



# COMPASSION IN ACTION



FALL  
2020

NEWSLETTER OF THE SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY

## DUCK TAILS

*With everything going on in the world right now, we thought you might need some levity, so we are offering up this tail — we mean tale — written by the SPCA’s Director of Admissions Amy Jaworski who is a NYS Peace Officer. The business of animal rescue can be emotionally and physically challenging and this memorable story shows how creative SPCA Agents must be to do their jobs! (By the way, Amy is now known as the Dave Barry of the SPCA!)*

**Picture it: Cazenovia Park, June 2020 ...**

While working a Monday night shift, Agent Maleskis and I received a call regarding eight domestic ducks that had been dumped in Cazenovia Park. (We knew they were domestic because they are not “native” to our environment and their survival in our changing climate would be questionable, and in many cases, impossible.) The ducks were in the water, near a bridge. Confident this wouldn’t be a problem, we headed to the park to assess the situation.

The ducks were located right where the caller said they’d be.

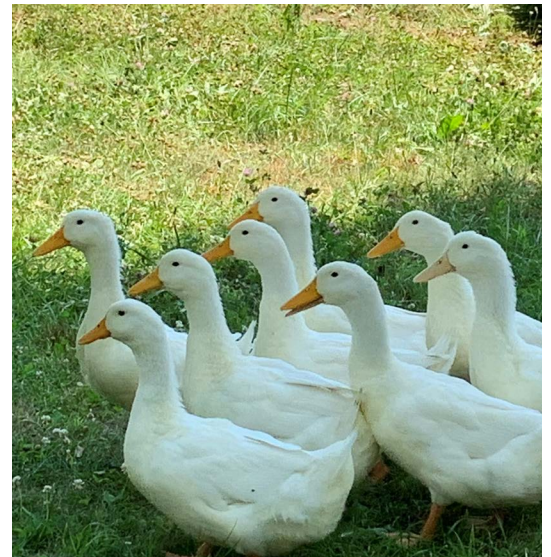
The ducks had no interest in surrendering, despite our most valiant attempt to convince them otherwise. We knew we would have to come back with some reinforcements ... and boats.

**A few days later, Agent Maleskis and I, along with Agents Robertson and Ivory, returned to try to convince the ducks they would be better off coming with us. Again, they were having none of our shenanigans. At this point, it was time to break out our secret weapons: two kayaks graciously donated to the SPCA for rescues just like this one!**

It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon, which guaranteed there would be plenty of witnesses to the calamity of errors that was about to take place. Eight uncooperative ducks, two kayakers, four uniformed agents, four nets, and three large carriers — what could go wrong?

The plan was hatched: Agents Ivory and Maleskis would enter the water in kayakers, corral the ducks, and push them toward the north bank, where Agent Robertson and I would be lying in wait to net them and safely secure them in carriers.

(continued on pages 4)





## FIND US

716-875-7360

YourSPCA.org

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Twitter: @YourSPCA

Instagram: @eriecountyspca

## HOURS AND LOCATIONS

300 Harlem Road,  
West Seneca, NY 14224

Please visit YourSPCA.org  
for current adoption hours.

The SPCA Serving Erie County  
is proud to be a Purina Shelter  
Champions Partner!



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## MISSION

At the SPCA Serving Erie County, our mission is to create a more humane community through education; rescuing, protecting, and enhancing the lives of animals; and nurturing the bond between animals and people.

*The SPCA Serving Erie County is not affiliated financially in any way with any other animal agency — including the Niagara County SPCA, the ASPCA, or any other humane society or animal welfare group. Our protocols, policies, and procedures are unique to this organization, a completely independent humane society that does not receive any city, county, state, or federal tax dollars. The important programs and services of the SPCA Serving Erie County are possible only due to the caring people and organizations that support us.*

# USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PETS

**BY GARY WILLOUGHBY, PRESIDENT & CEO**

In the world of adoptions, one common concern among staff and volunteers alike is how a pet will do in its new home. The SPCA does everything possible to shelter and care for homeless animals, addressing both their physical and mental health needs. However, at some point, a permanent home for that pet is needed.

Our organization was approached about a pilot project, the first of its kind, using smart phones, telehealth, and the great work of our staff and fourth-year veterinary students assigned here from Lincoln Memorial University-College of Veterinary Medicine (LMU-CVM). They will reach out to people who recently adopted cats from our organization to see how they are doing in their new homes.

