

THE Latham Letter

VOLUME XLIV, NUMBER 4

Fall 2023

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION



IN GRATITUDE TO VOLUNTEERS *HOLDING THE REIN*

Cover Story pp 6-10



THE LINK IN MILITARY FAMILIES pp 11-13

HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTIONS pp 14-22

MEDIA REVIEWS & NEWS pp 23-24

MANDATE

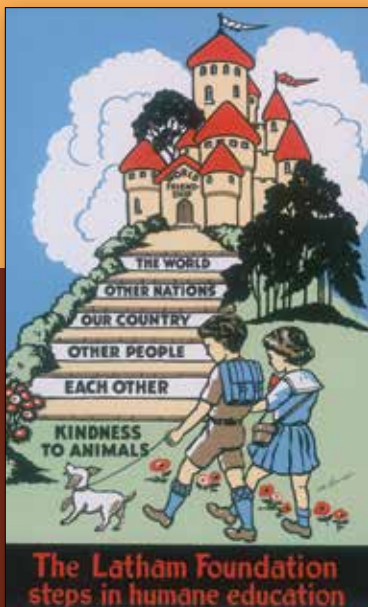
Edith Latham's **MANDATE:**

"To promote, foster,
encourage and
further the
principles of
humaneness,
kindness and
benevolence to
all living creatures."



WELCOME BACK, BROTHER BUZZ!

Brother Buzz, star of Latham's
Brother Buzz films and our former
Spokesbee, marks the end of articles.



The Latham Letter

Balanced perspectives on humane issues and activities

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Promotion of Humane Education

The Latham Letter

Volume XLIV, Number 4, Fall 2023

**BALANCED PERSPECTIVES ON
HUMANE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**



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Hugh H. Tebault, President

are able to amplify their work ability by having volunteers who see the same benefit of purpose and who are able to take time to help.

The American national motto is E Pluribus Unum -- out of many, one. As I shared in the [Fall 2005 Latham Letter](#), the motto of America was adopted in 1776 to bring together the 13 colonies into a single group. This common identity for America focused the many people toward the shared goals of the Declaration of Independence then published and the Constitution adopted in 1787. This can also describe how employees and [volunteers](#) from different backgrounds can successfully work together toward a shared goal to improve their community.

A key to success for you as the leader of a department or organization is to reach out and promote your humane education goals and the specific goals your organization has for the community. It doesn't matter whether you are a local shelter, local adoption agency, an animal therapy organization, or a historic museum. This publicity and outreach will encourage your employee and volunteer base. It makes public to your community the

VOLUNTEERS, ONE KEY TO SUCCESS

In working to help our communities, there is often never enough time in the day or dollars in the budget to do everything. Just like in our own household budgets, we work to stretch every dollar.

Many organizations

message that your team is open to new members and works together to improve your community.

In America, we are committed to the Constitution being applied equally to all citizens. In our own business we need to manage that relationship to ensure we also apply that commitment every day.

I was honored several years ago to be part of a review committee for a national horse therapy organization to read and vote on the "best horse," "best volunteer," "best staff" stories that were submitted from the several regions. Reading the stories of the animals and people, many of whom were rescued from abuse, working together so successfully to help each other was inspiring. I know that you have stories to tell as well that will inspire others in your community to step forward and volunteer.

In this issue of The Latham Letter, we share examples of how volunteers participate and make a difference in the success of many organizations. Hopefully these stories will inspire you to look at your organization to see if there are areas that might be improved -- areas that might encourage the staff and volunteers.

It is my hope that each and every reader can benefit from the examples included in this issue, and that you

will share them with others at your work or in your community, so that together we can help improve the success from which we all benefit. May you each enjoy success and the pride of accomplishment it brings -- showing respect for one another by working together toward common goals. 🐾





SAVE THE DATE

April 24th-26th 2024

IT'S YOUR TIME TO SHINE!

If you did not receive a Latham Humane Education grant but would like us to consider featuring your wonderful humane program here, or you have an article you'd like to submit, please contact: Editor@latham.org.

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING AN ORIGINAL HUMANE EDUCATION PIONEER

There is probably no one in APHE's current membership who was working in humane ed -- or possibly even alive -- when Jeanne Werner was doing this work at the Tacoma-Pierce County Humane Society in Washington State. She was my mentor when I joined the ranks of humane ed back in 1973 with the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region in Colorado. At that time we were two of the only six full-time humane educators in the U.S. -- and our responsibilities also included community publicity programs as well. Jeannie, as we all knew and loved her, went on to break the glass ceiling and became one of the first female CEOs of an animal shelter, where she continued to lead T-PCHS into exciting new areas of animal care and control.

Among her many creative ideas was when T-PCHS hosted an American Humane Association conference back in the 1980s: she asked participants to send in a t-shirt from their organization, which she had mounted on styrofoam torso hangers suspended from the ceiling in the vendors' exhibit hall. It made for quite

a colorful display, livened up the trade show booths, and more importantly showed a lot of organizations that often fought with each other over ridiculous turf wars and philosophical battles how much we all have in common.

