

Introducing Our New Volunteer Coordinator

The APF welcomes our new volunteer coordinator, Jody Sitors, who joined us in August. However, Jody is not a newcomer to the APF. Ten years ago she worked at the front desk as a customer service rep. She always has been interested in animal welfare and attended SUNY Delhi, where she earned a degree as a veterinary technician and later worked for various vet clinics.

Jody is an area native and presently lives in Burnt Hills with her husband Rick and her three children, Julia, 8; Derek, 3; and Jenna, who is just 1-1/2. She is very involved at Pashley Elementary School, which her daughter Julia attends, presently serving as PTA co-vice president.

When she is not at work or with her family, Jody also plays the piccolo and is a member of a local marching band, the Yankee Doodle Band. They perform in many parades locally and also travel for events out of the area.

Jody notes, "The APF has changed a lot in the 10 years since I have been here in very positive ways. In those days, there was no volunteer program and I am excited to be a part of a program that has so much potential."

The Sitors household presently includes a 13 year-old orange tiger cat named Kitty-Kitty and they just adopted an APF cat which they named Moe.

Please stop in and introduce yourself to Jody the next time you are in the shelter. You can always reach her at 374-3944, ext. 118 or email her at jody@animalprotective.org



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A Message from the President of the Board

Dear Volunteers,

Recently, I was speaking to someone about volunteer work and its rewards. This person responded, "I would love to volunteer, but I just don't have the time." Following this comment was a litany of reasons why this person could not commit to donating a few hours of his/her week... reasons that I, too, have given for not volunteering as often as I could; the same reasons that I've heard from other people as well, far too often.

How is it, then, that the APF has found such extraordinary people to help? How is it that APF volunteers are so willing to donate the most precious gift of time to ease the daily demands required of our hard-working staff? Is the answer as simple as, "we do it for the animals?" Sure, that's certainly a very good reason, but that each of you takes your love for the animals and goes the next step is the most heartwarming of acts. I am in awe of your generosity and compassion.

I cannot say enough how grateful the Board of Directors and I are to have you. If I haven't met you yet, I hope to in the very near future. I want to hear about your experiences and thank you in person.

And the next time I hear from someone or find myself saying, "I don't have enough time," I'll think of you and become inspired.

For the animals,
Lisa G. DiCocco
President, APF Board of Directors

Thank you for all your hard work at this year's Fireplug 500!

Maybe you helped at registration, checking walkers in. You may have sold t-shirts at Beasley's Boutique or handed out doggie goodie bags or prizes. Perhaps you helped judge the Greatest Capital Canine Contest, sold pizza or directed traffic. Whatever capacity you assisted in, we want to thank you for all your help with the 17th annual Fireplug 500 – we couldn't have put together such a large event without you!



Becky Pauley, shown here helping out at the team registration, was one of 60 volunteers at the 2009 Fireplug 500.

Welcome New Volunteers!

Eileen Austin

Lisa DeHart

Cassandra Maura

Interested in volunteering to help out struggling pet owners?

In years past, the APF has been very involved with the Schenectady's Concerned for the Hungry's Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, supplying thousands of pounds of pet food to struggling pet owners. Unfortunately, in 2008, due to lack of volunteers, we could not participate in the program. We did get a lot of feedback about how much disappointment there was that we were not there to help.

The only way we can offer this service is if we get a core group of dedicated people who are committed to working on this program. It does require contacting stores, schools, groups, etc. to collect and donate pet food, and quite a bit of coordination, follow-through and some heavy lifting. If enough people express an interest soon, we can again provide food for many hungry pets in our area.

If interested, please contact Kim by October 15 at: jess@animalprotective.org or 374-3944, ext. 119

APF Upcoming Events

***SEE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES NOTED IN RED**

October 17 **Pet First Aid for Cats and Dog**

Presented by Tundra Spirits at the APF from 1-5 pm. Fee: \$45. To register, contact Melissa at 374-3944, ext. 121.

October 24 **Howl-oween Party at Riverview Orchards**

660 Riverview Road, Rexford, 1-3 pm (rain date October 25)

\$10 per dog, families are free. Costume contest with prizes, hayrides, cider, donuts and more.

***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: We can use 1- 2 more helpers. Contact: Jody at 374-3944, ext. 118.**

November 5-16 **APF Online Auction**

You asked for it, so we're doing this popular event again! Many, many great items and gift certificates available just in time for your holiday shopping. There's something for everybody! Log onto www.animalprotective.org.

***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: We are still looking for more items and gift certificates, so please contact Kim at 374-3944, ext. 119 if you have something to donate.**

November 12 **What Dog is Right for Me?, 7 pm at the APF**

Free, no reservations necessary. Do your homework BEFORE you adopt a dog. Our dog training experts will answer your questions about what it takes to be a great dog owner.