Much of this work was conceived by our colleague Dr. Jane Brundt, a veterinarian who serves as the Executive Director for the CATalyst Council. The vision of the CATalyst Council is, "to raise the level of care and welfare of cats by cat owners — one that any owner will embrace through the human-animal bond and can achieve — supported by the highest quality veterinary care, preventative medicine, and cat specific products."



One of the many benefits of adopting a pet from the SPCA Serving Erie County is the free first physical exam offered by 64 participating Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society clinics located throughout Erie and Niagara Counties. Some adopters don't already have a relationship with a veterinarian and this partnership, along with the guidance from our staff, helps to facilitate this effort, so pets can receive the life-long care they need.

**During the virtual visit, the LMU-CVM student, supervised by the SPCA veterinarian, will:**

- 1. Determine the well-being of the cat**
- 2. Establish if the follow-up veterinarian visit has been scheduled**
- 3. Provide additional resources and recommendations to the owner**
- 4. Determine if there are additional cats in the home needing care**

While most animals in our care are only with us for a very short period of their life, our goal is to help provide a healthy and safe home environment for each pet and to be a resource for pet owners as needed. Assuring a relationship with an area veterinarian for the life of each pet is an important step in achieving this goal. In a future newsletter, we will let you know the impact of this pilot project. Thanks, as always, for your support of the programs and services we offer. Without that support, innovations like this one would be impossible.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

**Cruelty investigations is a tough part of our business. It was the driving force behind our industry, with the passing of Martin's Law of 1822 in London, England, and two years later the formation of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the first organization of its kind in the world.**

When our organization was founded 45 years later in Buffalo, the emphasis was the same, to bring laws and enforcement to help protect vulnerable animals while attempting to educate owners on proper care of their animals, large and small alike.

While much of this important work is stressful, sometimes dangerous, and emotionally taxing, it has its lighter side, when our team members answer unusual calls.

These calls may involve dropping the most petite person available down a storm drain to scoop up some ducklings who slipped through, or climbing up a very tall tree to rescue a cat who climbed up, but can't figure out how to get back down.

There was the time that a beagle ended up in a very small island on Cayuga Creek when the current was particularly fast. Concerned citizens called us and a couple of rescue boats were dispatched with our willing and able officers. The beagle howled at them, (as beagles do) and when they finally got close enough for their rescue efforts, the beagle jumped in the water and swam to shore and simply went home. He wasn't interested in a visit to the SPCA that day!

Then there is the time that our friends at WKBW Channel 7 became part of the story they were covering. Then Head of Cruelty, George May, went up with Sky 7 pilot Buckey Bucholtz to check on a deer that was stuck on ice at the Sturgeon Point Marina in Evans.

Buckey used the wind power of the helicopter's blades to move the poor deer to shore, while George tranquilized the deer from the helicopter so when they landed, he could carry the deer to an SPCA vehicle for safety. After a check by our team, the deer was released in a better area for her.

In the life of an Animal Cruelty Investigator, no two days are alike. In my time working with officers, I have found myself crawling under beds looking for cats, climbing in attics, lowering an officer down a storm drain, tracking an injured dog deep into the woods, helping get a male deer's antlers unstuck from a fence, trying to capture a goat who didn't want to be rescued, among so many other adventures that make this work unlike anything else.

**For 153 years some of Erie County's most adventurous and bravest men and women have put on the SPCA Serving Erie County uniform. They do whatever it takes to rescue animals in need and we are forever grateful for their dedication and to you as your support makes this work possible.**

**Gary Willoughby II**  
President & CEO



(continued from page 1)

Our plan quickly took a nosedive. (Or was it a swan dive? Eh ... different waterfowl.) The ducks were easily able to out-maneuver us because we were having difficulty with very shallow areas of the creek, where the kayaks were running aground. After fifteen frustrating minutes of aquatic duck-chasing, Agent Maleskis got out of her kayak and decided to continue the pursuit on foot, really putting our boot's "waterproof" declaration to the test. She was gaining on the ducks until she stepped off the Mariana Trench and ended up waist deep in Caz Creek!

After climbing back out of the water, catching her kayak, net, and paddle, she resumed the pursuit via self-propelled watercraft. (On a side note, our boots really do appear to be waterproof! The uniform pants, not so much.) It was time to re-evaluate our plan.