Jeannie passed away on Nov. 5 at the age of 89. There's an online obituary at www.legacy.com. The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement has also honored her legacy. Memorial contributions may be sent to what's now known as the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County. Her gentle spirit, fun-loving attitude and professional dedication will be missed. As we said on several trips together to her beloved Hawai'i, Alooooooooooooo-HA! Jeannie. -Phil Arkow 🐾





WILD HEARTS, GENTLED SOULS

PART 1, HOLDING THE REIN

As a filmmaker and creative director for the Latham Foundation for over 20 years, I have had the privilege of visiting, interviewing, and filming at some extraordinary places that celebrate the human-animal bond in different ways. I have learned that one can't really truly know how a program 'works' unless physically within the facility, experiencing that particular environment -- observing, participating, asking questions, and getting to know the people and animals individually. In my view, it just cannot be done via a zoom meeting or even a written article.

And yet, I now feel compelled to use all my creative tools to help tell the real stories of some of my outstanding visits. Hopefully this interactive experiment will allow the reader/viewer to travel through with me via words, video, sound

and stills that will bring it into focus.

Wild Hearts, Gentled Souls is a program located at the Wild Hearts Equine Therapeutic Center in Seneca, South Carolina, a recipient of Latham's 2023-24 grant awards. It is also known as Hoppin' Horse Farm. In my hunt to find humane education in action, I responded to their invitation to come visit. I was planning to visit my family in North Carolina, so I thought, why not?

As I turned the corner in my rental car at the



Continued on next page



Wild Hearts Way sign, the experience began. On this peaceful country road on a cold, overcast day, I saw an charming small country home (that was actually offices), old-fashioned simple wood fences here and there, an open corral and a few scattered healthy-looking horses spaced far apart around rolling hills. Later, I found out they have eight different pastures at Hoppin' Horse Farm. As a big city girl, I would describe the surrounding sounds as quiet-peaceful with an occasional few happy birds and a breeze.

From their grant application, I knew that Wild Hearts uses recognized equine therapies for a variety of people and reasons. One in particular is for combat veterans. What struck my interest was the great variety of ways they use humane education in their programs. All but one of the 44 horses were rescued and rehabilitated. Most have had difficult pasts – very relatable to their clients. They base their activities not only on the safety standards of [PATH International](#), but also on the principles of [Trust-Based Relational Intervention](#)®.

INSIDE VOLUNTEER TRAINING

My first stop was the training/office space with attached corral. I was struck by the extraordinary way the volunteers were trained to help – from mucking you-know-what to assisting in equine therapy activities. I was there for Week Two of a six-week training course. Even though I knew a bit about how equine therapy works, the calm I felt and the insights I learned by actually experiencing the training was so helpful for my own personal grief journey. I wished I could have stayed for the whole process, and then maybe I

would have learned more about the therapy that incorporated the [Polyvagal Theory \(PVT\)](#).

First on the agenda were some of Wild Hearts' guiding principles:

- “We share a sacred place with our clients, regardless of age or capability.”
- “We don't use horses.” ([see video](#)) In explaining that words make a difference, Janine Hartley, Director of Operations, explains how they partner with horses.
- “Resist the temptation to ‘fix’ people, horses, and uncomfortable situations.” This made me feel comfortable inserting myself into



Continued on next page



Facilitator and trainer explains all the principles from the binder.

all that was happening there that day – not just to gain academic knowledge but also to participate freely with a group of dedicated strangers - their volunteers.

MINDFULNESS

Above the facilitator (see picture) is a sign that says it all: Mindfulness. On her lap is a binder of each week of their six-week training sessions for the potential and very necessary volunteers. The feeling in the class, along with the words and energy from the facilitator, made me realize

that a ‘sanctuary’ is not just a cozy spa or a safe zone, but an attitude and a wisdom that is shared with respect to all.

“Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you’re sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imag-

ery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.” -Mayo Clinic

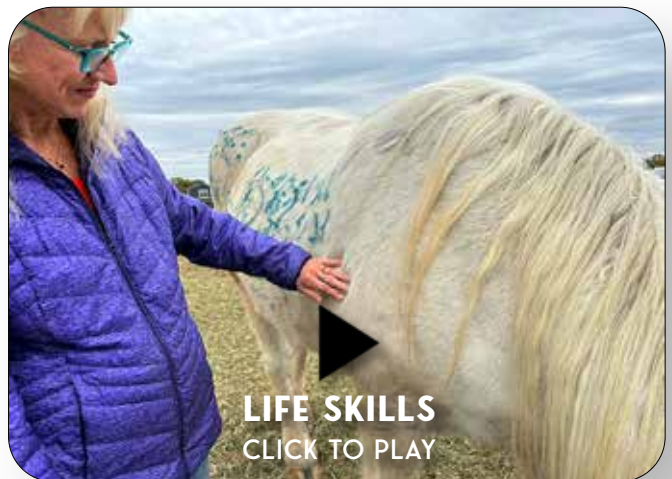
It was not a holier-than-thou lecture or a bunch of psychobabble words, but a gentle sense of humor and a feeling that we were all in this together. The instructors were being humane to the volunteers by reminding them that no one is perfect – to accept mistakes they would probably make.

