



## BLUE EARTH NICOLLET COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

November 2016



### Gratitude

The Oxford Dictionary defines gratitude as "The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation and to return kindness." As we near the end of 2016, it's time to reflect on all the people who have touched the lives of the cats and dogs who have found temporary shelter at BENCHS. In the commotion of daily shelter activity and ongoing fundraising, it's easy to forget to express our appreciation to our donors, volunteers, local businesses, veterinarians, staff, foster families, adoptive families, and the public safety officers who rescue the animals that have been abandoned. Each of you are vital to keeping our shelter doors open and the survival of 1,000 homeless cats and dogs this year.

You have our heartfelt gratitude.

The December Annual Meeting has been moved from December 12 to December 19 to ensure that we have enough Board Members in attendance. Please mark your calendars for the change. All BENCHS members are invited to attend.



### Meet Kelly Hulke, Vet Tech



As a Veterinary Technician at BENCHS for the past 6 years, Kelly can be found at the shelter one or two days each week. Any cat or dog that has been noted with a health concern is referred first to Kelly. She will begin to sort out the ones that

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need to see a veterinarian and those that we can treat in house. She assists with surgeries in our surgical suite and frequently gets messages from BENCHS staff asking for advise on the care of newly arriving animals. Working full time at Nicollet Veterinary Clinic with Dr. Beckendorf, our veterinary advisor, Kelly is a conduit of information from the shelter to the clinic.

Kelly grew up wanting to care for animals and has been at Nicollet Vet Clinic for 12 years. She polished her skills there and works diligently to keep the animals at BENCHS healthy. She also trains the new ACTs and teaches the staff and some volunteers various aspects of animal care.

Being an active mom to a young son and overseeing a household that includes a senior dog and a kitten would keep most people busy, but Kelly also squeezes in volunteer time for BENCHS. She has fostered animals from BENCHS that needed a very special level of care. Her favorite success story is the taming of a young husky who was brought to Nicollet Vet Clinic by a family who was no longer was able to keep him. Sadly, the husky had not been socialized and when he made his way to the shelter, it was discovered that he was highly unpredictable in his behavior. Kelly worked diligently with this dog in her spare time. He was placed in a foster home and is well adjusted and ready for a permanent home.

Whether Kelly is working in her role as Vet Tech at BENCHS or volunteering with BENCHS animals, she has a big impact on the lives of the cats and dogs who are lucky enough to be in her care. All of us at BENCHS cannot imagine how we would keep our furry friends so healthy without her compassion and skills. Kelly is a great asset to our program.



## **Fostering Puppies**

by Sharon Bjornson

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a BENCHS fosterer? Well, most every day begins with either the alarm or the dogs waking me up (I'm never really sure which one makes more noise). One particular day I awoke to something especially exciting. At the time, I had two dogs of my own, a Chocolate Lab named Bella and a Beagle named Lacey. In addition, I had two foster Chihuahuas named Leia and Guppy. These two foster pups, who came from the same home, were bonded buddies.



## **Volunteers Needed**

### **Kiwanis Holiday Lights**

BENCHS volunteers helped us raise over \$1,000 last year by volunteering at Kiwanis Holiday lights. The opportunities to share the Holiday spirit with your neighbors while supporting BENCHS are:

- Saturday Dec. 10
- Monday Dec. 12
- Friday Dec 16
- Sunday Jan 1
- Monday Jan 2

To sign up for a shift, go to [www.benchs.org](http://www.benchs.org)



## **Upcoming Events**



### **Pet Expo Christmas Tree**

**Pet Expo**  
The place to shop for our shelter pets  
Look for our BENCHS tree by the checkouts  
Pick a card with a picture of one of our shelter pets  
Buy the item on the back and put it in the basket  
What an easy way to help our shelter pets get their Christmas treats !!

