



COMPASSION IN ACTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY

SUMMER 2022



FROM PRESIDENT & CEO CAITLIN DALY

As I was strolling with my dog on the first warm day I could remember in a while, something dawned on me. While I love the warm weather, it is also a crushing time of year for animal shelter employees. For anyone familiar with

The Wizard of Oz, my summer motto is, “Kittens and wildlife babies and parvo puppies, oh my!”

Every summer, our doors burst open and our seams pop with hundreds upon hundreds of un-weaned and eyes-still-closed kittens, puppies, bunnies, various bird species, and other wildlife babies. Our infirmary is filled with round-the-clock bottle feedings, breathing support apparatuses, fluid administration, and lifesaving care. While these animals in crisis need our building and the amazing people who work within it, some animals could be helped by community members and therefore save more room for the most critical and vulnerable cases.

Here are a few of the simplest ways that you can help us this Spring and Summer:

- 1. Don't kit-nap (or bunny-nap) babies!** Often, baby animals are alone because mom is off collecting food for herself and her young and she will return once the coast is clear. If babies seem well fed and are uninjured, mom is probably nearby and will return soon!
- 2. Hang onto a found animal!** The shelter itself is here to care for the sick, injured, and behaviorally struggling animals. Healthy stray animals are just as happy (happier, in fact) crashing on your couch for their stray hold period. We can provide you with all the supplies that you need, from food to medical care. This will allow us to hold shelter space for those who need us most!

- 3. Re-home owned or found pets utilizing Rehome (YourSPCA.org/rehome), Next Door, Facebook, AdoptAPet.com, or various other social media outlets.** Re-homing is a safe and effective practice to keep healthy and happy pets in the community while they wait to find their next family. We can provide support through supplies and best adoption practices any time you need us!
- 4. Ensure that your pets are microchipped and wearing a collar and tags!** If your animal ends up loose in the community or at our shelter, we want to be sure they have the very best chance of reuniting with you. This is possible through up-to-date microchip information and tags. You can buy some fancy collars and tags right here in our SPCA Petique!
- 5. Become a foster parent!** Okay, I buried the lead a bit with this one. Becoming a foster parent earns you hero status, and it saves valuable space within our shelter that we can use for the neediest animals. The best part about being a foster parent? If you fall in love, you get first dibs!

The SPCA Serving Erie County exists to support our community and the wonderful people — YOU included — and animals who live here. This summer, I am asking our community to link arms with us in the pursuit of housing and caring for the most vulnerable animals who need us. Together, we will achieve our vision of a community where all animals are treated with compassion and respect.

Thank you for helping us help them,

Cait

More information about our foster care program can be found on page 2 and information about what to do if you find a baby wild animal can be found on page 7.



FIND US

716-875-7360
YourSPCA.org
facebook.com/SPCAErieCounty
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.

FOSTER CARE 101



We did it! We got through winter! The temperatures are warming and there's sunlight again. Look outside and you might be able to spot those brave Buffalonians wearing shorts and t-shirts. For dog owners, there are the muddy, paw-printed floors, but that's a fine tradeoff for warmer days. All of these are wonderful signs of the great spring and summer seasons that are right on our horizon.

To reiterate what Cait said in her article — spring and summer are the busiest times at the SPCA and we need YOUR help to care for the animals in our community. One of the most impactful ways you can help is by becoming a foster home. It's easier than you think!

Every animal who goes into a foster home has a veterinary check, is given age-appropriate vaccinations and, if they're old enough, flea and tick repellent. The SPCA provides everything foster families need to ensure that their foster animals are well taken care of, including veterinary care, food, formula, blankets, towels, bottles, syringes, and more. All you need to do is provide the room, the time, and especially the love.

Ask any foster parent — it is **a lot** of fun to watch how the mom — whether she's a cat or a dog or a rat — takes care of her babies and it's even more fun watching the babies' progression from immobile little cuties to party animals!

There are many facets to the SPCA's Foster Care Department, and we'd like to offer this brief overview.

Traditional Foster Care

During the spring and summer, baby animals, and especially kittens, are brought to the SPCA when they are too young to be adopted. The SPCA also receives healthy mother cats with their babies and the occasional pregnant cat. These cats and kittens have either been found outside (see infograph on page five for more information on what to do if you're in this situation) or they're the result of an unplanned litter in a home. These cats and kittens need a place to stay for a few weeks or months while the



babies grow to be 2-pounds, at which time everyone can be spayed/neutered and available for adoption.

