

# House with a Heart

15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter – 2021



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**Special Thanks** to our Volunteers, Donors, and  **IRONMARK** for making this newsletter possible!

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If you wish to receive our occasional email newsletters and follow what is happening at HWAH, please join our email list via our website. We do not sell our email lists, and you may opt out anytime.

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## Greetings from Sher

Flash back to early 2006, my husband Joe was sitting at the table and I was standing at the kitchen sink. I was fired up and determined that I wanted to start a Sanctuary for senior and special needs pets, and I was ready to do whatever it took to convince my dear husband that this was something he **WOULD** support. I was all ready to give my reasons and rationale and he just smiled and said, "Let's do it!" And so a wonderful idea was launched – House with a Heart Senior Pet Sanctuary!

So, we **DID IT!** And now 15 years later – even though my Joe is no longer with us – so many who gathered around when I needed them to help me to "keep on keeping on" are here to share with you our Annual Newsletter. I am pleased to report we are still going strong. With the help of dedicated volunteers and **YOUR** support, this venture has been a rousing success. We have given love and care to well over 300 senior and special needs dogs and cats here at the Sanctuary and helped to find loving homes for countless others through our Safety Net.

We have been blessed beyond belief and felt compelled to start several new programs over the past few years in order to help even more senior and special needs pets. With your support, we established our K-9 and Kitty Medical Miracles Program and now provide medical grants for at least 20 pets each year. Our newest project, the Feed Fido and Fluffy-HWAH Pet Pantry, was born out of our desire to help families feed their pets during the first year of the pandemic and has continued on. We now provide pet food and supplies to senior citizens and their companions who live on a fixed-income in subsidized housing in our county. Even that program has grown and we are able to offer food and supplies on a regular basis to partner rescues.

As the years have rolled by we have been fortunate to be able to reach out beyond our own doors and make a difference in our community. Thanks to your help, a husband and wife's dream in a kitchen on a Sunday morning has grown, flourished and taken on wings of its own to help make a positive impact for so many. **LOVE LIVES HERE** and **KINDNESS COUNTS** and it is all possible because of our dedicated volunteers and **YOU!**

*Sher Polvinale*

# K9 & Kitty Medical Miracles



20

Pets Saved  
Jan-Oct 2021



23

Rescue Partners  
Across the U.S.



Bella, before and after

**This year, we provided 20 Medical Grants that helped to move some wonderful dogs and cats from being left behind to being loved. Here are the lucky pets who received a second chance in 2021 because of our K-9 & Kitty Medical Miracles Fund.**

## Double Success!

### K9 & Kitty Medical Miracles & Buster's Buddies

Our K9 & Kitty Medical Miracles program continues to thrive – Thanks To You! We are providing medical grants to Rescue Partners who save senior dogs and cats from shelters or owner give ups.



**Buster's Buddies**

And our Buster's Buddies program helps other rescue groups by providing a home at HWAH for hospice dogs that need a quiet, safe place to live out the rest of their lives. These pups are not HWAH residents, they still belong to their rescue group.

Bella, a pup who came to HWAH through MASTER Rescue when her owner could no longer afford her medical care, is a recent success story of these programs.

Poor Bella was a mess. She was terribly matted and missing hair on her belly and her legs. She was skeletal as a result of being so underweight, and her toenails turned around to pierce her paw pads. We cried often as we took care of her, trying to make her comfortable and to relieve her pain and help her to gain weight. Bella was quiet and so sweet and accepted the medicated baths and small meals we provided several times a day.

We thought surely this little dog would be with us as a hospice case for the rest of her life, but sweet Bella had other ideas! Over the next few weeks she gained almost two pounds per week, her hair began to grow back in, her energy level increased, and her bubbly Westie personality began to show itself.

Within a few months, Bella looked like a healthy happy dog with lots of pep in her step, and MASTER Rescue decided that Bella was well enough to find a loving Forever Home. It didn't take long for the rescue to find an incredible family in New York who had recently lost their beloved Westie and wanted to rescue another senior. Soon, Bella was on her way to her new home... We cried as we waved goodbye, but this time they were happy tears.

Caring Heart  
Rescue

Frederick Friends  
of Our County

Gray Face Acres

Healing Hearts  
Animal Group

House with  
a Heart

Jack Russell  
Terrier Rescue

Leashes End



Samatha



Tuxedo



Frostie



Leo



Ziggy



Lady



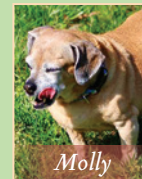
Garrus



Dotti



Minnie



Molly



ANNIVERSARY  
HWAH

2006



7/10: Officially designated a Non For Profit – Excitement and Butterflies as we opened the envelope to discover that we had been awarded our 501C3 Status!