Will be there yesterday - Christmas

### **Holiday Bake Sale**



On this particular day I was taking Leia to the vet in Nicollet because I suspected she might be pregnant. The vet confirmed my suspicions and counted five pups growing in Leia's tiny body. I was warned to prepare myself for the fact that not all the pups might survive due to their mother's small size. Regardless of the risks, I wanted Leia to have things ready for her upcoming arrivals so I began preparing a birthing box in a quiet empty bedroom. When I thought her time was near, I slept on a couch with my hand in the box to comfort Leia. I watched her day and night but it wasn't until I went to an evening BENCHS meeting that the blessed events began arriving. I came home to two puppies in Leia's birthing box. Soon after came number three, number four, and finally number five. Four girls and one boy were all alive and healthy. And I got to see three of them being born.

At first the tiny new pups were content to stay cozy in the box with their mother. But before long they started moving around and needed more room. I made a pen in the dining room and covered the floor with a tarp, newspapers, and blankets. I added a few toys and the pups had a new place to play and get used to more noise and interaction. After a few weeks, Leia began spending more time out of the pen. The puppies were so cute and they jumped at the side of the pen, wanting to be picked up whenever anyone walked by.



As they grew, the pups were seen by a vet to be weighed and get their necessary shots. With solid food added to their diet, they grew like weeds. I spent a lot of time every day holding and playing with them in their pen, but before long they needed even more room. So I gated off the kitchen and let them play and romp there while I was preparing meals.



They loved playing tug of war with my socks.



Soon it was time for the pups to leave me but they didn't go to live in the shelter. Instead, I brought them to

meet their adoptive families and go directly to their forever homes. Each little pup went home with a goodie bag containing a blanket that they had used at my house along with some familiar chew toys and a bag of puppy food. Was it hard for me to say goodbye? Of course it was, but the smiles on the faces of their forever families made it much easier.

### Pet Expo Sat. Dec. 3 10am-4pm

Not too many people have time to bake like this anymore. But that doesn't mean you have to be without homemade cookies and goodies this holiday season. BENCHS supporters will be baking delicious holiday treats for the BENCHS Holiday Bake Sale on Saturday, December 3, from 10 am-4 pm at Pet Expo. We are seeking volunteers to bake their favorite holiday cookie, bar, cake, or bread and bring them to Riverside Regional Pet Shelter on Friday, Dec.2, between 11 am and 6 pm. Or you can drop off at Pet Expo starting at 9 am. Saturday. The baked goods should be packaged and labeled. If your bars or cookies include nuts or your bread is gluten free, please indicate on the label. You may even want to include the recipe.

Volunteers will price your items and bring them to the sale on Saturday morning, Dec.5. We invite you to come to the sale between 10am and 4pm and invite your friends. All of the proceeds from the bake sale go to taking care of the homeless cats and dogs at the shelter.

What a great way to celebrate the holiday season and support BENCHS!

### Kiwanis Holiday Lights



Kiwanis Holiday Lights Celebration runs from Nov. 25 through Dec. 31 at Sibley Park. Join us for the Opening Ceremony and parade at 6pm on Fri. Nov. 25. Don't forget to find our tree in the row of volunteer organization trees. Vote for your favorite.

As successful as I was at fostering the puppies, I turned out to be a foster failure. You see, I adopted both Leia and Guppy myself. Sadly, Leia later became sick and crossed the rainbow bridge but Guppy still enjoys being spoiled rotten with Bella and Lacey.

Actually, I'm not really foster failure. I loved fostering Guppy, Leia, and her pups so much that I took in three more foster dogs a short time later.

Think you might be interested in fostering? Contact [BENCHS](#) for more information.

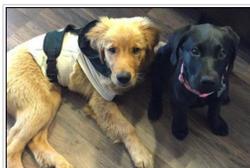


## Is This a Dumb Question?

by Morgan Vanderburg

"Actually, there is one more thing...would you please take a look at the sore on his back?" Although I didn't realize it at the time, this question had a huge impact on the life of my Golden Retriever, Bentley, by sparking a sequence of veterinary care that eventually led to the identification and removal of cancer.