Learning how to be mindful was a bit of a challenge at first, particularly for me being in a brand new situation and not there for the same reason as the volunteers. The group leader talked about how there are always choices for both humans and animals, and we all need to take ownership so that we can heal.

LIFE SKILLS

[*\(video\)*](#)

It never occurred to me that being empathetic was a life skill or that it could be learned. All these nuggets of inspiration were giving the volunteers more tools to use in conjunction with their behavior around both clients and horses. An added bonus – it would also work in their everyday life.



LIFE SKILLS
CLICK TO PLAY

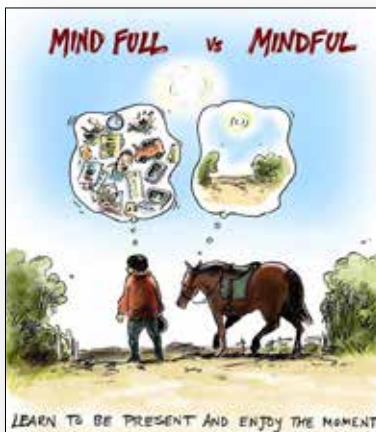


INTRO TO REAL HORSES 101

“True horsemanship is developed in the mindful quality of everything we do—not just in the quality of everything we do with our horses.” Mark Rashid.

As I looked through the training lessons’ binder, I could see that it was a great guide of all one needs to know about horses -- horse parts, names of horses, breeds, saddles, ropes, maps, gates, all things safety and how to be confident around horses and people in therapy – all very fact based. Did you know horses constantly ask two questions: Am I safe? and What are we doing?

But it also



had tips for processing your emotions (i.e. as someone witnesses your therapy). There are grounding and breathing exercises; silence; holding space. The latter refers to the science behind the mythical human-animal bond – holding space is a real thing. All the information in the binder led to healing all around for those involved in any way.

And finally the binder instructions come to real life with how to kindly bring a horse out of pasture and back in again.

It is an amazing way to spread humane education, but more was needed to conduct successful equine therapy.

BE PRESENT

The first step – being there. Back to the concept of mindfulness and keeping track of your own thoughts of what you are doing with the horse, maintaining your presence means not getting distracted. Don’t think about things like grocery lists, what your child is doing after school or a previous conversation. Just concentrate on what you are doing right now with the horse. This is as simple as: We are walking to the barn.

BE A HORSE

I was lucky enough to not only observe but to participate in the actual physical training. Practicing leading with no words ([see video](#)) is done first with other humans so that we can comprehend what the horse is understanding



from us. Easier said than done! But it makes sense now that you and others near you need to practice calming your mind.

I was the horse, and my partner was my leader. The ‘leaders’ were taken aside and each was asked to come up with a task or path they wanted the ‘horse-human’ to achieve. She could only use two words to guide me to do exactly

Continued on next page

where she wanted me to go: Yes and No. I had no clue - nor did the rest of the 'horses.' An apparent fun game of trial and error actually made us be in the moment so we would not miss a direction. Understanding the internal communication of a horse, using body language, processing emotions, noticing the diminished sensation in your body ... all so you can get back to calm grazing. (I was able to see/recognize this later when I observed a veteran calming his equine partner in the same way.)



GUARDIANS OF THE SPACE!

CLICK TO PLAY

practiced approaching an actual horse and calmly, kindly, haltering it. Finally, they were 'guardians of the space.' When I went back to the lesson from the manual, and was reminded that this actually refers to the science behind the human-animal bond, I realized I had experienced 'holding space' in action. You can experience it too!

is intense and long, but so very important. It takes a lot of commitment and heart. It takes very special humans – and horses – to make equine therapy work wonders. What a gift they give to us and the world.



HOW TO LEAD

CLICK TO PLAY

The next step was How to be a Leader. ([see video](#)) To lead so herd members choose to follow involves being a guardian of the space. Our human/horse practice continued as one practiced holding the lead and the other being the stubborn horse. I was good at that! Then we switched roles. By doing the physical activity, it now made sense to me that I'm not pulling or being pulled but leading and being led – holding the lead.

Once that was mastered, I went back behind the camera and the volunteers

STRAIGHT FROM A VOLUNTEER'S MOUTH

I now see how very important a well-trained partner is, not only in helping the horse but also in becoming a meaningful partner in the actual therapy process – even if the volunteer's job that day is just to be the guardian of the space. The volunteer training



Founder Jessica Fry talks about challenges & joys for horses, clients and volunteers:

I will miss the future and final requirement for volunteers: to spend five hours observing and five hours doing. I could continue observing the beauty and humanness here for days. I didn't have to search too hard. I truly found humane education existing in many ways from the moment I drove onto Hoppin' Horse Farm.

