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SOS Animal Rescue Newsletter • Volume 10, Issue 1 • January 15, 2010

## Dirty Dog Run Cleans Up in Donations

It wasn't actually meant to be a true Dirty Dog Run, but the weather created a course true to the name and made for some muddy, albeit excited, pooches. SOS Animal Rescue and sponsors hosted its first annual Dirty Dog 5K Trail Run at City Forest on Saturday, October 10.

Over 62 runners attended, a majority with dogs in tow, to run or walk the scenic and winding trails of City Forest. For added adventure, part of the race ran through the Haunted Forest, giving everyone a few thrilling turns. Some splashing and dodging of mud holes occurred, but definitely no dogging it on the trail for this run. Many comments were made regarding the perfect (although chilly) weather and the colorful tour of one of our city's best venues.

Prizes went to the top runners in the male category: Luke Hickman of Midland and Brad Safnuk of Mt. Pleasant. The top female finishers were Alissa Czeiszperger of Alma and Kelley Ludlum of Freeland. The top two under 16 runners were Aiden Vennard of Tomball, Texas, and Matthew Zabik of Midland. The first finishing walker was Susan Erhardt of

Midland. Not to be forgotten, the four-legged friends earned prizes for Top Dog to Finish, Smallest Dog to Complete the Race, and Largest Dog to Complete the Race.



Among the runners, additional donations, and sponsors, SOS was able to raise funds to support the Spay/Neuter Program. As you know, this fund assists limited income families in Midland County to spay or neuter their pets. SOS hopes to help prevent litters of unwanted cats and dogs and to minimize the number of animals euthanized yearly at Midland Animal Control. **The next run is tentatively set for Saturday, October 9.**



## THANK YOU, SPONSORS!

**Howl-A-Day Pet Resort**  
**Northern Animal Clinic**  
**Park Place Homes**

## THANK YOU, PRIZE DONORS!

**Animal Pal**

**A Good Hair Day Pet Grooming**

**Cline Close Dyer PLC**

**In the Beginning Day Care**

**Isabella Jansen**

**Mieske's Country Market**

**Hillary Umbleby, Allure Salon & Spa**

## SOS EVENTS

**Sunday, January 3**  
**Noon – 3:00 p.m.**

Adopt-a-Thon at PetSmart

**Sunday, January 17**  
**Noon – 3:00 p.m.**

Adopt-a-Thon at PetSmart

**Sunday, February 7**  
**Noon – 3:00 p.m.**

Adopt-a-Thon at PetSmart

**Sunday, February 21**  
**Noon – 3:00 p.m.**  
 Adopt-a-Thon at PetSmart

**Tuesday, February 23**  
 National Spay Day

**Sunday, March 7**  
**Noon – 3:00 p.m.**  
 Adopt-a-Thon at PetSmart

**Sunday, March 21**  
**Noon – 3:00 p.m.**  
 Adopt-a-Thon at PetSmart

*Adopt-a-Thons may be cancelled if no pets are available for adoption.*

## Adams Student Provides for Needy Animals

Frequent SOS donor J.R. Nosal (below) provided Christmas to many animals this year. J.R. is a fifth-grade student at Adams Elementary. At this year's Adams Holiday Shop, he sold crafts that he and his parents made. All of his proceeds were to benefit SOS. He made a sign that read "Help Me Help the Animals." With sales and donations, he raised over \$100.

J.R. shopped throughout Soldan's Feed & Pet Supplies, collecting food, litter, toys, and other needed items for the SOS Christmas Giving Tree. With helpful advice from Soldan's staff, J.R. was able to fill the box and help with many needs for area animals. Both SOS and Soldan's want to say "thank you!" We are impressed that someone so young would do this at this time of year. Keep up the good work, J.R.!



## Soldan's Giving Tree

In December, Soldan's let SOS set up a Giving Tree in their store. The Giving Tree is similar to Midland's Sharing Tree; however, the focus is on dogs and cats in need. The program was a huge success and we would like to thank everyone who donated items. We received much needed cat and dog food, kitty litter, food bowls, treats, and gift certificates to Soldan's and VetMed. We are very grateful to the generous donors for these items. We especially want to thank Soldan's for letting us put the tree in their store.

## Pet Club Donates Bake Sale Proceeds

Northeast School Pet Club (below) held a bake sale and selected SOS Animal Rescue as the donation recipient for the event proceeds. The club brought many baked goods into school and set up sales in the cafeteria, generating over \$154! Northeast Pet Club president Christiana H. contacted us when the group decided to do the fund-raiser after an internet search for a local no-kill animal rescue group. They then sent SOS a note requesting we attend their December 11 meeting at Northeast so that they could present us with a check. Kathy Tangney accepted the check on behalf of SOS and also gave a talk about responsible pet care to the group of about eight students. Many, many thanks go to Christiana and all of the Northeast Pet Club students!