Bentley was a 16-week-old puppy when we brought him into Minnesota Valley Pet Hospital for his final round of vaccinations. A few weeks prior to this appointment, we noticed a small, red sore located near his left shoulder. While it seemed somewhat inflamed, it didn't seem to bother him. We figured it was an injury from a play session or the result of a skin allergy or bug bite. While at the appointment, the veterinarian administered the vaccines and asked if we had any questions. I initially hesitated to mention the sore for a few reasons: this wasn't the reason for our visit, I didn't want to delay the appointments after us, and I figured I was acting as an overly-concerned, hypochondriac dog owner. However, I asked the question anyway.



*Bentley and his sister, Luna after learning the pathology results*

The veterinarian immediately conducted a skin scraping of the sore. The results showed a large volume of histamine, which is present in both benign tumors and cancerous mast cell tumors. Although mast cell tumors are very rare in puppies and long-haired dog breeds (Bentley was both), the veterinarian still recommended a

Hint: BENCHS.

We have several opportunities to earn money for BENCHS by volunteering. [Click here for the dates.](#)

If you can't volunteer, please visit the park and consider making a cash donation. Visitor donations are shared between non-profits working the event based on the number of volunteer hours worked.



## Past Events

### GoGo Photo Contest

The photo contest had 22 beautiful fur babies entered. There was a flurry of activity the last hour of voting and Savannah came out of top with 330 votes!



Second place went to Daysha with 260 votes and third place was captured by Halo with 255 votes!



We had one special person donate enough to make sure that everyone gets to be on the tree at Sibley Park! The contest raised \$1400!!! That money will be used to help

cautious approach of immediate growth removal.

Bentley had surgery five days later and the pathology testing confirmed a diagnosis of cancer. Fortunately, the cancer was removed with clear margins before it could spread to rest of Bentley's body. Throughout this experience, I learned:



*Bentley on the ride home after surgery*

Ask questions and voice concerns. A good veterinary care team will welcome the opportunity to address them.

Scary health problems can occur, even at 16-weeks-old. Trust the recommendations of your veterinarian and stay strong for your pup.

My Golden Retriever never loses his smile and joyful spirit, even after a surgery that left him with a four-inch scar.



## BENCHS Partner - MNPAW

BENCHS belongs to a coalition of rescues and shelters called **MNPAW (Minnesota Partnership for Animal Welfare)**. Once a year members of this group gather together at AHS (Animal Humane Society of Minnesota) for the MNPAW Conference.. Topics of discussion included Finding the Right Volunteers, Compassion Fatigue, and Canine Brucellosis. MNPAW has been a great resource for BENCHS. It's great to be able to just send an email out to this group when we get stuck on a solution at the shelter. We have reached out for advice on a variety of things including what to do with hard to place dogs. Our relationship with RR Professional Dog Trainers stemmed from that conversation. If you would like to find out more about MNPAWs mission you may visit their website at [MNPAW.org](http://MNPAW.org).



BENCHS donors did indeed "Give to the Max" on Thursday, Nov. 17. When the board members arrived at the shelter at



pay medical expenses. Thank you so much to everyone that entered and voted!



## Vital Statistics

October Adoptions

Cats & Kittens - 33  
Dogs & Puppies - 23  
Total - 56



## Treasury Notes

### October Income Statement

Operations Income:  
\$16,064

Operations Expenses:  
\$25,551

Net Income (Loss):  
(\$9,487)



## Painless Giving

### [Amazon Smiles](#)

Are you an Amazon addict?  
Click the link above to register for Amazon Smile and 5% of your purchases will go to BENCHS

### [WoofTrax](#)

Add this app to your mobile phone, turn it on whenever you take a walk and BENCHS will receive a donation for every mile that you walk. Great for you, your dog and BENCHS.

10 am, we learned that the GiveMN site had crashed. Although a bare bones donation page was set up, we were not able to track the generosity of BENCHS donors as we had in other years. Instead, we tracked donations made through our website, delivered by the Post Office and dropped off in person at the shelter. Having donors share stories of why they support us, watching families meet and adopt a new pet into their family, and observing the flurry of activity around the shelter reminded us of the importance of BENCHS to the community.