Sometimes, tiny, orphaned kittens are admitted to the SPCA. Foster families are needed to take care of these fragile little ones who we affectionately call bottle babies. It takes a lot of patience and time raising them, but it's an incredible feeling of accomplishment and love when they're thriving and ultimately adopted.

Throughout the year, and especially during the spring and summer, to help other animal shelters in our region and across the country, the SPCA receives transports, which include puppies and sometimes even pregnant dogs. For the most part, they are admitted under similar circumstances as the cats — they need a few weeks (or months depending on how old they are) before they're the appropriate size to be spayed/neutered and made available for adoption.

Fostering animals isn't restricted to just cats and dogs — there are opportunities to foster small animals like guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, rats, rabbits, geckos, birds, etc. We're always looking for new foster homes for these animals.

Foster parents are never in this endeavor alone. Foster parents have access to the Foster Care Department employees, which includes a veterinary technician. If a serious issue arises, the Foster Care Department works closely with the Veterinary Department and an appointment is made for the animal to see an SPCA veterinarian. There is also an after-hours number that foster parents can call during unexpected emergencies. Foster parents are also encouraged to use an app that is specifically made for them, and it serves as a weekly check-in, making sure the animals in the foster home are doing well. In most cases, this app can answer a lot of questions that come up in foster care situations.

Behavior Foster Care

Even though the SPCA tries hard to have every animal acclimate to shelter life, some will never have a smooth transition to living at the SPCA. With all the new and different experiences, including the various sounds, food, and people, the shelter can be an intimidating place. When an animal is having a tough time, SPCA staff depend on behavior foster homes to help care for these frightened animals. Equipped with a personalized behavior plan created by the SPCA's Behavior team, a journal to record progress, and a check-up date, foster parents take on the responsibility of helping the animal feel more secure.

Because the shelter is a frightening place to these animals, some of them can be adopted right from the foster home so they never have to come back to the SPCA. Other animals, after they've had time to decompress from shelter living and re-establish their feelings of security, can be brought back to the

shelter to be adopted. Foster families work directly with the Behavior Department to determine which is the best situation for each animal.

The SPCA's Foster Care Department introduced a new way for shy cats to enjoy extra attention in a program called Shadow Cats. The program allows shy cats to benefit from the opportunity to live in temporary, caring homes. Cat participants in the program may not be as outgoing as many of the animals who come into the SPCA. These cats will spend two weeks or more in a foster home to enhance their confidence in people and comfort in a social setting.



Medical Foster Care

When an animal is sick and needs time to recuperate, the SPCA's Veterinary Team works in conjunction with the Foster Care team to find a home for the animal to finish recovery. The animal may be prescribed cage rest due to an intensive surgery or may need a few days on medication before the SPCA's veterinarian can re-check him/her. Medical foster animals go to their foster homes with specific recovery instructions from SPCA veterinarians, their medications, support from the Veterinary Team, and there are even video instructions available online for specific treatments.

Foster Benefits

Every foster family has first dibs to adopt any of their foster animals! When a foster family adopts one of their foster animals, we call it a foster win, because it is! And good news — the same goes for foster families' families and friends. If your family or friends meet your foster animal, fall in love, and they want to add him/her to their family — they can!

Foster families have a new incredible option — the ability to adopt their foster animals right from their homes. Because foster parents know their foster animals better than anyone else, they can personally introduce their animals to potential adopters and a trip to the SPCA isn't necessary for adopters. The SPCA Adoptions team takes care of the pre-adoption interview and then it's up to the foster family to introduce the animal to their potential new family. Everything is done online (using email) and the system is incredibly easy to navigate and use.

There are more exciting initiatives coming down the foster care pipeline and we'd love to have you join our foster care ranks! Please visit YourSPCA.org/fostercare for more information, including a foster care application, or call the Foster Care Department directly at 716-875-7360 ext. 216.

MORE MUTTFIA MAGIC!

BY SPCA CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER GINA LATTUCA

Bills Muttfia worked its magic once again during the '21-'22 Buffalo Bills season!

For the second year in a row, the Buffalo Bills' General Manager Brandon Beane and his wife, Hayley, sponsored the Bills Muttfia program at the SPCA Serving Erie County!

All season long, for every home game touchdown scored by the Buffalo Bills, the Beanes paid the adoption fee of one or, in the case of bonded animals, two SPCA animals.

Dogs, cats, small animals, birds, reptiles, even farm animals were drafted into the Bills Muttfia the day after game day and announced on the SPCA's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. Hayley shared all the posts with her online audience, and very often, the rookie draft was shared by popular groups the Bills Mafia, Bills Mafia Babes, Buffalo Bills Reddit, and several local media outlets!

