



The Little Guild of St. Francis

Newsletter

Summer 2005

The Comfortable Shoe

Have you noticed that Baby Boomers are really starting to show their age? There we were, multitudes of us, listening to loud music, getting sun tanned, working multiple jobs then balancing kids, their sports, our sports, mortgages and vacations. Exhausting when you look back at it. We hate slowing down but also hate to admit that sitting down really feels good these days. We're also looking after our parents now, the shoe is definitely on the other foot.



This quarter's newsletter is dedicated to the older generation of dogs and cats at The Guild. Some of them just stole our hearts when we found them at the pounds; a few of them were returned to us due to their caregiver's illness or death. It probably doesn't seem like that long ago for these pets either when "the shoe was on the other foot."

They're sweet all of them, opinionated in some subjects, they move a little slower than you know they used to, they enjoy a good meal and life for them now is pretty darned good. They're happy with a scratch on the ear or a nice slow rub around the chest and back. They need to take their pills and they'll listen patiently when you tell them about how you can relate to their aches and pains. Their eyes are the windows of their souls. They're settled, they know who they are and they accept it.

It's always harder to adopt out the older generation because of our fear of losing them. While we all know that life offers no guarantees, you may be surprised at just how spry or 'cool' they are. Older pets are good for older people; they understand one another. (Have you talked to a teenager lately?) We invite you to come and meet our seniors. We're very proud of them and they're proud of themselves, you'll see.

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A Note from the Director

Why do so many great dogs wind up in a shelter? This is a question that every shelter worker struggles with from time to time. I know I have. There are many reasons for this, some are easily fixed and others more difficult. Over the next few issues, I plan to talk about this and would love to hear from those of you who have an opinion or information about this growing problem.

More dogs are being "owner surrendered" to the pounds in our area. Some because people have lost their jobs, lost their homes, are moving to an apartment that doesn't allow animals or can no longer afford to keep their pet. Some dogs end up in pounds because their owners have gone into a long term care facility or have passed away and no plans were made for the dog's care. Other dogs are surrendered because of behavior problems that could have been corrected with some training and commitment on the part of the owner. All of these situations end with a confused dog sitting in the pound wondering what happened.

How many of us have adopted a cute little puppy, taken it home and laughed at how cute and funny it was when it jumped up on the couch, nibbled on our fingers and pant legs, jumped up on us "to show how much they love us", and generally ran wild around the house? At five pounds weight this might have been funny. A year later when the dog weighs 60 or more pounds and is still doing all these things, the cuteness quickly wears off. Our dog is now in his teen years and has never had any effective training or discipline, actually their misbehavior has probably been rewarded with a lot of attention. This is the point at which many people decide that the dog is just not right for them. They need a calmer, better behaved dog. Another dog sitting at the pound wondering what happened. The Little Guild takes in dogs from the dog pounds of Litchfield County so we have a stake in this problem. I can't say I know what the solution to this is; however with some feedback from all of you perhaps we can find a way to change at least some of these conditions for the better. I hope to hear from some of you soon.

A Letter From the President

Volunteers, this is the watchword of the Little Guild. While the Little Guild has a great, but small, permanent staff, it is the many volunteers who keep the operations running.

Our volunteers range in age from seven to 93.

We have 12 volunteers who walk the dogs. We have 10 volunteers who clean out the cages.

We have 6 volunteers who regularly feed our cats. We have 9 volunteers who socialize all of our animals.

We have 6 volunteers who manage the Thrift Shop.

Time spent with the dogs and cats makes them into much more social and adoptable animals who give pleasure to their new owners. It also provides satisfaction to the volunteers who can relate to someone who needs their care and love.

And, let us remember and appreciate the many people, especially children, who request that instead of presents for their birthday, confirmation, bar mitzvah, etc. donations be made to the Little Guild. In fact several children have made their class project at school raising money for the Little Guild.

To all of these many volunteers we owe not only a great vote of thanks and appreciation, but also our very existence and success.

