.

►Keep antifreeze out of your pet's reach and wipe up any spills immediately. The sweet smell attracts animals, as well as children, and is lethally poisonous if ingested.

►Livestock should have a 3-sided shelter, and access to fresh water and food.

A safe and healthy pet is a happy pet!



Danger under the hood: "Spike" climbed under a truck hood to keep warm in the sub-zero February temperatures. A driver unknowingly turned on the ignition, destroying the cat's front left leg. Concerned citizens brought him to the shelter, where the medical staff performed an emergency amputation. He is currently making a full recovery in a foster home.

Visit our website for updates...

adoptable pets, information and news!

www.stevens-swan.org

The following gifts were received through December 31, 2006

The Stevens-Swan Humane Society makes every effort to ensure that all donations are acknowledged in our newsletters. If you notice an omission, please notify us by mail at 5664 Horatio St., Utica, NY 13502, and we will include it in the next issue. Thank you for your support.



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Russell and Helen Humphrey

In Memory of "Tippy"

Richard and Audrey Ellis

In Memory of "Vanessa" Calli

Natasha Homa

In Memory of "Zany" Dinerstein

Mrs. Evelyn Dinerstein

\$85,000 and Counting! Stevens-Swan's Second Annual Telethon Celebrates A Great Success for the Animals!

By the end of the second annual Stevens-Swan Humane Society Telethon on January 18, staff and supporters were celebrating \$82,162 in pledges! Supporters from across Central New York tuned in and stepped up to help the shelter continue to successfully operate, even coming to Stevens-Swan in the days and weeks following the event with additional gifts that were not pledged during the telethon. The final tally will likely be close to \$90,000!

Executive Director Kathy Contino-Turner said, "We are **so** pleased with the community's support of Stevens-Swan. Our staff tends to several thousand abused, abandoned and unwanted animals 365 days a year to ensure that they have proper shelter, nutrition and veterinary care. Additionally, we shelter hundreds of dangerous animals annually in order to keep the public safe, and offer a reduced-cost bi-weekly rabies clinic so that companion animals can be protected from this awful disease, which many are surprised to find is still common."

"With this kind of monetary support, we will be able to continue offering our services to the animals – and the residents – of the Mohawk Valley. Each and every contributor should be proud of what they are helping us do."

The staff, board and animals of Stevens-Swan would like to extend heartfelt thanks



SSHS employee Cathy Thibault relaxes with a shelter puppy at the telethon.



WKTV anchor Kristin Lowman, SSHS Associate Director Anne White, Board President Donna Sweeney, and Executive Director Kathy Contino-Turner react as co-host Jason Powles reads an updated total.



Auxiliary member and telethon volunteer Emily Dormio gets help from a special assistant.



Who knew puppies could answer phones? Auxiliary member Sharon Maron and New Visions student Andrea M. watch firsthand as the telethon "goes to the dogs."

Thank you...

...to the many generous sponsors of the 2007 Stevens-Swan Humane Society Telethon:

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Gates-Cole Insurance

The Mohawk Valley Kennel Club

BPO Elks Lodge 33

Crash's Scrap Metal

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"Pebbles" the rabbit is just one among thousands of animals that will benefit from the generosity of telethon sponsors, donors and volunteers.

**The Mohawk
Valley Pug Club
Shows Its Love for
The Animals at
Stevens-Swan**



It was nothing but love at the Annual "Pugs and Kisses" event on Sunday, February 11. Approximately 75 members of the Mohawk Valley Pug Club - along with some 60 of their furry friends - attended the brunch, and donated more than \$500 to SSHS! Members also brought sheets and towels for the comfort of the animals here at the shelter. About 30% of the dogs that come into Stevens-Swan each year are purebred; many are turned in because their owner was not prepared for the specific needs of a purebred animal.

The Mohawk Valley Pug Club enables members to share their love of the breed, as well as share this great breed with the community. They visit nursing homes and health care centers, as well as participate in events such as parades and their own get-togethers.. The Pug Club also serves as a resource for pug owners regarding veterinary care, grooming, training and boarding.

Pug owners interested in learning more about this club can call Melody at 315-732-1074, email her at kmklar@bluefrog.com or check out their website at <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/mvpug/>.

How You Can Help The Animals of Stevens-Swan

There are many ways you can help the thousands of companion animals that find a safe haven at the Stevens-Swan Humane Society each year.

- Educate family and friends about the importance of spaying and neutering pets. The math is simple: fewer unwanted animals mean more pets in homes and reduced numbers in shelters.
- Make helping the unwanted and abused animals of Central New York your legacy by remembering them in your will. This gift will help ensure that they will be cared for into Stevens-Swan's second century.
- Make a monetary donation in any amount. For example, a gift of \$15 covers the cost of a rabies vaccination, \$50 helps pay for medication and \$100 offsets the cost of spaying or neutering *every animal* that is adopted from the shelter.
- Don't shop...Adopt! If you know a responsible animal-lover that is looking for a new best friend, suggest that they visit Stevens-Swan. We may not be sheltering the pet they envision in their mind's eye, but that doesn't mean they won't find the love of their life here!
- Encourage every pet owner you meet to provide annual veterinary care and vaccinations to their pets, and explain the benefits of services such as grooming and training. A healthy, well-behaved pet makes for a happy home!



**Stevens-Swan
Humane Society**

5664 Horatio Street
Utica, NY 13502

Phone: 315-738-4357
Fax: 315-797-6362
Email: info@stevens-swan.org

**Don't shop...
Adopt!**



Did you know that ferrets are related to sea otters and weasels, not mice and rats? The Ancient Greeks kept ferrets as pets, and they were also used to protect grain stores from rodents. They were brought to America in 1600s for the same purpose. They are curious and social animals that make great pets!

Sturges Manufacturing donated 592 leashes to the Stevens-Swan Humane Society in January. The leashes were made at the Sturges facility on Sunset Avenue in Utica,



which has been in business for almost 100 years.

Sturges Sales and Marketing Manager Darren Woods and his wife Bonnie adopted their dog "Sidney" from SSHS in the fall of 2000. Pictured below are, from left, Woods, "Sidney," and SSHS Executive Director Kathy Contino-Turner.