"Brandon and I were so excited to sponsor another season of Bills Muttfia!" says Hayley. "We love rescues and have two [rescue dogs] of our own. Plus, it is heartwarming and inspiring to see the wonderful work done by the SPCA Serving Erie County."

At the time of this writing, 45 animals found their new homes this season as part of the Bills Muttfia program, including personable Teapot the turtle (who was with the SPCA a record 193 days!), friendly felines Sam and Nellie (not far behind Teapot, living with us 166 days!), and Sherman the guinea pig (whose last name is now Beane!). That's 45 homes made

better — at least 45 lives changed — thanks to the Beane family and their Bills Muttfia program!

The Bills Muttfia program, conceived by the Beanes, picked up where Hauschpups left off two years ago.

During the NFL's '20-'21 season, the Beanes, staunch supporters of pet adoption and owners of two rescue dogs (Bodie and Peanut) along with two guinea pigs (former Bills Muttfia rookie Sherman and new addition Percy), immediately jumped at the chance to reimagine a program originated by former Bills kicker Stephen Hauschka and his wife, Lindsey, who paid the adoption fee of one dog, or "Hauschpup," for every home field goal kicked.

Bills Muttfia met the goal originated by Hauschpups: help the SPCA Serving Erie County place animals with loving families more quickly.

"I think adopting is so important because you have shelters that are just full," added Hayley, who has since joined the SPCA Board of Directors.

The entire SPCA Serving Erie County family thanks the Beanes for giving our animals the best and biggest treats of all: new families to love them!

For more on Bills Muttfia, visit YourSPCA.org/BillsMuttfia.



Hayley Beane with the family's guinea pig Sherman on his adoption day.

Wine & Wags & BREWS!

Wednesday, June 15 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Join us for this one-of-a-kind social event with your dog! Spend the evening sipping distinctive drink samples from local wineries and breweries and tasting incredible food samples prepared by local restaurants, bakeries, and food trucks. Browse the pet-themed exhibitors, plus participate in exciting raffles - all to benefit the animals at the SPCA! Dogs are welcome, but not required to join the fun!

Tickets: \$45 pre-sale / \$55 at the door / VIP tickets: \$75

For more information about the event, or to purchase tickets, visit YourSPCA.org or call 716-875-7360 ext. 230.

(Human) attendees must be 21 and older to attend.

Thank you to
our sponsors!

REGENT
Development & Construction



YOU FOUND KITTENS! NOW WHAT?

START HERE

Are they ill or injured?

YES

Call **716-875-7360, ext. 214**
to speak with an
Dispatch employee.

NO

ESTIMATE THE AGE OF THE KITTENS



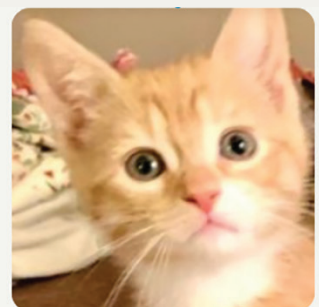
0-2 weeks
Kittens' eyes
are closed or
barely open



2-4 weeks
Eyes are open
and alert;
becoming mobile



4-6 weeks
Very mobile and
playful; can
eat food



8+ weeks
Very active and
playful: weigh
2+ pounds



CAN YOU SEE THE MOM CAT OR A NEST?

YES

NO

DO NOT KIT-NAP

A kitten's best chance for survival is with mom. If you want to help, make sure mom has access to shelter, food, and water.

ARE YOU SURE?

Mom may be off hunting or not want to come around if people are nearby. Watch for her to come back in a few hours. Pro-tip: Leave a ring of flour around the kittens. Check in a few hours to see if you see mom's footsteps!

FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE

Please call Admissions at **716-875-7360 ext. 0**. Please also visit our list of cat rescue organizations at bit.ly/wnycatrescues.

MOM CAME BACK

STILL NO MOM

ADOPTION PHOTOS



Noah and Molly from West Seneca adopted Cajun!



Ethan from Buffalo adopted Charlie Brown!



Steven took Rex home!



Jessica adopted Jeremiah!



Latrisha from Buffalo adopted Plum!



Dominique adopted St. Nick and Hotch!



Milkshake was adopted by Laura, Calvin, and Madison of Corfu!



Caryn from Tonawanda adopted Bert and Ernie the gerbils!