**After just a few minutes of implementing Plan 2.0, we realized this one had some promise. The ducks were driven towards the south shore and were close enough to net! After three giant strides, and one minor slip, I was able to net the first duck!**

While catching one duck at a time would ensure that we'd be there all day, we were happy to keep it up until all eight were safe and sound. This plan had promise. We missed a few times but were much closer than we were before.

It was right around this time that the ducks seemed to have hatched a plan of their own: STORM THE BEACHES! Seemingly without warning, the next time the kayaks drove them towards the shore, they all ran out of the water. All of them. At the same time. In different directions.

After quickly abandoning their kayaks, Agents Maleskis and Ivory took off into the shrubbery after the fleeing ducks. I was able to quickly net and secure two additional ducks.

And although I didn't find out until later, this was probably around the time I split my pants.

**Agent Robertson, in an unbelievable demonstration of agility and determination took the term "multi-tasking" to a whole new level. With a left leg on a kayak to keep it from floating away, a right leg pinning down the pole of a net to prevent a duck from escaping, a right hand holding on to another duck, and a left hand keeping his face out of the mud, Agent Robertson was fresh out of limbs to be able to do anything else. I secured the unnetted duck and grabbed the kayak, allowing him to focus on his new netted friend.**



Meanwhile, Agent Maleskis dove headfirst into the thick undergrowth to capture two of the three remaining ducks. The third took off and was not in sight. I took one of the ducks from her and began looking for the final duck, knowing that if he got away, his fate was probably not good. The duck I was holding was rather uncooperative, but I didn't have a carrier in close proximity, and we wanted to stay fresh on the heels (do ducks have heels?) of the escaping duck. At that moment, I looked up to see a long-time shelter volunteer, Cheryl Lindstrom, who just happened to be enjoying a leisurely stroll through Cazenovia Park. The exchange went something like this:

**Me: "Cheryl! Hi! So nice to see you!"**

**Cheryl: "Hey th—"**

**Me: "Here — hold this!"**

**I thrust the duck into her arms and took off before she had a chance to object.**

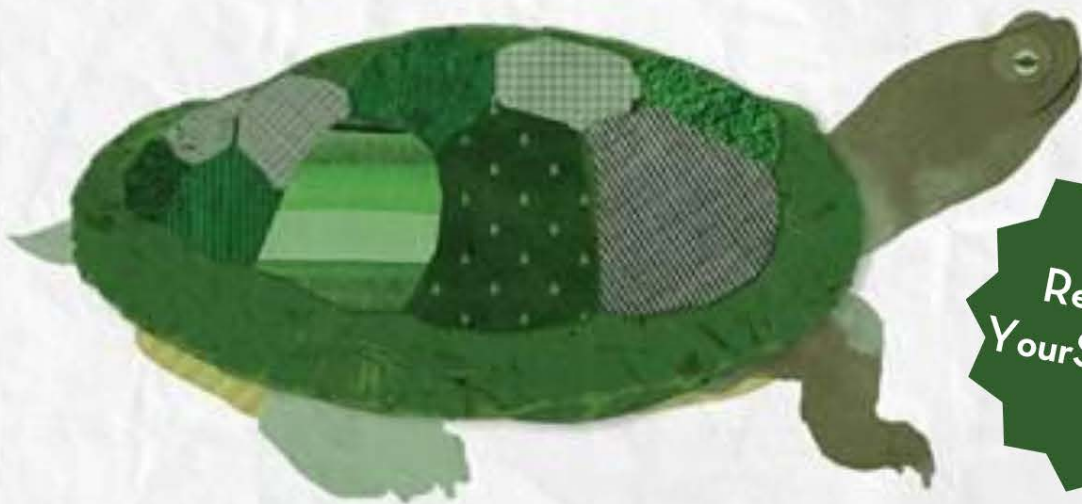
Agent Ivory was able to negotiate the surrender of the final duck. With all animals safe and accounted for, and all (well, most of) the agents no worse for wear, we headed back to the building to get the ducks set up in our Educational Farm.

**In the end, everyone was a winner! It's days like these that remind me of how lucky I am to work with such amazingly dedicated people, all while performing one of the most rewarding jobs on the planet. As for the ducks, they were held stray time and spoiled at our Educational farm and were all adopted together to a farm in Irving.**

On an ironic side note, the new owner claims the ducks want nothing to do with the pond on the property and prefer a baby pool instead.