## Christina Erskine Reviews Animal-Themed Books

### ***Before You Were Mine*** by Maribeth Boelts & David Walker

For ages preschool to eight years, *Before You Were Mine* explores a little boy's thoughts as he spends hours with his new puppy that his family adopted from a shelter. The boy wonders what his puppy's life might have been like before they adopted him. And so the story takes the reader on the little dog's journey through the pondering of the little boy. A book that will touch your heart with its endearing illustrations as well as a positive message to love and cherish those wonderful four-legged family members that deserve so much.

### ***Go Home! The True Story of James the Cat*** by Libby Phillips Meggs

James the cat had been on his own a very long time. He had belonged to a family at one time, when he was much younger. James had gotten lost years ago. Life on his own was very hard. He went hungry and thirsty, and the world was a frightening place. Whenever someone in the neighborhood gave him any attention, he thought he had found his home. But it would take many years of being shooed away out of yards for him to find someone that realized he was a lost cat and that he needed someone to care, protect, and love him again. Realistic illustrations. For ages five to eight years, *James the Cat* is a wonderful book that will pull at your heart strings (winner of the ASPCA Book Award).

### ***A Rare Breed of Love*** by Jana Kohl, PhD

This is the true story of Baby, a puppy-mill dog who spent nine years in a tiny cage producing litters of puppies. It is also the story of Ms. Kohl and her journey of discovery of an unknown world of inhumanity towards the tens of thousands of voiceless victims living and dying in puppy mills across our country. This book will definitely enlighten even the most hardened skeptic.

**new e-mail address: [info@sosar.org](mailto:info@sosar.org)**

## Ear Mites – a Mighty Ear Problem for Cats

When the veterinarian examined Baby, a rescued feral kitten, he expressed his shock that the youngster didn't have ear mites. That's because ear mites are so common among cats, that even indoor kittens are often affected by them.

Ear mites are a widespread annoyance to many cats, whether indoor or outdoor. These crab-like parasites cause infections and inflammation in the cat's ear canal, especially for kittens. Some cats have strong reactions to ear mites and scratch their ears until they bleed. Others, even with significant mite infestation, appear to be not very bothered. (It's thought that older cats develop an immunity to the mites because they react less or that some are more hypersensitive to the mite's saliva than others.) Cats of multi-cat households are often at greater risk because mites are easily transmitted from cat to cat or even from dog to cat.

Because the presence of mites in the cat's ear canal stimulates the production of wax, an infected cat's ears appear full of dark wax. Ears also will exude an unpleasant odor. A veterinarian can make a definitive diagnosis by using an otoscope or microscope to see the mites.

To treat an ear mite problem, the veterinarian will flush the debris from the cat's ears. Then he or she will apply medicated drops to the cat's ears. The cat's owner would then be directed to put the drops in the cat's ears at home daily for a period of about three weeks. If the cat is member of a multi-cat household, all cats would likely need medical treatment to fully eliminate the problem and not see recurrences. After the treatment regimen is complete, the veterinarian would want to see the cat once more to ensure that his ears are now mite-free.

Without treatment, the infection can lead disfigurement of the ear from constant scratching or to more serious bacterial or yeast infections. Serious infections can cause loss of hearing and rupture of the ear drum.

Mites sometimes migrate from other parts of the cat's body. Because they can live on other areas of the cat, treating just the ears isn't always enough to prevent reinfestation. Topical flea treatment formulas are being used with success to also eliminate ear mite problems, especially in situations when the mites may be throughout the cat's body. Check with your veterinarian about what formula and approach is best for preventing or treating ear mites in your cat.

*Reprinted from [www.petcarerx.com](http://www.petcarerx.com).*

## Morley Portraiture Raises Smiles and Donations

Kathy Morley, owner of Morley Portraiture, volunteered to host a fund-raiser for SOS Animal Rescue. She promoted the event by distributing postcards through several businesses and mailings to people throughout the Midland area.

On December 10, Kathy and volunteers awaited the response. And it was overwhelming! Over 70 people brought pet dogs and cats to have their portraits done in time for Christmas, each donating either money or pet food toward helping SOS Animal Rescue's threefold mission to foster and find new families for homeless dogs and cats, fund a low income spay/neuter program, and provide public education on responsible pet ownership. Working more than 11 hours straight, Kathy photographed over 100 animals while volunteers helped direct people as they came into the studio.