SPRINGTIME IN THE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

BY SPCA DIRECTOR OF WILDLIFE BARBARA HANEY

Every year, the Wildlife Department looks forward to spring and the richness of flora and fauna that emerges after the long winter slumber. With each year that we are open and servicing the community, we get more and more concerned citizens who call us about a variety of subjects and we are always happy to help them navigate living in harmony with our wild animal friends. We can help to assess the condition of wildlife that may be in your yard or help make suggestions for how to make your yard more hospitable for wildlife or how to discourage wildlife from choosing your yard as their habitat. How marvelous is it to just be curious about the fauna in our area?

Springtime brings babies. Oftentimes people will find babies and wonder what to do. Here are some tips for some of the more common babies that are found. Always keep in mind that baby animals are BEST with Mom!

There's a long-held myth that touching baby animals makes their mother reject them. This is untrue. Birds have a horrible sense of smell and would hardly notice if a human put a baby back in its nest. Mammals, like cottontail rabbits and squirrels, are fantastic mothers and their urge to take care of their young far outweighs the scent of humans. Any baby animal's best chance for survival is when it's cared for by its mother.

What do you do when you find a baby animal? First, try to unite it with its mother. Although we care for hundreds of orphaned baby animals per year, we know that we are second best. We want to ensure that we aren't kidnapping babies from their very capable mothers.



Squirrels: Squirrels have babies in the spring and in the fall. Consider NOT cutting down trees that house squirrels during these times. After a windy day, sometimes squirrels can be blown out of their nests in trees. If you find a baby squirrel, check for

injury. Is there blood, an obvious broken bone, or is the squirrel cold, wet, and crying? If so, please call us. If not, check nearby for a tree that may house their nest and remember that squirrels always have a back-up nest too, especially if the nest itself is damaged. Put the squirrel in an open box with a heat source (hot water bottle) and leave it at the base of the tree and wait. Allow six or so daylight hours for the mother to retrieve the squirrel. This means leaving the baby squirrel alone. If after that time the mother has not retrieved the squirrel, please bring the baby to us. But, feel free to call us for support in reuniting squirrels with their mothers. It is always such a joy when we

can prevent baby squirrels from coming in and reunite them with their mothers instead!



Cottontail Rabbits:

Cottontail rabbits often make nests in yards of houses. It will appear as if the mother is nowhere to be found. Because cottontails are crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and a prey species, the

mothers come to feed them twice per day and we rarely see them. It may appear that the babies do not have a mother, but more than likely they do. If you're concerned that a mother isn't attending her babies, you can lay dental floss or string in a tic-tack-toe pattern over the nest and check back after dawn or dusk to see if the mother disturbed the nest while feeding her babies. If the babies are quiet and in the nest, they are most likely being taken care of by their mother. Leave them be. If you have any questions, please call us.



Nestling and Fledgling Birds:

Baby birds come in two varieties: Nestlings, that are sparsely feathered and cannot flit, hop, or bounce around, and fledglings that are feathered but still have a bit of fluff and are capable of flitting about with toes

that can grip a branch. Fledglings are birds that have recently left their nest but are just learning the skills of being an independent bird. They may not fly very well but their parents are nearby. These birds can be placed up in the branches of trees or bushes to keep them from predators, but they don't need to be "rescued." Nestlings need to be placed back in their nests, if possible. If the nest has been destroyed and this is not possible, they can be placed in a nest-like container capable of draining water and put back in the tree near where the nest was originally found. The parents will likely take care of the nestling. We are happy to support these efforts to keep the baby birds with their parents and welcome calls to help suggest ways of accomplishing this. If it appears that the nestling is truly orphaned, please call us.

As good stewards, we must try to reunite babies with their parents, but if this isn't possible, we're lucky in WNY to have a Wildlife Department as part of our SPCA where we can help the animals and help the people who want to care for them.

The Wildlife Department is available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 716-875-7360 ext. 247.



LEAVE A LEGACY OF COMPASSION

Let your love of animals become your legacy and help sustain the operations of the SPCA for years to come by including the SPCA in your estate plans.

A bequest is one of the easiest and most impactful ways to support the SPCA's mission. Legacy giving options include:

- Wills
- Trusts
- Charitable gift annuities
- Life insurance policies
- Real estate and personal property
- Retirement benefits

For more information, visit YourSPCA.org/donate/planned-giving, or contact Jennifer Gurz, Chief Development Officer, at 716-875-7360 ext. 219 or jenniferg@yoursPCA.org.

SHELTER GUARDIANS

Shelter Guardians are monthly donors who are so incredibly important to the work we do at 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 \$5 or \$50 each month, it truly makes a difference!

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.



Are you interested in becoming a Shelter Guardian?

Enroll online at YourSPCA.org/shelterguardians or call Colleen at **716-875-7360 ext. 227**.