I wish I was there now. I wish we all were! 🐾



WHY VOLUNTEER?

CLICK TO PLAY

THE LINK IN MILITARY FAMILIES

PART 1: INCREASED RISKS OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL ABUSE IN MILITARY HOUSEHOLDS

By Phil Arkow, President & Secretary,
the National Link Coalition

- *A series of well-publicized scandals about U.S. military personnel experiencing sexual assault and their reluctance to report their superior officers led to public outcry and numerous investigations. The allegations were found to be quite serious:*
- *15% of female veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan screened positive for military sexual trauma.*
- *A Pentagon survey found that 26,000 women and men were sexually assaulted in one year, but only 13% of cases were reported.*
- *52% of active service members who reported sexual assault had experienced professional, promotional, social or administrative retaliation.*
- *Women veterans who are subjected to sexual and physical assault are more likely to have chronic health issues and significantly lower quality of life more than 10 years after completing active duty.*
- *A 2011 report found that women in the U.S. military were more likely to be raped by fellow soldiers than they were to be killed in combat.*

These troubling statistics led to military installations providing victim services resources for service members experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual assault. Commanders became sensitized to the dynamics and impacts of IPV in order to lessen secondary victimization of women and provide a greater social support system for women who experience IPV in the military.

Responses have included the Family Advocacy Program on military installations to connect service members with a victim advocate or get help with child abuse and neglect, domestic abuse and

problematic sexual behavior in children and youth. The military's responses continue to evolve; most recently, President Joe Biden on July 28, 2023 signed an Executive Order changing procedures in

from military commanders to independent military prosecutors who are outside the victims' chain of command.

While addressing these serious issues of interpersonal violence, the military – like so many other public institutions – neglected to consider interspecies violence, and how incidents of animal abuse are often harbingers of acts of violence against people.

The National Link Coalition has been

active for many years in attempting to address this gap and sensitize military personnel to the significance of animal



the Manual for Courts-Martial to move responsibility for handling crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse away

Continued on next page

abuse and its Links to human violence. These Link issues are often exacerbated by the dynamics of military families' lives. Unique factors in military life make female spouses of service members, as well as women in the armed services, particularly isolated and "soft targets":

- The military calls spouses "dependents" – they literally depend on the male service member for housing, health care, insurance, money, and a social life.

- Frequent relocations make long-term social connections difficult.

- Most IPV offenders, military and civilian, are young men; in the military, they tend to be in the lower ranks.

- Military courts and protection orders may exist only at the base commander's discretion; not all bases have them.

- Many spouses are afraid to report due to possible impact on his career, pay and rank.

- There may be language and cultural barriers with military brides who may not speak English.

- IPV offenders have military-honed capacity and training for violence and familiarity with and access to firearms.

- Frequent combat deployments increase the risk of the returning service member experiencing traumas and difficulty in readjusting to normal routines of family and relationships away from the intense camaraderie and tension of combat.

THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND IN THE MILITARY

Military families' relationships with companion animals are similar to civilian populations. Unfortunately, our knowledge of these issues is severely limited, as only a handful of studies over the past 40 years have examined the status of pets in military households.

Tom Catanzaro reported in 1984 that 93.3% of military families had pets when they were growing up, and 99% felt their children should have pets. 66% of families visited a civilian or base veterinarian at least twice a year. 34.5% celebrate their pets' birthdays. The primary reasons for not currently having pets were housing limitations and the costs involved with transporting them during relocations. Even so, 72% of families would take their pets with them if transferred stateside, and 49% would do so if going overseas.



Catanzaro also reported that the emotional security offered by pets was significantly greater for military families compared to their civilian counterparts. More than two-thirds of military families said their pets were important while the spouse was absent, when they felt lonely or depressed, and as companions for themselves and their children. While 39% said having a pet would restrict their

travel and freedom, 70% said pets offered happiness and fun, 63% said they created a sense of responsibility, and 51% said pets increased the time that families spent together.

Lynn Anderson reported that 96% of families who had to

Continued on next page

leave pets behind when they were transferred experienced at least one family member expressing temporary or chronic sadness.

This sadness can have significant consequences for military morale as well as family members' emotional health. Perry Chumley and colleagues reported in 1993 that service members or their families may experience emotional trauma when separated from their pets; this may lead to family problems, poor adaptation to new environments and animosity toward the military service.

"Pets offer companionship, an outlet for affection, security, and constancy for families. It is reasonable to suspect that these attributes become intensified when the military service member must leave the spouse for extended periods," they wrote.



In a 1998 study of interpersonal and animal-related trauma experienced by veterans, it was found, not surprisingly, that military families experience higher rates of exposure to trauma, physical and sexual abuse, and PTSD than civilians. But military families were similar to civilians in their


exposure to the loss of a special pet, being frightened or hurt by an animal, witnessing or perpetrating violence against animals, and having sexual interactions with animals.

