

Forever Home

News from RHHS

Ouray Avenue Kitten Gang

When neighbors Jennifer Hancock and Stacy Schoolfield found a box of filthy 4-week-old kittens left behind by renters on their street, they followed the momma cat to another young mother with a 1-day-old litter covered in feces and afterbirth. The new mom had stopped caring for them once she gave birth. They pair soon discovered a third cat—pregnant with four babies that would be born within the week. For the first time, they were exposed to the tragic reality of the cat overpopulation problem in our community.

Jennifer called Roice-Hurst to find out what they could do, and the two immediately offered to foster the kittens, since they were too young to stay at the shelter and would need round-the-clock

care to survive. This was both women's first experience as kitten surrogate mothers, so they came to the shelter for an in-depth foster training session and learned how to feed, stimulate, and groom the tiny kittens. To prevent the burnout that often comes with the sleepless nights of bottle feeding every two hours, the friends took turns, taking the kittens back and forth to each other's houses every few days so the other could rest.

The kitten care team branded themselves the "Ouray Avenue Kitten Gang" and started a Facebook page to chronicle the kittens' shenanigans and growth. Within weeks, they had over 100 followers. By the time the kittens were eight weeks old and ready for adoption, Stacy and Jennifer had already found homes for all 11 kittens. With the help of Grand Valley Pets Alive, they trapped and spayed the mothers.



Stacy & Jennifer cuddle their foster kittens

Once their first batch was grown and gone, they continued to foster bottle babies for RHHS until kitten season waned. When it was all said and done, the Ouray Avenue Kitten Gang raised 20 spoiled kittens from five different litters!

Stacy and Jennifer are now members of the new Grand Valley Cat Coalition and raising awareness in the community about trap-neuter-return efforts.

A Community Solution to the Community Cat Problem

While Western Colorado is experiencing a shortage of adoptable dogs in its shelters and regularly transfers them in from high-need areas, our cat population is tragically abundant. During this year's kitten season, RHHS took in over 250 kittens, almost half of which were strays. CLAWS and other shelters experience a similar phenomenon and Grand Valley

Pets Alive (GVPA) fields countless calls about abandoned cats and kittens year-round. These prolific cats cause a tremendous strain on resources at shelters as they scramble to care for, house, and spay/neuter them.

In the face of this issue, Roice-Hurst and five other animal groups in town have formed the Grand Valley Cat Coalition. This coalition

will take a targeted approach at cat population control beyond just TNR in a coordinated effort that has never been possible among local agencies before.

We have secured the grant money to move forward with the pilot year, which will begin in 2018. To learn more or to volunteer with our corps of trappers/transporters, call (970) 434-7337, ext. 103.

Agencies and organizations across our community have come together to address issues facing dogs and cats in Mesa County and beyond. See inside for more inspirational stories of collaboration in the animal welfare world...

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Our pets are thankful for YOU this Thanksgiving

On behalf of all of the dogs and cats at Roice-Hurst, thank you for thinking of us this holiday season! This is what we're most thankful for:

The soft, warm beds and blankets you donate for us to sleep on.

The dry food, canned food, and treats you bring to fill our bellies.

The volunteers who take us on walks, read to us, and play with us.

The volunteers who clean our kennels, litter boxes, and dishes, and do loads and loads of laundry.

Your donations that keep us cool in the summer and warm in the winter, pay our vet bills, and give us a place to be safe and happy until we find our forever homes.

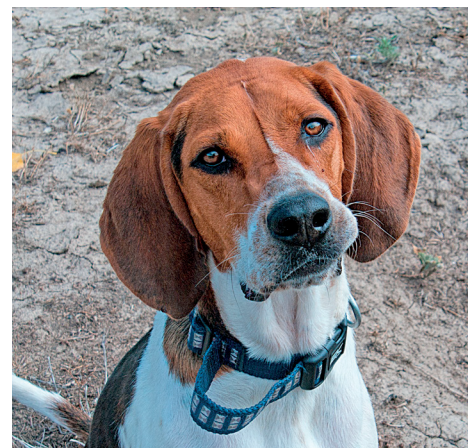
The toys that take our minds off stressful times and burn off energy.