2009



7/19: Joined Facebook – Signed up for Facebook totally unaware that one day we would have over 50,000 Followers and climbing!  
<https://www.facebook.com/HousewithaHeart>

2009



11/7: Our founder, Sher Polvinale, was awarded Montgomery County Humane Society's "Humanitarian of the Year" at the MCHS Love Ball.





Elvis in the delivery wagon



Sarah Miller and doggies at HWAH



Pat & Mark Freedman



Pat & Mark delivering pet food and supplies



## Pet Pantry Update from Sara Miller



Kirby chows down on beef and brown rice, Raleigh craves Milk Bones, old Lucy walks away if she doesn't have Tidy Cat, and Cody sits-up for duck or lamb pate... These are just a few of my buddies at the senior subsidized apartment building where I deliver pet food for the HWAH Pet Pantry program.

I have been a volunteer with HWAH for almost two years. When the Pet Pantry program started during the COVID pandemic in April of 2020 to help people who had trouble providing for their pets – I hopped on board.

Once a month, I pull my red wagon full of requested pet food and supplies into the senior apartment building where I'm greeted by a dozen dogs and their owners. Mercifully, the cats stay in their apartments!

Not only do I bring food, treats, and supplies, but I also give lots of head scratches and belly rubs, chat with owners, celebrate holidays, and share in the sadness when a beloved pet crosses the Rainbow Bridge.

As with any volunteer work at HWAH, the reward is in knowing you're helping a pet struggle a little less so they can love a little more.

On a personal note, my little doggie Elvis recently crossed the Rainbow Bridge, but even though he's not riding shotgun anymore, he's there with me in spirit, as I pull my red wagon loaded with food and treats for Kirby, Raleigh, Lucy, Cody, and all of their neighbors.

## Meet Volunteers Pat & Mark Freedman

We first learned about House with a Heart in 2009 when looking for short-term care for our rescue poodle Bandit. A few years later, we both started volunteering at HWAH. Pat provided administrative help and also took care of the resident cats. Her role has gradually expanded to include responding to donation offers and handling donations of food and other supplies. Pat enjoys providing care to the resident and foster cats, and especially loves drawing out fearful or shy foster cats and helping them get socialized.



Mark helps design, build, troubleshoot, and repair lots of things at HWAH. His first project was a 2014 survey of the back lawn to find the best location for an emergency evacuation shed, and to plan the layout of its shelves and kennels. Later, he built several awnings over the back patios to give the pups more shade, built ramps and walkways to make it easier for them to get around, installed screen doors for the kitties, and enclosed the second-floor hallway with clear plastic panels. His latest project is creating and maintaining the Sanctuary's aquarium. Mark likes taking Joie for walks, and especially loves when the Sanctuary pups gather round to "supervise" him and his work!



## LOVE LIVES HERE!

In the season for gratitude, we continue to be warmed by the love and care from each and every one of you who share and support our mission of providing a "Helping Hand" for senior and special needs pets. We are so grateful to be celebrating our 15th year with a look back at a few special memories.



My husband / HWAH Co-Founder Joe Polvinale with some of our first pups: Big Red, Buddy and Spirit.



Snow of 2010: One of our dogs walked across a snow drift and hid under my car in the driveway. I was home alone and had to dig a trail out to the car to get her!



The day terrified Tammy Two Too snuggled in Pam's arms.



Dr. Neville was our Vet. She came in with her Mobile Van almost every week.



In 2013, when the volunteers gave me the gift of Joie after my Dolly passed away.



Getting ready to feed the pups is always my special moment everyday.

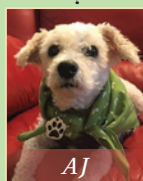


The day that Sally picked Frances to be her very own Forever Foster Mom!

### LOVEPAWS



Olive



AJ



Simba



Sissy



Skylar



Bella



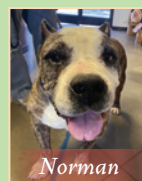
Dixie



Cleo



Remie



Norman

### MASTER Rescue

### Pet Connect Rescue

### Strength of Shadow Dog Rescue

2013



11/14: Our 5th Annual Open House – Volunteers, Visitors and HWAH Residents enjoyed a day full of love, laughter and great food.

2015



5/1: A National Geographic video featured HWAH went viral – We were so excited that NGS put together an amazing video for us.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8zqW2txy8g>

2016



4/16: 10th Anniversary Bash at HWAH – Video tributes recorded by HWAH volunteers and a beautiful plaque honoring Sher's husband Joe made this an event to remember!