In Part 2 of this series, we will examine various responses to these dynamics by the military and other organizations.

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from May through September, MC escaped the sun's harsh rays by hiding in a drainage pipe or under the mammoth cardboard compactor. The grinding sounds that squished and squashed dozens of boxes each day didn't seem to bother her. The clatter was part of her existence. Occasionally, she rested on the gravel scattered in and around the small enclosed yard where we walk dogs. MC's fur was dirty and sticky and she looked haggard from her lengthy outdoor life.

TRIBUTE TO MC ALSO KNOWN AS THE MALL CAT

By Debra J. White

For the past fifteen years, or so the story goes, a scruffy gray and white cat (MC) lived near the rear entrance to the Chandler Fashion Center in Chandler, AZ. The shopping center has more than 180 upscale retailers. How she arrived so long ago is unclear. Recently, I learned that MC had died. She left this world peacefully, surrounded by people who cared.

At least twice a week, I volunteer at the mall adoption store operated by the Arizona Animal Welfare League (AAWL), once the sight of a former puppy store that closed over ten years ago. I had ample time to learn about MC.

The mall was the only place MC ever called home for so many years. That all changed last

summer when a shelter volunteer trapped and transported MC to a local animal sanctuary. For the first time in ages, she had a bath and a medical exam. Not surprisingly, MC was dehydrated and partially deaf from living near a large cardboard compactor. MC finally used a scratching post, lived in a comfortable environment and even started to make friends.

In the blistering Phoenix summers that stretch

Few mall patrons or employees knew she existed. MC was largely invisible to the steady stream of truck drivers who parked at the loading dock to deliver merchandise to mall stores. Hardly any employees entering or leaving work through the back entrance caught a glimpse of MC. Even some volunteers didn't know about MC.



Continued on next page



I started volunteering at the mall store in 2014. One day, I had a dog out in the yard for exercise and noticed a white and gray cat hustle by. Up until then, I'd never met or heard of MC. Once I returned to the store, with the dog in tow, I inquired about the mysterious cat outside.

"Are we missing a cat?" I asked. "I saw one outside."

"That's the mall cat," a worker said. "She's been here like forever."

"How does she survive?" I asked.

"People leave out food and water," the worker said. "Too bad she's not social, she'd be a candidate for adoption."

MC's handful of friends always provided regular provisions. Food

and water seemed like it was barely enough but it was the best we had to offer. At least MC had protection, albeit crude, from the sun and rain as well as regular nourishment. That's more than many other homeless cats have. Also, she avoided the danger of being harmed by neighborhood thugs. Mall security makes the rounds, inside and out, 24/7. Someone had trapped MC years ago and she was spayed. At least there were no kittens.

I always rejoiced when one of our shelter cats was adopted. I hoped the new owners would adhere to the adoption agreement they signed by keeping the new cat indoors where it's safer.



Outdoor cats are prone to disease, car accidents, and to fights with other animals. They live shorter lives than indoor cats. MC surprised us all. She lived much longer than many outdoor cats.

After an adoption, I cleaned out the cat's cage. Leftover cat food was served to MC. Otherwise, it was ditched. Why? Sanitary and health reasons. On my shifts, I also treated MC to whatever donated canned food we had on the shelves. She seemed to enjoy the special treatment.

Why shouldn't she? She was homeless for years, not having her own scratching post, fake mice to play with or a comfy bed to sleep on.

Several times I've found MC resting near or even in the yard, the enclosed area where we take dogs out for bathroom breaks and exercise. As I approached slowly, MC darted off as soon as I neared.



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I was never able to touch her. She did, however, recognize my voice. She meowed when I held a can of cat food.

Sometimes, when I filled up MC's dish with snacks, I wondered about the mama cat's previous life. Before she delivered kittens at the mall, did she have an

owner? Did she live indoors with a litter box? Was she fussy about the kind of litter she used? Did she like the no-clump kind? Or maybe she didn't care?

Was she fed premium cat food or did she eat bargain brand? Did she have

her nails trimmed? See a veterinarian on a routine basis? Did mama cat greet her owner

when she came home from work with a soft purr? I wonder what broke the human/feline bond. Was mama cat allowed in the yard and wandered away? Was she abandoned on purpose? Or was she too born to a homeless cat without enjoying the benefits of life indoors or the love of a human companion.

I'll never know.

MC is one of about 500,000 homeless cats in Maricopa County scraping by on the streets. They forage for food to quell the hunger pains in their bellies. To quench their thirst, they drink from dirty puddles. To escape the scorching sun or the summer torrential downpours, they hide under cars. If they're not sterilized, they reproduce and bring in more cats like MC to the world. In many cases, kind caring people leave out food and trap them for sterilization. Some localities like the town of Gilbert forbid, by law, the feeding and even the trapping of homeless cats. The cycle of misery continues.

