In the enchanting book *Are You My Mother?* a lost baby bird searches for his mother, wondering if she might be a cow, a car, a dog, and more. In our real life Rescue Village version of this tale, a newborn kitten lost his mother and litter mates in the depths of winter. Just days old, the kitten was brought to the shelter – his umbilical cord still attached and his eyes still closed. It was a miracle that this newborn even made it to RV. He was given the name Winston and sent to foster care. His “mom” fed him every two hours and kept watch constantly. He weighed mere ounces during those first days. Yet, with time and around the clock care, Winston began to put on weight and thrive. He found the “mother” he needed. When he was ready, Winston returned to the shelter and was put up for adoption. A perilous beginning ended happily ever after.

If you’re interested in being a temporary parent (foster) for homeless animals, please visit: www.geaugahumane.org/volunteer

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A Language All Its Own

I don’t know about you, but my life with every pet I have had has been marked by tail wags, purrs, face licks, cuddling through illnesses (mine and theirs), and unparalleled friendship even when our time together came to a close. At dinner with friends last weekend, a social worker who tends to people in hospice care was ecstatic considering all of the ways that animals and Rescue Village could be brought into the final days of her clients.

Yes, the more we can strengthen that magical interplay between animals and human beings, the more we can lift up everyone’s lives. It is truly inspiring to see dogs that look tougher than nails melt into the arms of a young child. Watching that child put her head on this giant dog’s shoulder speaks volumes about these bonds we create.

I’ve always loved the posters of the huge NFL players gently holding tiny kittens with the caption “Real Men Love Kittens.” Courage is not just what is shown on battlefields — it takes courage to be compassionate. Strength is not just what is displayed when you are tough. It takes amazing strength to adopt and tend to a senior dog knowing that the sunrises to come are limited. It takes a willingness to be soft and forgiving to counsel a young family deciding to give up their dog because it is too much work. It takes real street smarts to know that kindness often works much better than belligerence.

I saw the look of relief in a very frightened dog’s eyes when a volunteer just let her be. These gestures, these ways of being humane, these acts of love help define our humanity… and our community. It is a language all its own.

Sincerely,
Hope Brustein, Executive Director

Happy Retirement To A Dog Named Stella

Followup: In 2013, a puppy named Stella was surrendered to Rescue Village to start her new life. We quickly realized just how special Stella was, and she was selected by our behaviorist to be trained as a service dog. After extensive training, Stella was adopted by Type 1 diabetic named Brian who needed Stella to alert him when he had medical emergencies. “There were several times when she saved my life,” says Stella’s adopter Brian. Sometimes, his diabetes would cause him to lose consciousness. Stella would give him warning barks before this happened or would bark after the fact until he woke up. “One time, when she couldn’t wake me up, she actually hopped a fence and went to the neighbor’s house and barked until they followed her to my house.”

We recently received exciting news from Brian that Stella can now officially retire as a service dog. Brian received a new kidney and pancreas and Stella will no longer have to worry about standing guard to alert in case of emergency. Brian assured us that Stella will still just get as much attention, love, and devotion from him. “She’s a retired service dog, but she’s still my little girl.”

Never Giving Up On Olive

A horse named Olive came to Rescue Village after our Humane Agent responded to calls complaining about her poor body condition. Although her owner had feed in the barn and vet records, we could see that this horse’s needs went way beyond what the owner could address. After much discussion, Olive was voluntarily surrendered to Rescue Village.

This sweet Thoroughbred had a complicated medical history. Still, from day one, the mare started to improve. After months of a regular feeding regimen and daily medicine, Olive was brought back to health.

“A horse’s rehabilitation story will be one we use to educate others about providing proper nutrition and about what can go wrong even when you have good intentions and the money to do it,” said our Barn Program Manager, Adrienne Johnson.

“Rescuing animals is more than that – it is also the daily obligation to try harder, keep learning, and know your limitations.”

UPDATE: Olive was recently adopted and is doing great in her new home!
She Calls Him "The Best Dog Ever"

Beth Conlin attended a Yappy Hour event in June 2016. That evening a shy little lab mix named Joker, who was transferred in just days earlier, caught her eye. He had been burned with acid and was missing a large patch of hair on his back. She was not looking for another dog, yet she was smitten. She couldn’t stop thinking about him, so she called Rescue Village the next day and left a message. By the time someone called her back, Joker had been adopted by someone else. Beth was crushed.

As fate would have it, Joker was returned to the shelter three days later and we called Beth immediately. She rushed up to the shelter and the rest is history. This timid little dog now wrestles with his cat and dog siblings and cuddles with anyone who will have him. Beth visits us on occasion with Jersey, his new name, and has become heavily involved with Rescue Village because of him. As a board member of the Chagrin Valley Horse Show she was instrumental in bringing the shelter on as one of the benefiting charities of the show. Recently Beth rode her motorcycle in a Poker Run benefitting Rescue Village. Too bad Jersey doesn’t have a pair of goggles or he surely would have joined them! A huge thank you to Beth and Jersey.

Kindness is Powerful — Pass it On!

Introducing the "PAWSitive Steps" Program

A new program, a new lifeline that brings together “At Promise” (aka “At Risk”) youth with “At Promise” (aka “At Risk”) dogs. This new partnership, called "Pawsitive Steps," is between Rescue Village and the Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility.

The program helps incarcerated youth improve their communication skills and better manage their emotions, preparing them to re-enter their community. Involvement in all of the day-to-day work in the shelter teaches responsibility and teamwork. Based on merit, participants will earn the privilege to work with shelter dogs, training them in basic cues and manners, as well as improving the animals’ social skills.

Together with shelter staff, the opportunities to learn about hard work, compassion, dedication, and commitment abound. The shelter dogs will have a better chance to be successfully adopted. It’s truly a win-win situation as we make “pawsitive” moves together every step of the way.

Upcoming Events:

- **WET NOSE 5K**
  Sunday, August 5th At Orchard Hills Park
  Join Rescue Village for this dog-friendly 5K run or walk to benefit the animals of Rescue Village!

- **Woofstock**
  Sunday, September 16th
  At the Cleveland Metroparks Polo Field
  Woofstock is the biggest dog and family friendly festival and FUN-draiser in Northeast Ohio! Join us on September 16th for a doggone good time!

- **Young Professionals Event**
  Thursday, October 4th
  At Lopez (located in Cleveland Heights)
  Stay tuned for more details on this brand new event for animal loving young professionals!