People who like and share our stories on Facebook and Instagram.

People who come to support us at fundraising and adoption events.

Local businesses that give us discounts and donated items to save us money.

The staff that comes in every day to remind us we are loved and safe.



The people who take care of the staff who take good care of us.

The foster families that show us love while we grow and heal.

Everyone who has named RHHS in their will to care for us for years to come.

Our generous community that never forgets about us.

OUR FOREVER HOMES!

For more ways to support the animals at RHHS, contact Anna Stout at 434-7337, ext. 107 or anna@rhumanesociety.org.

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Volunteer Spotlight

You may see Irene Binggeli's SUV full of dogs on their way to new lives across the state of Colorado and beyond, marked with an "Animal Rescue Transport Vehicle" sticker on the side. As a volunteer transporter, Irene drives thousands of miles each year with precious cargo that often barks the whole time and, on occasion, stinks up the car. But that does not deter her from accepting trip after trip, knowing the crucial role she plays in the lives of these pups.



But Irene doesn't just transport dogs; she was instrumental in helping RHHS transfer dogs from hurricane-affected areas in Texas, from performing over 25 home visits to driving to Utah to transport the dogs on the last leg of their journey. She is now coordinating the hurricane dog foster program—which includes coordinating supplies, vet appointments, and providing support for 17 different foster homes. When she's not on the road with a car full of canines for one of the many rescue groups she assists, you can find her behind the RHHS table at our events or taking our pets to their vet appointments. Irene embodies the spirit of collaboration that makes our animal welfare community so special in Western Colorado.

Shelter from the Storm Dogs from Texas Find Forever Homes in Mesa County

In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, Roice-Hurst received countless inquiries from our community about what we were going to do to help. We were in the middle of our commitment to Mesa County Animal Services to provide overflow relief to them during their repairs and did not have extra room in the shelter. But the calls kept coming. We saw how important it was to our community that we lend a hand in Texas, so we turned to our community for help; **if we could form a corps of potential fosters to house dogs in their homes, we could expand our capacity and be prepared for dogs from hurricane-affected areas.** The response from our community was overwhelming—**almost 90 people responded to our call for help!**

Initially, we hoped to provide relief to shelters by taking in dogs that were already in shelters before the storm and free up space for those found during and after the storm. Fortunately, they were able to place them in shelters and rescues close to Houston and didn't need

us. But after the 30-day hold for pets brought in during the storm, we were called on for help. After hours of head-spinning coordination among Best Friends Animal Society staff, transporters from multiple agencies, other shelters in Western Colorado, more than 30 potential foster homes, and others, we finally had a dog list and a transport date!

On October 25, we welcomed 17 dogs to Roice-Hurst, including 8 with special needs. After over 24 hours of travel, the dogs were relieved to get out of the crates and meet their new foster parents. That night, they slept in homes for the first time in a month and a half. They are now available for adoption!



Helping Shelters Help Troubled Cats

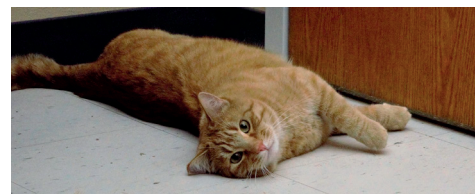
There are some cats that just don't know how to get along with humans—yet. Alan was one of those cats. When he arrived at Colorado Animal Rescue in Glenwood Springs, the staff couldn't handle him even long enough to do his intake. After working with him for months and not seeing progress, they called Jodi, the Cat Behavior Counselor at RHHS, to see if the RHHS Animal Resource Center could take him. **If she couldn't bring this aggressive orange kitty out of his shell, his future was grim.**

Alan is not the first cat to come to RHHS from another shelter for a final shot at finding a forever home. **RHHS is fortunate to have the only cat behavior program in Western Colorado and works regularly with other shelters** to bring in behavior cats that aren't candidates for adoption. In exchange, those shelters take our adoptable cats

or help with the overflow of kittens we get during kitten season to free up space for these "troubled" cats. Jodi also travels to other shelters to offer training to their cat teams.

Jodi worked with Alan to find his triggers and prey preference. **After just a few weeks, he graduated from our behavior program and is now available for adoption!** He's looking for a calm home with someone who is willing to play with him every day.