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People and Pet Mail

Dear Faith and Staff,

"I have had Misty (formerly Ophelia) for 1 year now. She is doing great and is one of the nicest cats I have ever had. I am so happy that I adopted her. She is a very happy cat and enjoys going to the barn with me every morning to feed the horses." Darlene Knox - Morris, CT



Dear Little Guild,

"I just wanted to say thank you for looking after me during my time at the Little Guild. I live in Boston now and have a new friend who is a big black dog called Max! He even lets me share his cushion with him. Sometimes I go to Litchfield on "vacation" and then I get to go outside and play. I thought you might like a picture of me to include in your next newsletter. I am a very happy adopted cat! Love, Oona." Stephanie F. Dyson – Boston, MA



Dear Liz and Staff,

"It has been 5 months since we adopted Darcy and we just love her. She has developed a personality that is just wonderful. Darcy has turned out to be a wonderful protector for us. She is a total enjoyment to have and we continue to have a lot of fun with her. Burt and I thank you for giving us a wonderful dog to be a part of our family." Lisa Demers and Burt Berthiaume – Hillsdale, NY

Dear Faith and All,

"Mia formerly known as Punkin, has the run of the house, including beds! She has been an angel. I can pick her up and she loves lap time. This is a match made in heaven." Sincerely, Elaine – Winsted, CT



THE LITTLE GUILD OF ST FRANCIS DONORS

April 1 - June 30, 2005

On behalf of the Board of Directors and all the dogs and cats you have helped, we would like to thank you for your support of our shelter. You have made it possible for us to help these beautiful animals that have found themselves homeless through no fault of their own. Please know that we are very grateful for your support.

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Litter Box Tips

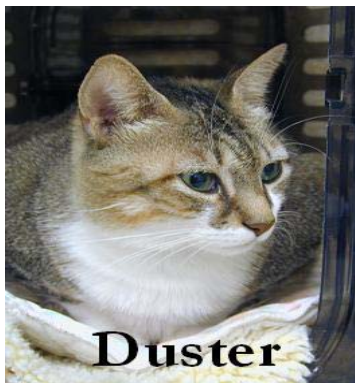
"Keeping Your Cat From Thinking Outside The Box"

- Place your cat's litter box in a quiet area, which is easily accessible. You may be less pleased with kitty if you place her box in the basement, next to an appliance.
- Most cats prefer fine-grained litters because of the soft feel. There are many different textured litters to choose from, if one does not work, try another.
- Once you have found a litter your cat likes, stick with it. Sudden changes can cause problems.
- If your cat prefers to use your house plants as a litter box, try mixing a small amount of potting soil into the regular litter in the box.
- Many cats are "put off" by scented litters or air fresheners placed near their box. Unscented litter, mixed with baking soda, works best.
- Scoop out the box daily and change the litter once a week. Thoroughly wash the box once every 7 to 10 days with mild soap and hot water. (Harsh chemicals leave odors that cats dislike). One litter box per cat is the rule.
- Litter box liners are OK, but some cats will prefer no liners.
- Most cats will not use litter that is more than 2 inches deep.
- Many medical conditions can cause a change in litter box habits. If your cat begins to eliminate outside of the box, your first call should be to the vet. Once health reasons are ruled out, your vet can assist you with simple behavioral modification techniques to resolve the issue.

Remember, if your cat has litter box problems, punishment is never the answer, nor is banishing your cat outdoors. Be sure the litter box is clean and have your vet check to see if there is a medical problem causing it.



We all need a good home!



Our Dream of No More Homeless Pets

Caring for animals is expensive. Without your donations, the shelter and the work we do is at risk. Please indicate your commitment for 2005!

YES, I want to be part of the work of The Little Guild. Here is my 2005 contribution.

\$45 Member \$100 Caregiver
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Send me a monthly reminder.

Send me a form so I can instruct my bank or credit card company to send this amount each month.

Many companies offer a matching gift program that doubles the value of your gift to The Little Guild. Please ask your Human Resources representative for a form, complete it, and send it along with your gift today. Thank You!

Donations are tax-deductible under section 501 (c)(3) of IRS code. Notification of your donation will be mailed to you.

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Late Breaking News!

The Torrington Area Foundation, through its Marion & Alice Edwards Fund has awarded The Little Guild a grant to cover the purchase and installation of a much needed generator that will insure our animals are warm, watered and their medications are kept refrigerated during the power outages that occur during the winter here in West Cornwall. Thank you very much!

We are now microchipping all of our adopted pets. This will give them a much better chance to get back home if they are lost.

Thanks to all of you who stopped by to see us at the Connecticut Agricultural Fair in Goshen on July 29-31. Several cats were adopted there and we got a chance to talk with many past adopters who updated us on how well their new pets are doing. We also won the “Best Community Booth” award!

Join us at the “It’s A Dogs’s Life” at THE CANINE SPORTS CENTER, Rt. 63, Goshen on September 17th and 18th. All proceeds to benefit animal rescue. Bring your dog with you because this will be two days of canine adventure and fun. Agility, obedience, frisbee, flyball, best costume, drooliest dog, and a parade of rescues each day! For you and your best friend, it just doesn’t get any better than this!

Visit our animals for adoption at www.littleguild.org

**The Little Guild of Saint Francis
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