Last summer, a shelter vol-



unteer trapped MC and brought her to a cat sanctuary to live out her remaining years. She rested comfortably on soft beds,

had access to a scratching post and never spent another day in the scorching heat. Bravo to all the people who cared for MC. She was one special cat.

Part of me choked up hearing the recent news that MC had died. Her death meant something to me and those who cared for her. She may have been nobody's cat but she was loved by many. 🐾





THE JOY OF PETS:

HOW ANIMAL COMPANIONSHIP CAN IMPACT OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Walking a dog, playing with a cat, stroking a rabbit or watching fish swimming – all pets bring us joy. But did you know that animal companionship can also benefit our health and wellbeing? It's actually good for us to spend time around animals of all shapes and sizes. We explore why in this guide.

HOW POPULAR ARE PETS?

It's increasingly common to

own a pet. According to the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA), it is estimated that 59% of UK households had a pet in 2021, up from 45% in 2018.

THE 10 MOST POPULAR PETS LAST YEAR WERE:

Cats and dogs are the most popular pets by some way. But whether you have a furry, feather or scaled friend in your home, it's likely they make you feel better.

According to the 2022 PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report:

- 94% of pet owners said that owning a pet makes them happy
- 84% of pet owners said that owning a pet improves their mental health
- 84% of pet owners said that owning a pet makes them less lonely
- 65% of pet owners said that owning a pet improves their physical health

WHY ARE PETS GOOD FOR US?

Most pet owners are clear about the immediate joys that come with sharing their lives with companion animals, but what's the reasoning behind it? We take a closer look.

THE IMPACT ON WELLBEING:

- Stroking dogs, cats, or other pets can elevate levels of serotonin and dopamine, which

Pet	Population in millions	% of households
Dogs	12	33%
Cats	12	27%
Rabbits	1.1	2%
Indoor birds	1.3	2%
Guinea pigs	0.8	1.2%
Domestic fowl	1.2	1.1%
Hamsters	0.6	1.7%
Tortoises and turtles	0.4	1%
Snakes	0.4	0.8%
Lizards	0.4	0.7%



make us feel good and relaxed. Serotonin is a chemical that carries messages between nerve cells in the brain and throughout your body, and it's believed to act as a mood stabilizer.

- Dopamine is another important brain chemical that influences your mood, particularly around feelings of reward and motivation. Spending time with animals can reduce stress levels. In fact, dog owners can have lower blood pressure than non-owners, which may be due to the fact dog owners tend to go on walks, according to some older research.

THE IMPACT ON PHYSICAL HEALTH

Pets are a great stimulus for healthy exercise, which can substantially boost your mood and improve your cardiovascular fitness levels.

- Pets promote positive social interactions. Most pets are a great talking point, but dog owners in particular will often stop and talk to each other on walks.

- Pets provide structure and routine. Pets need a regular feeding, care and exercise schedule. Having a consistent routine keeps an animal balanced and calm, but it has benefits for owners too. It's a motivation to stick to a routine and gives you a reason to get out of bed to feed, exercise, and care for your pets.

More than anything, our pets become our friends. They comfort us when we're feeling our worst and make us laugh with joy in our happiest moments. Not only do they boost our mood and improve our health, an incredible bond is formed between pets and their families. There are some ad-

ditional benefits felt by the youngest and oldest owners, though, which we explore further below.

FURTHER BENEFITS OF PETS FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Pets can also play an important role in child development, including supporting with:

CONFIDENCE

Pets are non-judgmental. They offer unconditional love, are great listeners and won't criticise. This can be helpful for the self-confidence of kids, especially if they feel isolated or misunderstood, which can happen throughout childhood.

SOCIAL SKILLS

When it comes to social skills, kids can learn a lot from their pets. Dogs, in particular, are known for their ability to build bonds with people. They provide unconditional acceptance, which can be very reassuring for kids who are shy or feeling insecure. And when kids witness their pets behaving calmly in different situations – whether it's meeting new people or going to the vet – they learn how to model that behavior themselves. Pets can teach kids a lot about how to interact with the world around them.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Not only can caring for a pet help children develop a sense of ownership and pride, they also offer an opportunity for children to learn about responsibility and empathy. Through daily caretaking

Continued on next page



activities like feeding, walking, and playing games, kids learn the importance of responsibility and patience.

FAMILY TIME

A pet can give a family a chance to spend more quality time together, as well as having a shared interest to talk about and bond over.

ANIMALS CAN BOOST IMMUNITY

Pets can lower our risk of developing allergies. In particular, dog exposure in early life has been associated with lowering the risk for subsequent allergies when children get older.

FURTHER BENEFITS OF PETS FOR OLDER INDIVIDUALS

While the joy of owning a pet doesn't change with age, there are some benefits which older people may enjoy more:

COMPANIONSHIP

As people age, they may find themselves living a more solitary

life. Their friends and family members may have moved away or passed away, so caring for an animal can provide much-needed companionship. This companionship can come in a range of shapes and sizes, depending on what type of lifestyle someone can offer.