On behalf of volunteers and homeless pets at SOS, a BIG thank you goes to everyone who came to the fund-raiser and made donations. Your help is very much appreciated and critical for continuing animal rescue work. Many thanks go to Kathy and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this possible.



## Eastlawn Students Give Generously

Mrs. Hill's fourth-grade and Mrs. Lauer's fifth-grade classes (pictured above and below) at Eastlawn Elementary made a very generous donation to SOS Animal Rescue. They donated cat food, dog food, cat litter, cat toys, and dog toys. These donations will be used in our foster homes or delivered to families in need of assistance for feeding their pets. This is another excellent example of working together to help the animals.



# Obedience Training: It's Not Just for Pets

When even the gentlest dogs and cats feel threatened, the natural way for them to defend themselves is by biting and scratching. And the people they bite most often are children. **Fifty percent of children in the United States under the age of 12 get bitten each year**, with those between the ages of 5 and 9 at greatest risk. Usually, the dog is familiar – their own, a neighbor's, or a friend's.

The jaws of an average adult dog can exert 200 pounds of pressure per square inch. The sharp, pointy teeth of a cat may spread bacteria to deep tissue. This can be especially damaging to children, who are more likely to be bitten on the face, neck, and head.\*

## Pet Peeves

Situations that can make dogs and cats behave defensively include being startled; believing their territory is being invaded, especially when eating; and physical pain.

In addition, pets may become overzealous during play and not realize they're capable of hurting people. Children should not take a toy away from a pet unless the animal is willing to drop it. They should also avoid disturbing pets when they're sleeping or eating.

Many young children aren't aware of their own strength. They must be taught not to hurt a pet by pulling, squeezing, or behaving aggressively. Teach your child which parts of your pet can be touched and how to pet gently.

Even well behaved children may interrupt a pet's meal in some way, so you may want to prepare your dog or cat for this eventuality. **Each time you feed your pet, purposely disturb the food bowl in some way.** Nudge it with your foot at first, and as your pet becomes more used to this, pull the bowl away. Helping your pet to be tolerant can prevent him or her from feeling that his meal is being threatened.

Food can cause a problem between pets and children in another way. A dog who is not trained to sit and wait for a reward can pose a threat to a child (without meaning to) by jumping to grab food from a child's hand. In his enthusiasm, the dog may bite or knock down the child. Make sure your pet minds his manners with proper training.

## Learn the Language

Dogs and cats can't express their feelings verbally, of course, but animal body language can speak volumes. Children, as well as caregivers, should learn to recognize warning signals from dogs and cats.

Dog aggression warning signs

- Ears are back
- Tail is down and tensed
- Muzzle is tense, accompanied by low growling or snarling

- Head down, avoiding eye contact
- Teeth are exposed

Cat aggression warning signs

- Ears are upright, rotating slightly forward
- Ears can be folded back against their head in an attack posture
- Legs are straight and stiff
- Tail is stiff and lowered; a cat may swish tail back and forth rapidly
- Fur is raised, including on the tail

If a dog or cat is showing any warning signs, do NOT approach the animal.

Respectful behavior breeds safer pets

A dog or cat who is unpleasantly surprised by a child's behavior may snap or scratch before there is even an opportunity to show a warning sign. Children should be taught to treat pets respectfully at all times. It's far more effective to avoid upsetting an animal than it is to avoid an animal you've upset.

- DO let a dog sniff your closed hand.
- DON'T pet or kiss a dog or cat's face and head. Instead, stroke them gently along the neck, back, and sides. Don't pat them on the head unless you know the dog is friendly and tolerant. Petting and scratching a dog is preferred. While dogs may love being rubbed on the belly, never try to roll a cat over to rub her stomach. Cats may bite or scratch.
- DON'T tease a dog or cat with intimidating or threatening gestures.
- DON'T approach an unfamiliar dog or cat until you get the owner's permission. The same goes for petting and picking up the pet.
- DON'T hold a cat who doesn't want to be held. If she can leave when she wants to, chances are she'll come back. And she won't have a reason to scratch.
- DON'T approach a stray dog or cat. Avoid a dog who is chained or tied up. And never approach an animal who appears injured or sick.
- DON'T reach into a car or through a fence to pet a dog or cat. Animals in vehicles and yards may be territorial and likely to bite.
- DON'T try to stop a fight between dogs or cats – you could be seriously injured.
- DON'T run when approached by a strange dog. Running will encourage the dog to chase you, and he may attack. Don't make direct eye contact with the dog. Stand very still and be very quiet if the dog approaches. Try backing away slowly. If the dog becomes aggressive, stand still and very slowly move your hands and arms to protect your chest and neck. Wait until the dog has left before moving away. If a dog knocks you down, do not move. Cover the back of your neck with your hands.