November 18 **Volunteer Orientation, 6 pm at the APF**

Know someone interested in volunteering? Tell them about this upcoming orientation.

November 21 **Bottle & Can Drive**

***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Start saving your bottles and cans and drop them off at the APF. We do need volunteers to help with this on November 21 and on November 24.**

Contact: Mary at 374-3944, ext. 114.

December 5 **Pet Photos with Santa and Bake Sale, 10-2 at the APF**

***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: We need plenty of people to bake their favorite Christmas cookies for this popular event and also a few more helpers, especially with photography.**

Contact: Jody at 374-3944, ext. 118.

February 11 (*tentative date*) **Jewelry Party**

***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Clean out your jewelry drawer and bring in your unwanted treasures, whether fine or costume. We are also looking for broken or orphan gold or silver pieces. We need several people to help sort and price jewelry prior to the sale and also to work the day of the event. Contact Kim: at 374-3944, ext. 119.**

Family Holiday Traditions That Help Homeless and Needy Pets

excerpted from animalshelbertips.org

With our economy in turmoil and families, as well as pets, struggling financially, this is a good year to start traditions of true meaning in your family. Helping homeless and needy pets with traditions you enjoy and continue for years to come could be one of the most rewarding and memorable traditions you establish with your family.

When you ask adults or kids what they most like or remember about past holidays, they usually respond with fond memories of traditions or family activities rather than gifts they received.

Use the following ideas as a starting point to start traditions that help needy and homeless pets in your area.

- > **If you give gifts to a fellow animal lover, this year start a tradition of donating to that person's local shelter in his/her name.**
- > **Buy food or other items from the shelter's wish list**, wrap those items, and place them under your Christmas tree with a name tag such as "for the homeless pets of at the APF." Take your kids to the shelter to deliver the gifts.
- > **Consider dividing the amount you spend on kids between traditional gifts and donations to your local animal shelter.** For example, print out a photo of a homeless dog from your local shelter on photo sized paper and place that photo in a card or wrapped gift. Include a note with wording such as "Bobby, your Aunt Jenny sent a donation in your name that will feed me for three months. I'm an eight year old sweetheart of a black Lab still waiting for my forever home. This helps me so much. Thank you! Zack."
- > **Take advantage of kids' computer skills.** Publish flyers to post around your community on behalf of homeless pets. Call the shelter first and ask about specific food or other items needed. Kids can publish a flyer stating what's needed and where to deliver the items. Also print photos of a cat and dog (downloaded from the shelter's web site) with wording such as "Help us please! We're running out of food." Go with your kids to ask businesses to post these flyers in their windows. Also, they can be placed in church lobbies, library bulletin boards, school bulletin boards, etc. Kids can take flyers to school and start a school wide project. Classes can help pets as a holiday project and bring shelter wish list items for pets to school. Include several classes and have a contest for the most items collected. Ask the local newspaper to write a story about this effort with photos of kids in the winning class and of course the youngster(s) who initiated the project.
- > **Set a goal with your kids to buy items for needy and homeless pets every time you buy items for your own pet.** Define a time period, such as the next month or even the next year. Deliver the items to your shelter or a pet food bank in your area.
- > **Does your family draw names for holiday gifts?** Ask for volunteers (probably adults) to withdraw their own names and substitute pets' names from your local animal shelter. The person who draws a pet's name can buy pet food. Make sure the kids in the family understand that family members gave up gifts for themselves so homeless pets can be fed. Take the kids along when the items are delivered to the shelter
- > **Extended family can connect with younger family members with a mutual love of pets.** Aunts and uncles, as well as grandparents, often struggle with gift ideas and activities for kids in the family. Start a tradition of helping homeless and needy pets with your younger family members.
- > **Sponsor a kids' Christmas party at your home on behalf of your shelter's pets.** Each child can bring items from your shelter's wish list. Tell the kids you'll match their contribution. For example, for every pound of food brought to the party, you'll match that, or even double it (25 pounds from the kids and 50 pounds from you). Ask your friends to do the same with their kids and make it a competition between families, neighborhoods, etc.
- > **Make plans as a family to contact at least one business owner you know or do business with and ask if they'd be willing to donate some of their revenue in December to your local animal shelter.** Your kids can help the business prepare flyers for their store window. Volunteer to run an ad in your local paper for this business to announce this promotion. Any business is a candidate for this, so think beyond pet related businesses.

Once you've carried out a family project to help homeless and needy animals, you'll learn how to make the tradition even better next year. Keep expanding on your ideas. Include the whole family to decide the best activity for you. You'll no doubt create memories for your family to carry in your heart forever. And the homeless and needy pets in your area will be very grateful too!