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT BOTH PET OWNERS AND NON-PET OWNERS:

- Agree interaction that pets can help reduce loneliness (85% of respondents)
- Agree human-pet interactions can help address social isolation (76%)
- Believe human-animal interaction is good for their community (72%)

If you are a senior individual and living on your own, you can find useful tips on home safety, accessibility options, types of independent

housing, managing finances for peace of mind via our guide on independent living for seniors.

ROUTINE AND PURPOSE

A pet can also provide a sense of purpose, as they rely on their owner for care and attention. Most animals tend to thrive on a routine, being exercised and fed at similar times each day so it gives a structure to your day. In return for all of this care, pets can provide unconditional love and affection.

GENTLE EXERCISE

As we've mentioned earlier, pets can keep you active. Having an animal that encourages exercise and playfulness is useful at any age, but can be more important to have encouragement as you get older. Dogs especially can give their owners an excuse to get outside for a walk each day.

DECIDING WHETHER TO GET A PET

Although pets can bring a lot of joy into our lives, they're a big commitment. The amount of time and effort involved with different animals may vary, but owning any pet is hard work. According to the PAW report, 30% of pet





owners said that owning a pet is hard work and 16% said it makes them stressed. Pet ownership is a big responsibility. You do have to invest time, energy and money into your animals. So, deciding to get a pet should be a decision you take your time over. Think about:

- **How much time you have.** Certain pets, such as dogs, will need a lot more of your time – to exercise them and keep them company, for example. In addition, all pets need the opportunity to play, and time to be set aside for them to be groomed and cared for.

- **How much space you have.** Do you have the room to accommodate a pet and all of its belongings? Hamsters, rabbits and guinea pigs may seem small, for example, but the right size cages and runs can take up a lot of space.

Most free-roaming pets need their own space to retreat to as well.

- **The type of home environment you can offer.** You also need to think about your current lifestyle and whether a pet fits into that – for example, whether you have a family, your working arrangements, your priorities in your free time and so on. Think into the future too as that may influence what animal may suit.

- **Your budget.** It's important to investigate not only the up-front costs of owning a pet, but factor in costs of looking after the animal – such as food, vet bills, pet insurance, and so on.

Your thoughts about each of these points may steer you towards different pets or you may decide to wait until your lifestyle changes.

OTHER WAYS TO SPEND MORE TIME AROUND ANIMALS

If you don't think a pet is right for you at the moment, that's OK. There are plenty of other ways you can benefit from spending time with other pets or animals. They include:

OFFER OUR TIME TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY WITH PETS

A lot of people with pets would love you to spend time with them. Whether that's joining them on a dog walk or volunteering to house sit and look after their small furries while they're on holiday, you'll definitely be helping them out – while enjoying your own time around pets.

If you don't have any friends or family with pets, try volunteering with The Cinnamon Trust. It's a charity which helps older individuals or anyone with a health condition or disability that means they can't walk their dog as easily anymore.

VOLUNTEER AT ANIMAL CHARITIES

Animal charities are regularly looking for volunteers to help. You'll find charities of all shapes and sizes, including those who focus on specific animals or even breeds. Start your search locally to see what opportunities are available.

Expect to get your hands dirty, though. Charities may need support

Continued on next page



in all areas of animal care - including exercise, cleaning up after them, grooming, feeding and so on. Ask about the time commitment required and decide whether you can help.

VISIT RESPONSIBLE ZOOS, RESERVES OR ANIMAL PARKS

If you'd like to see animals you rarely get a chance to, zoos and animal parks are a great place to visit. It's just important to visit and support responsible places. In other words, zoos focused on conservation efforts, wildlife education, and other efforts to encourage appropriate interaction and responsible behaviors with wild animals.

IN THE UK

If you're looking for a fun day out that the whole family can enjoy, why not visit one of the UK's

many zoos, reserves or animal parks? With so many amazing places to choose from, it can be hard to know where to start. Here are just a few:

- **London Zoo.** London Zoo is one of the oldest and most famous zoos in the world. Home to over 16,000 animals, it's the perfect place to learn about wildlife from all over the globe.

- **Highland Wildlife Park.** Set in the stunning Cairngorms National Park, the park is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including European bison, Przewalski's horses, and Scottish Wildcats. Visitors can also enjoy a range of activities, such as ranger-led walks and talks, safari rides, and hands-on experiences with some of the resident animals.

- **Knowsley Safari Park.** How about getting up close and personal with some wildlife? Here,

you can drive through the park to see some of the animals in their habitats – many will come up close or you may even get a monkey jump on your car.

AROUND THE WORLD

- **San Diego Zoo, California.** This zoo is home to more than 3,700 animals, representing over 650 species. In addition to educational exhibits, the zoo offers opportunities to feed and pet some of the resident animals.

- **Kruger National Park, South Africa.** One of the largest game reserves in the world, visitors can explore the park on foot, by car, or even by hot air balloon. With over 500 bird species and a significant number of mammals, including lions, elephants, and rhinos, Kruger National Park is a must-see for any animal lover.