Regardless of how “well-trained” your children are, NEVER allow children age 5 or younger to play with pets without adult supervision.\*\*

### Spread the love, not the germs

Bites and scratches aren't the only hazards pets can present to children. Children should always wash their hands carefully with soap and water after touching an animal. Keep a very young child's or baby's unwashed hands out of his mouth after he has touched an animal. Parents and caregivers should always wash their hands after touching pets too, especially before handling food.

### Preparing your pets for a human sibling

If you don't have children but are planning to, keep in mind that adding a new baby to your household can be stressful to your pet. Just as you prepare your home by purchasing baby furniture and diapers, you should help your pet make this big adjustment.

### Before the baby comes

While you're waiting for your new baby to arrive, make sure your pet's vaccines and medical checkups are up to date. Have your pet checked for parasites. Get him or her used to nail trims. If your pet is not spayed or neutered, you may want to consider doing so now. Altered pets are less aggressive, calmer, and less likely to bite. (Neutering also increases your pet's chances for a longer, healthier life by reducing the incidence of breast cancer and eliminating uterine, ovarian and testicular cancer.)

In addition to preparing your pet physically, you can help him or her know what to expect. A new baby will command a great deal of time and energy, which will mean less of both for your pet. **If your pet is attached to the primary caregiver, get him or her used to spending time with another family member before the baby comes** to avoid a sense of sudden abandonment.

If your dog or cat likes to jump in your lap, teach him or her to wait on the floor beside you until invited up. If your cat likes to swat or pounce, encourage her to use appropriate toys, a cat tree, or other objects. To discourage your cat from jumping onto the crib or changing table, put double-sided tape on the furniture. If you don't want your pet in the nursery, install a gate. This will enable your furry friend to wait outside while still being able to hear, smell and see what's going on inside the room.

In fact, it's a good idea to let your pet hear, smell, and see a real baby before yours comes home. If you have friends with infants, invite them to visit. Be sure to closely supervise all interactions. Other ways to familiarize your pet with your baby's characteristics ahead of time are by sprinkling baby powder or baby oil on your skin so your pet is exposed to

these new smells. If you've chosen a name for your baby, mention it so it becomes familiar to your pet. If you have toys or stuffed animals for the baby, make sure your pet understands that these are off limits with a stern, “no.”

### After the baby arrives

Before you come home with the baby, have someone bring home a blanket or an article of clothing with your baby's scent on it. This way, your pet can investigate this new smell before meeting the baby.

When you get home, have someone else hold the baby so you can greet your pet warmly. **When your pet is calm, hold the baby and keep pet treats handy, both to distract your pet and to make this a pleasant experience. Encourage your pet to sit quietly nearby and be sure to acknowledge good behavior with praise and treats. Always supervise any interaction.**

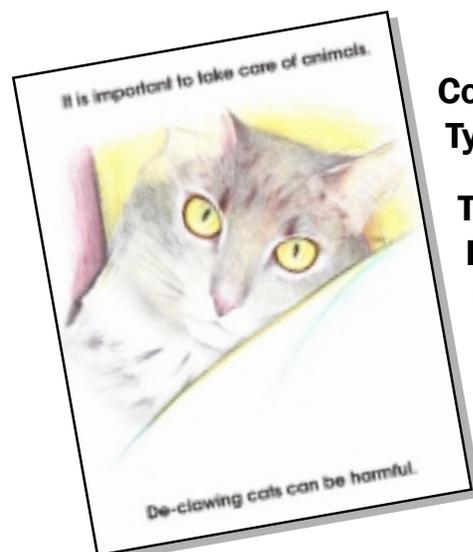
Try to maintain a regular routine as much as possible, so your pet can adapt more easily to the new situation. A dog who can sit, stay, and heel would be a welcome companion when taking the baby out in the stroller, but be sure to practice this first without the baby. If your cat likes to cuddle, let her snuggle up next to you when the baby is napping; however, never let your pet sleep with your baby. A pet can accidentally smother an unattended infant.

And while life will undoubtedly be busier, try to give your pet some focused attention without the baby every day. Chances are, you'll enjoy it as much as your pet will.