# PAWS in the PARK <sup>2020</sup>

GO AT YOUR  
**OWN PACE,**  
FROM YOUR  
**OWN PLACE.**



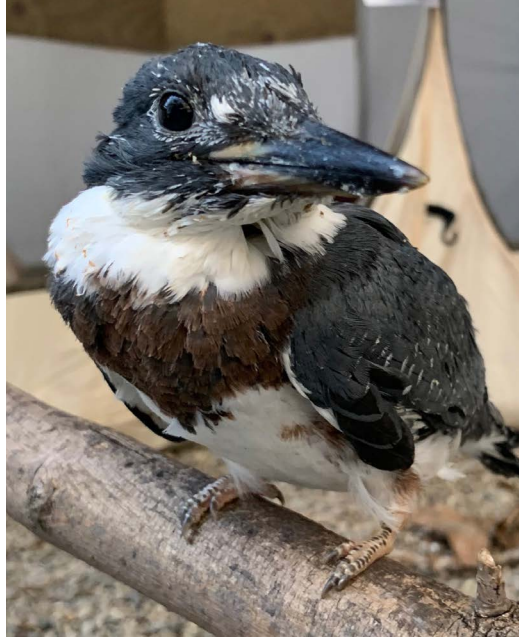
Register on  
[YourSPCA.org!](http://YourSPCA.org)

This year Paws in the Park is virtual and we want you to be part of the fun wherever you are!

For more information, please contact SPCA Events Coordinator Caitlin Fager at [caitlinf@yourspca.org](mailto:caitlinf@yourspca.org).

Thank you to our sponsors!





## WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT: UNIQUE ORPHAN LANDS AT THE SPCA

BY BARBARA HANEY, DIRECTOR OF THE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

**On June 25, the SPCA's Wildlife Department had a rare animal come in, a nestling Belted Kingfisher. We have had a handful of adult Belted Kingfishers admitted to our hospital, but we'd never had an orphaned nestling. This little gal was found in Springville. We knew she was a female because Kingfishers are sexually dimorphic, which means that the males and females look different from one another. In most birds that are sexually dimorphic, the male bird is more colorful than the female, but in the Kingfisher's case the female has an extra band of rust color on her white underside.**

Kingfishers are stocky birds, about robin-sized, and they have large heads and a shaggy crest on the top and back of the head and a straight, thick, pointed bill. They love to perch on the edge of waterways, creeks, streams, and lakes where they eat small fish by plunging into the water or hovering over the water and then plunging in after they catch sight of fish. They have a distinct cackling rattle call that our little lady exhibited from day one.

It has been a joy observing this Kingfisher mature before our very eyes. We kept her in an incubator the first few days and fed her smelt with calcium and vitamin B supplements every

45 to 60 minutes. Then we moved her to an outdoor enclosure and simulated what nature will eventually provide for her. Kingfishers make burrows in dirt near the edges of waterways, so we made hiding places for her. We introduced live minnows and mealworms while we continued to feed her smelt like her parents would every hour.

Later, we added higher perches to her aviary with makeshift ponds of live fish. We were still feeding her smelt by hand and we'd splash it in the water with hopes that she'd find her instinct to hunt. Our Wildlife Veterinarian Dr. Karen Slotte had been in contact with specialized wildlife veterinarians about this sensitive species, as we are always continuing our efforts to collaborate and learn in a concerted effort to return healthy wild animals back to their ecosystems! And in this case, we did it!! The Kingfisher was released July 31 by our Wildlife Veterinary Technician Jimmy! Watch video of the release at [YourSPCA.org/kingfisherrelease](https://www.yourspca.org/kingfisherrelease).

**We were completely awestruck by this very rare opportunity to watch the development of this rare species and, as always, the Wildlife Department continues to learn and pave the way in wildlife medicine, wildlife husbandry, and compassionate care for our wild friends!**

# THE SPCA: VIRTUALLY!

The very nature of the work that the SPCA does is very hands-on, so when COVID-19 tipped nearly everything upside down, several departments had no choice but to make alternative arrangements, which included a lot of online assistance.

## Special Events

Both of the SPCA's signature fundraising events, Wine and Wags and Paws in the Park, take place outdoors and it was heartbreaking to think of 2020 without them, but there weren't any other choices ... or were there?! The SPCA's Event Coordinator Caitlin Fager came up with some great alternatives! "In place of Wine and Wags, we hosted Fanimal, a virtual event that invited SPCA supporters to vote for their favorite team — Team Dog, Team Cat, or Team All Animals. Team All Animals triumphantly won, and I personally think that's only right!"