- **Sydney Zoo, Australia.** With over 350 species of animals, the zoo offers something for everyone. The zoo is also home to a variety of unique exhibits, such as the Nocturnal House, where creatures that are only active at night live. Educational programs and events also run throughout the year, making it a great place to learn about wildlife and conservation.

- **Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, Japan.** Considered one of the biggest and best aquariums in the world, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is home to over 75,000 marine animals, including whale sharks, manta rays, and sea turtles. The aquarium also features a unique coral breeding program that is helping to preserve this vital ecosystem.

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TAKE PART IN ANIMAL ACTIVITIES

Have you ever wanted to try something new? New unique animal experiences often crop up and offer fun ways of connecting with animals. Some of the best include:

DOG YOGA

Yoga with dogs is a great way to spend time around animals and benefit from their calming presence. Dogs are natural yoga partners because they're non-judgmental and are always present in the moment. They also provide gentle pressure and warmth, which can help to relax the muscles and ease tension. Plus, dogs are always happy to cuddle.

FALCONRY EXPERIENCES

Falconry experiences are a great way to benefit from spending time around animals. Not only do you get to spend time in the company of these magnificent creatures, but you also get to learn about their care and training. Falconry experiences offer a unique opportunity to connect with nature and appreciate the beauty of the animal kingdom.

ALPACA WALKS

Alpacas are sure to put a smile on your face – they're friendly, gentle and curious by nature. These South American natives are typically used to being around people, so they make great walking

companions. Being around alpacas can help reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure, and improve mental well-being. Walking an alpaca is also a great way to get some fresh air and exercise. And, of course, it's simply fun.

HORSE RIDING

Riding helps to develop balance, coordination, and muscle strength, and can also be a great way to relieve stress. Horses are social creatures, and spending time with them can help to reduce anxiety and improve moods. In addition, horses require regular grooming and

exercise, which can provide an opportunity for bonding. Whether you're an experienced equestrian or a complete beginner, horse riding is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and the company of these wonderful animals.

FARM EXPERIENCES

Visiting a farm and spending time with animals can be a very enjoyable experience. Farms offer a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and to relax in a more natural setting. And, of course, there's the opportunity to spend time with or care for animals such as chickens, pigs, sheep, cows and more. 🐔

A NEW FRIEND FOR LIFE

BY ERIK FRIEDL

“An indispensable primer for the benefit of both child and pet.”

A New Friend for Life is being made available for the first time on Amazon. This 18-minute DVD is an ideal primer for the younger set (K-4) on responsible pet care and offers young viewers complete and up-to-date informa-

The film was produced by Erik Friedl for The Anti-Cruelty Society and is available for \$19.95 on

Amazon.com . www.amazon.com/ (scroll down to 3rd video).



tion on welcoming a new pet into the family.

Included are segments on caring for pets in winter, microchip identification and the dangers facing stray animals.

The program helps children and their families consider their commitment before adopting a pet, then explains how to introduce their pet to a new home, how to keep it clean, safe and healthy, and why spaying or neutering one's pet is so important.

Teacher's recommendation:

“As an educator, parent and animal lover, I would have to recommend this delightful, informative program to any family with children who are considering adopting a dog or cat into the family. An indispensable primer for the benefit of both child and pet.” 🐾





We would love to know your thoughts on this issue's articles.

If you would like to share your own anecdote, story, photo, or artwork relating to one of the Latham's steps to Humane Education, we would love to see it (and possibly publish it in

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Interested in Writing for the Latham Letter?

The editors welcome manuscripts relevant to the Foundation's interests and mission but reserve the right to publish such manuscripts at their discretion. The Latham Foundation promotes respect for all life through education; The Latham Letter, which has been published for more than 40 years, presents balanced views on humane issues and activities throughout the world. We are particularly interested in articles that will appeal to the Letter's diverse readership. Subscribers include animal welfare and social service professionals, veterinarians, university students, and individuals interested in humane education, the human-companion animal bond, animal-assisted or animal-facilitated therapy and interventions, and the connection between animal abuse and other forms of violence.

Submissions should be between 500 to 2,000 words and e-mailed as an attached Microsoft Word document with a brief cover letter explaining your submission. The cover letter should include authors' names in publishing order and the name, address, telephone (home and work) and the e-mail addresses for the corresponding (submitting) author.

Photographs, tables, figures and other related graphics such as an organization's logo are encouraged. Photographs should be properly labeled with credit and captions and submitted either as high resolution files or as originals, which will be scanned (and returned if requested). Please include copies of all signed releases.

Tables and figures should be submitted as separate files in their original format.

Please do not integrate them into the electronic text.

Submissions should conclude with a brief biographical paragraph about the author(s) including preferred contact information.

The ultimate decision regarding the appropriateness and acceptance for publication lies with the Latham Foundation. All accepted manuscripts are subject to editing for space and to conform to the Associated Press Stylebook.

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TO WINTER



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