*\*Weiss HB, Friedman DI, Coben JH. Incidence of dog bite injuries treated in emergency departments. JAMA 1998;279:51-3. [PubMed]*

*\*\*Centers for Disease Control, Healthy Pets, Healthy People*

*Reprinted from [www.bluebuff.com](http://www.bluebuff.com).*



**Congratulations,  
Tyler K.!**

**The St. John's  
Lutheran  
School  
7th-grader  
is our poster  
contest  
winner!**

## SOS Member Goes the Extra Mile

An adorable little puggle that I took care of for a day is back home. I posted a flyer about this missing dog around my area, and I stopped in at the M-20 Animal Hospital because I found him running on Homer Road at M-20. A veterinarian technician was there walking dogs and she took my flyer inside. She checked the voice mail and called me ten minutes later, saying that a message had been left on Friday about a missing puggle. I called the owner to reunite them.

Here is the interesting part: the owner lives near Adams Elementary, but I live five miles outside of Midland. The puggle ran over 10 miles in less than 24 hours. We could not believe it was the same dog, but indeed it was. He is happily back with his family.

A big thank you goes to the veterinarian technician for taking the time to check voice mail on the weekend and getting in touch with me. My husband was very sad to see him go. Who knew a puggle was his true love?



Thank you,  
Soldan's  
of Mt.  
Pleasant,  
& Midland  
for Pet  
Photos  
with Santa!



# THANK YOU!

Roberta Allard  
 Paul & Carol Allen  
 Anne Applegath  
 Nancy Bailey  
 for donating scrapbook album sales  
 Susan Beeson  
 Bennigan's for hosting  
 Be Involved fund-raiser  
 Merry Blades  
 in memory of Skippy  
 Marsha Bradley  
 Thomas Cimbalik  
 Luis & Stephanie Cirihal  
 Mona Cline  
 Lynn Cox  
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 David Letts  
 Larry Marshall  
 Michelle McCormick  
 Midland Public Schools  
 Special Services  
 in honor of Katie Cook & Barb Camp  
 Alison Moldovan  
 Joan Monahan

Lyuba Pace  
 Rhoda Palmateer  
 for foster cat Frankie's vet bills  
 Teresa Pennington  
 Mary Alice Ralph  
 John & Barbara Rothhaar  
 Leslie Russell  
 Saginaw Valley State University  
 Faculty Association  
 in memory of Kody Bangert  
 Gary & Sandra Smith  
 in honor of Dr. Bernie Butler  
 Merrie & James Thompson  
 for Coco  
 Paul & Pam Vammer  
 Neil & Julie Wackerle  
 for foster dog Holly's eye surgery  
 Sarah Wiley  
 Arnold & Sally Young

Northern Animal Clinic supports the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry by hosting a Pet Pantry fund-raiser. SOS Animal Rescue donated collars, leashes, treats, dishes, and cat scratch posts to this worthy cause. Thank you, Northern Animal Clinic, for hosting and supporting this worthy cause in our community.

Codi Pound is our newest young volunteer. She jumped right in by helping us at adopt-a-thons. She also created a pet bookmark to be given out at adopt-a-thons and education programs. Thanks, Codi, for showing that age is no barrier to helping the animals!

## Spay Day

National Spay Day inspires people to save animal lives by spaying or neutering pets and feral cats. This year's Spay Day occurs on **Tuesday, February 23** and includes events and activities taking place in February across the U.S. and the world.

In recognition of National Spay Day, Dr. Blasko of Midland Vetmed in partnership with SOS Animal Rescue is sponsoring spay week. Eligible Midland County families in low income or other hardship situations will receive assistance in getting their pets spayed or neutered. Special thanks go to Dr. Blasko for volunteering her services in this important cause.

## Spay/Neuter Statistics

From January 2004 to December 2009, SOS Animal Rescue has spayed/neutered 1071 cats and dogs.

| SPAY/NEUTER  | 2004      | 2005       | 2006       | 2007       | 2008       | 2009       |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Female Cats  | 41        | 90         | 93         | 109        | 90         | 57         |
| Male Cats    | 26        | 64         | 57         | 70         | 49         | 27         |
| Female Dogs  | 14        | 31         | 32         | 30         | 44         | 23         |
| Male Dogs    | 13        | 17         | 30         | 41         | 20         | 3          |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>202</b> | <b>212</b> | <b>250</b> | <b>203</b> | <b>110</b> |



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#### **Officers**

Joann Taylor, President  
Shelley Park, Vice President  
Darlene Andrews, Secretary  
Karla Oldenburg, Treasurer

#### **Mission Statement**

SOS Animal Rescue is a non-profit  
501(c)3 organization whose mission is  
to reduce the number of unwanted pets  
in Midland County through placement  
and public education.

#### **Board of Directors**

Dawn Carsten  
Liz Shook

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Sheryl Billmeier Hnizda

## **THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!**



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