The SPCA's most beloved event, Paws in the Park, has gone the way of many walks, races, and marathons this year — totally virtual! Participants are encouraged to do the walk on their own time, using their own routes. See page 5 for more information.



## Summer Camps

Since moving into the new shelter in 2017, summers at the SPCA have been especially upbeat because of the children's laughter that would permeate the hallways during summer camps. Summer camps were not a viable option this year and the SPCA's Humane Educators put together different options. Parents could register their children for virtual camps which would meet over Zoom or purchase backpacks which had activities and lessons that kids could do at their own pace.

Director of Humane Education Christine Davis said, "It was definitely challenging having to change how we do everything, but we learned so much. The worst part was missing the kids and we hope we won't have to miss them again next year!"

## Foster Care and Veterinary Departments

When COVID-19 hit, the Veterinary and Foster Care Departments did a lot of research on telehealth and explored different options for a variety of scenarios. One of the first things that was done was to cease non-emergency visits to the shelter with their foster animals and instead use video calls to assess each situation.

An email account was created specifically to be used for the infirmary staff to communicate with SPCA foster parents and with new adopters if they had unexpected issues. Foster parents were encouraged to send video and pictures of any issues to this new email account. This allowed the veterinary technicians to confer with other veterinary technicians and/or remotely with a veterinarian regarding issues and questions. When feasible, an animal could be medically cleared for adoption using the pictures and videos, as well as conversations with the foster parents.

## Volunteer Department

In mid-March, the SPCA's Volunteer Services Department deactivated the volunteer database of 1,996 volunteers. This meant that perhaps for the first time in the SPCA's history, the SPCA worked without the help of our volunteers. Needless to say, each and every volunteer was sorely missed.

To reactivate volunteer's statuses and to inform volunteers of new policies and procedures put in place, virtual orientations were held. Director of Volunteers Services Kelly Deschamps said, "These virtual orientations will also be used for future volunteers who are just starting their time at the SPCA! Orientations are run multiple times per week via Zoom where volunteers can log in via video or phone call."

## Wildlife Department

Normally, when someone finds a sick, injured, or orphaned wild animal, they are encouraged to bring it to the SPCA's Wildlife Department to be assessed by staff and volunteers. "The beginning of March is the beginning of our busy season, so the timing was, at best, inconvenient," Director of the Wildlife Department Barbara Haney said. "We had to quickly develop ways that people could help wildlife with limited in-person contact with our department's staff. We encouraged people to call us with questions first before they touched the animal and brought it to us. And more than usual, we relied on smart phones. We asked people to take pictures or videos of the animal. In many cases, we could deduce from our conversation and pictures that the animal was fine and didn't need our intervention. It was a team effort and definitely a win-win!"

"We also used Facetime with Dr. Slote, our wildlife veterinarian, mostly when we were evaluating animals upon their admission. This method kept everyone safe and the animals still received the care they needed."

# ADOPTIONS



Ollie was adopted and finished recovering under the care and watchful eyes of Chelsey and Kevin!



Edward from Angola adopted Furby!



Potter the turtle went home to Buffalo with Jason and his son!



Zachary recognized a gem at the SPCA when he adopted Sapphire!



Lorence and Fiona were adopted by Holly and her daughter Nova!



Angelia and Malcom and their dog Eclipse agreed that Stella the Siberian was welcome to join their family!



Cleo went home to Clarence with cousins Ronny and Justin!



Yancheng from Buffalo welcomed Andy the kitten to his family!

## Shelter Guardians

Shelter Guardians are monthly donors who are incredibly important to the SPCA! These amazing people designate an amount that is automatically donated to the shelter each month. Their monthly, steady donations are the resources we depend on to give compassionate care to thousands of animals each year. Whether you can give \$50 or \$5 each month, it truly makes a difference!

Are you interested in becoming a Shelter Guardian?

There are many benefits:

- Provides a safe, secure way to donate every month.
- Choose the monthly amount that best suits you.
- You can cancel or change your donation at any time.
- Provides the domestic and wild animals at the SPCA with the care they need.
- 10% off every purchase at the SPCA's Petique.
- 10% off on every PawsWay purchase.
- Receive fewer mailings while still being informed about special shelter news and updates.

Enroll online at [YourSPCA.org/shelterguardians](https://YourSPCA.org/shelterguardians) or call Colleen at 716-875-7360 ext. 227.