2017



6/1: Established the K9 & Kitty Medical Miracles Fund – We started this program with high hopes and the support of our followers. It has become our legacy program, and will continue to help senior and special needs pets.

# "Going for the Gold" Annual Calendar Cover Contest



[July 2021] Our HWAH Olympics "Going for the Gold" contest featured Sanctuary residents and forever fosters competing for not only a gold medal, but also to be the cover model for our 2022 calendar. Canine athletes Marco, Russell and Monroe participated in the virtual contest and the three-day competition was fierce!

Marvelous Marco won the gold medal, and he's so proud to be the calendar cover model. Thanks to YOUR generous donations made during the contest, we also raised funds to help care for our senior and special needs dogs and cats.

## Meet HWAH Resident – Piper!

Piper's lucky number must be SIX! She is now 6 years old, and when she came to HWAH, she was 6 months and 6 pounds! She was not thriving and her vet recommended euthanasia. Piper's owner just couldn't take that step and asked us to accept her into hospice care, and to love her for as long as she had left. Piper was lethargic and barely moving, a truly sad little pup.

Our dear vet Dr. Neville was intrigued with her case and was determined to save her, and Piper became one of Dr. Neville and HWAH's success stories. With wonderful medical care and the love of everyone at HWAH, Piper began to improve, and now she is our sweet bouncy beagle.

Piper still needs to have quarterly ultra-sounds and plenty of medications to keep her liver disease under control, but once this little pup experienced all the love and care at the Sanctuary, she became another testament to Love Lives Here at HWAH. Piper is animated, spirited and lively and when she is not bouncing around, she is snuggling and giving licks and LOVE.

Last year, Piper won our first Calendar Cover contest, but she hasn't let that go to her head.



2019



3/28: Published our first book – SENIOR DOGS: Tongues & Tales, Featuring the Residents of HWAH.  
<https://www.blurb.com/b/9377230-senior-dogs-tongues-and-tales>

2020

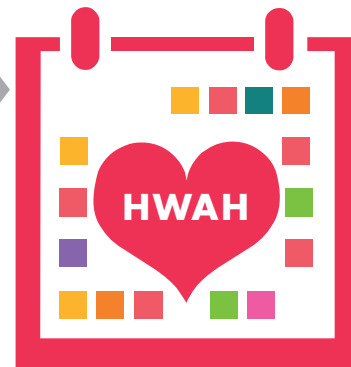


5/1: Started the HWAH Pet Pantry – from a need that arose during the Covid Pandemic the Pet Pantry has become an ongoing program that helps seniors and folks in need to care for their pets.

2021



3/1: Our newest "helping hand" HWAH Foster Hospice – Loving a dog or cat at the end of its life can be heartwarming and heartbreaking, but it is always worth it.





## House with a Heart Pet Sanctuary

6409 Stream Valley Way  
Gaithersburg, MD 20882



**Love them for their Lifetime!**

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Email: [housewithaheart@gmail.com](mailto:housewithaheart@gmail.com)

240.631.1743

CFC Donation Code 69166

## The Many Ways to Help

House With A Heart Senior Pet Sanctuary



While we were truly blessed this year, we need your continuous support to cover our costly veterinary expenses, purchase food and supplies, and make improvements that benefit our senior residents and forever fosters. You can contribute by:



- Making a one-time, occasional, or monthly donation.
- Choose HWAH (#69166) as a designated nonprofit in the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area.
- HWAH is a 501c 3 non-profit organization so your donation is tax deductible.
- Purchase items that appear on our Wish List in the "Shop HWAH" section on our website.
- Sponsor a HWAH pet of your choice.
- Donate to our "Feed Fido & Fluffy" HWAH Pet Pantry to help feed hungry dogs and cats. If you prefer, purchase pet food for needy pets on our Amazon Wish List.
- Shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select House With A Heart Pet Sanctuary as your charitable organization.
- Help us promote our mission! Purchase HWAH apparel from the "Shop HWAH" section on our website.

HWAH is a non-profit and volunteer supported organization. Situated in a house on two acres of fenced property in Gaithersburg, HWAH fills a need for its dogs and cats by providing a sanctuary for them. These senior pets at HWAH are there as a result of becoming homeless or were in the process of losing their homes for a variety of reasons. Unlike most other rescues, HWAH does not seek adoption for its residents. Instead, HWAH provides a safe and loving place for its residents to live out their full lives so they will never lose their home again. HWAH relies solely on donations to cover its expenses. In addition, HWAH's volunteers are instrumental in daily operations and upkeep of the sanctuary.