If you have a misbehaving cat, contact Jodi at (970) 434-7337, ext. 103 for a free consultation with our Animal Resource Center staff!



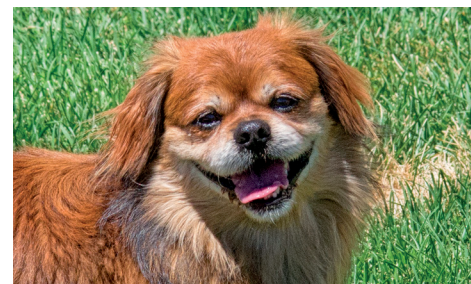
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From The Executive Director's Desk: Local Collaboration a Regional Model

Mesa County Animal Services has not euthanized a healthy, adoptable pet since 2010. For a county shelter, that's pretty amazing. And it's due in large part to Animal Services' partnerships with shelters like Roice-Hurst, which take their available dogs and put them up for adoption so that MCAS never finds itself in a position of having to euthanize for space.

The relationship between RHHS and MCAS is unique and is touted as an example for cooperation between private shelters and municipal agencies around the state—and around the country. I was invited to speak at the Best Friends Regional Summit in Salt Lake City in April and again at the Best Friends National Conference in July, focusing largely on this collaboration and the benefits it brings to the community—both for people and animals. I must admit, I was floored by the comments by other agencies about the animosity between animal organizations in their communities, especially between private and government-run agencies.

Doug Frye, Director of Animal Services, and I call each other "Industry BFFs" and have a very open line of communication between us. We work together to plan joint training opportunities for our staffs, address the needs of special needs shelter pets at both agencies, transfer animals to rescues around the region, and establish procedures and policies that improve the services we provide to our animal and human communities.



We have switched to a new donor management system. If you have previously asked to be removed from our mailing list or wish to update your contact information, please email info@rhumanesociety.org or call 434-7337.



Doug and I meet at least monthly to discuss the needs of our agencies, trends in the community, and ways to work together to improve services for Mesa County. In one of those meetings, Doug brought up the impending repairs to Animal Services' building. He was concerned; **with more than a 60% reduction in space, he feared they might find themselves in a situation of overpopulation, which could mean a return to euthanasia.**

By the end of the meeting, we had a plan. Roice-Hurst would scale back its transfers from other shelters and rescues and focus on our community's dogs until the repairs were over. We agreed to transfer at least 200 dogs into our adoption program during construction and ensure they found homes. (Thanks to a grant from The Rachel Ray Foundation and Best Friends Animal Society, we were able to subsidize a portion of the spay/neuter and medical costs for these animals.) **This allowed Animal Services to focus on their mission—public health and safety—and us on ours—the bonds between pets and people.**

MCAS is now back in its building, but our ramped-up transfer relationship will remain intact. We understand that while our missions are different, our goal is the same—a healthy and thriving community for both pets and people.

Shamu smiles at the camera in the RHHS side yard. Shamu was one of the dogs transferred from MCAS to RHHS this year.

Business Spotlight

Grand Junction Subaru truly loves pets. From selecting Roice-Hurst Humane Society as its "Hometown Charity" during the national Subaru Share the Love Event for the past three years (and again for 2018!) to nominating Roice-Hurst as a partner shelter to be eligible for grant funding for fee-waived adoption events, Ron Bubar and the team at Grand Junction Subaru always have our pets on their minds. GJ Subaru has donated over \$40,000 to Roice-Hurst through the Share the Love Event over the past few years and is now helping us get pets adopted!

Last month, RHHS and GJ Subaru hosted a two-day fee-waived adoption event thanks to a grant through the ASPCA and Subaru. **Every available kitten, all but one available dog, and five adult cats (including one long-timer)—a total of 26 animals—were adopted in the span of two days!**



Join us for our next ASPCA/ Subaru National Fee-Waived Adoption Event!

"Home for the Holidays" Adoption Event

December 15, 11am-4pm
at Roice-Hurst Humane Society
362 28 Road

December 16, 10:30am-2:30pm
at Grand Junction Subaru
651 Market Street