The board set our goal for this event at \$50,000 - \$10,000 more than last year. Several donors agreed to match funds up to \$20,000 in donations received. As of Tuesday, Nov. 22, our total donations received totaled \$42,946, with just over \$10,000 donated through GiveMN. We ranked #48 in a group of non-profits whose budgets go as high as \$1 million. BENCHS is one of the smaller groups in the pool.

We are also delighted that 30 new families have made a choice to help support BENCHS financially. Donations continue to trickle in and we're hoping to announce on December 1 that we have reached our goal. If you haven't donated yet, there is still time. You may send a check to BENCHS - Glve to the Max, 1250 N. River Dr, Mankato or donate through our website. [www.benchs.org](http://www.benchs.org)

Thanks to everyone who made sure our message got out on Facebook, email blasts, postcards, and our website. And to our donors who not only share their money with us, but share our story of the great work that can be done when saving lives and creating families is your primary mission.

It feels like Christmas came to BENCHS a bit early this year!



## No One Is a Throw Away

by Terri Hanson

We found this box full of cats on our door step a few weeks ago. Because we are a no kill shelter, we create spots for all of our residents and commit to them until they are adopted. The problem is that legally we can only have a certain number of animals in our building. When we reach that



### [Apply to Volunteer](#)

#### **Dog Walkers**

Orientation Session at 3:30pm on dog walking days. All dog walkers are required to attend a session. Sign up for Dog Walker Training during orientation

#### **Front Desk Receptionist**

#### **Data Entry**

Work with staff to enter data into our ShelterManager database during animal intake.

#### **Cleaners**

#### **Yard Work, Snow Removal**

Check "Groundskeeping/Gardening" on the volunteer interest form



[Become a Member of BENCHS](#)

Membership - \$35 individual/family

#### [Kibble Klub Sustaining Membership](#)

Sustaining members begin at \$10 per month

#### [Special Funds](#)

Sponsor a Pet Spay/Neuter Fund  
Vet & Vaccine Fund

limit, we cannot take in any more and we simply have to say no or offer to put them on a waiting list. With the weather getting colder, more strays are arriving at Mankato impound. We have a commitment to take those animals that go unclaimed. Drop off boxes filled with animals like this leaves us with our hands tied, struggling and scrambling to create a space that we literally do not have.



If you need to surrender an animal, please do it the right way by making a call or writing an email [rps@hickorytech.net](mailto:rps@hickorytech.net) to set up an appointment. If we are full, we will give you other suggestions. Dropping off animals in boxes or leaving them tied to the doorstep is not safe. Please do NOT do this.



This is Pomegranate. Someone put her on the street to fend for herself and treated her like something that could be thrown away but we know that she is worth more than gold. When she arrived, her tongue was hanging out of her mouth and crust covered her lips. The vet had to remove 18 teeth because they were so badly decayed, leaving her with 4 remaining teeth. She comes to us with nothing: no name, no information, no vaccination records and no story. We just sit and wonder, how could someone just walk away from this sweet beautiful senior girl. What she did bring with her was a broken heart that has begun healing. It's dogs like this- which make me so thankful and humbled to work at BENCHS. These throw away dogs are made first priority and are never forgotten. They deserve and receive all of the hopes and dreams we can fathom as a BENCHS family.

If you, or someone you know is struggling or if there is an immediate emergency where you cannot keep your pet- please contact the shelters and rescues in your surrounding area. Please never put a pet in danger by "letting it go". There are so many horrific things that could have happened to her.

*Since Terri wrote this article Pomegranate has been adopted and is enjoying life with her new family.*

### [Make a Contribution](#)

Support the shelter with a donation or memorial



### **Waiting for a Home**

As the weather gets colder, the shelter continues to receive calls daily about homeless animals. Here are a few of our cats and dogs who would like the gift of a forever home for the holidays. To learn more our adoptable cats and dogs, visit [Petfinder](#).



Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society

Happily at home at 1250 North River Drive, Mankato, MN • 507.625.6373

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