Happy Friday everyone! Here are your updates for the week:

HR POSITION: I am very happy to tell you that Skyla Snarski will be joining HSWM on March 30 as our new human resource representative. She even has previous animal shelter experience as an added bonus! I think you all will really like her, and she is very excited to join our team.

RETAIL: We have made a few changes to retail ordering and management. Jaime is now responsible for all retail ordering, so if we need something or there is something you would like to add that we don't currently carry, please let her know. Stephanie tracks all the retail items on the back end, so please see her if you need to take something from retail for shelter use, have incorrect numbers on inventory, etc.

PUPPY ADOPTIONS: Starting with our next transport, we are going to try a different puppy adoption process. Adopters get frustrated when they miss out on available puppies because they go so quickly, so we are going to try making them all available on a Friday or Saturday once they have been processed and letting people know via social media etc a couple days ahead of time. Our hope is that this will give people a little prep time and also give all potential adopters a fair shot at adoption.

TRANSPORTS: We have an ASPCA transport coming on 3/19 and a puppy transport coming from HARTT on March 30. We will also be taking a cat transport every 2 weeks or so to try and keep our offsite locations full.

VOLUNTEER GROUP: Julie is coordinating multiple visits for the GR Cares volunteer group through the rest of March and all of April. They will be working at the shelter every Sunday and Monday. If you have tasks or projects that you would like help with, big or small, please let Julie know.

PCC: PCC is Monday night! Please let Megan know if you would like a ticket and don't have one yet-it's free for staff! Also please make sure to check out our auction website, we have just over 200 really cool items/packages to bid on. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, so please help us by sharing our posts on social media and encouraging your family and friends to participate. ANYONE can bid in the silent auction, no ticket is required! Here is the link:

[http://bit.ly/PCCAuction2021](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fbit.ly%2FPCCAuction2021%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2T9puzU5EDxd5DwiWiRjfzdh2gN6htNF3524A4ZqMjatd163AEyVhiMcE&h=AT2bIQsZULgsUCJJ9twNd1mJUsgnN3yUA7bRJjjPamYDyQUf0ANbBDveEnzCDVc7hBBBBihaqcd19AvscA2-Waqg_-hl3rBNE-SU-RuXCX9iHeBFqiMtUaZRF96LWaCKpA&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT1iIYNwbMwHExuX5Sj2ovfrofb1FxvpAVt8EbpMcfdR2sJx8R5Db_HsiAkg4-ORXGAKK35L1APxZ_5WRwxB3sG6DR3sIdV3woyGJwMRIJ_l2XNSCjF2SpTNQXqsbNf6a_jGxrYvraVbsaOcIf3jQhzTMXs)

CONFESSIONS OF AN IRRESPONSIBLE PET OWNER: Here is a little blog post that was written by a national shelter leader that helps remind us that no one is perfect when it comes to pet ownership, not even us! It's a great perspective on showing adopters some grace and looking at what makes a good home from the animal's point of view instead of ours.

**Confessions of an Irresponsible Pet Owner**

My descent into irresponsible pet ownership began when I was just eight and received a bunny rabbit as an Easter present. My parents built a hutch in the backyard and Thumper was beloved, but only as an outdoor pet. I cared for him reasonably well with my mom’s help, but after a couple of years, my brother let Thumper out of his cage and we never saw him again. Following this loss, my parents purchased for me a parakeet, complete with a cage. Though unable to be handled, my bird was a well-cared for pet until one night, our family cat broke into his cage and attacked and killed him.

At various times, I had gerbils, newts (I floated them around in little plastic boats in the pool), goldfish who lived in a bowl and typically died within a few months of being won at the fair, a large toad, two dogs, several outdoor cats, a snail I got in a science summer class, ants, tadpoles and several other animals. I learned, as did my peers who had similar experiences, animals could be bought, traded and sold and that their deaths, timely or not, were a natural part of having animals.

As an adult, I have never been the perfect pet owner either. At various times, I have:

* Owned a dog when I lived in a ‘No Pets’ apartment
* Owned a cat when I lived in my college dorm room
* Adopted a tiny fluffy dog from the local pound and returned it the following day
* Lied on an adoption app that I had a six foot fence when my fence was only four feet
* Failed to keep my pets up to date on all vaccines
* Missed giving them flea and heartworm medications because I forgot
* Failed to keep my microchip info up to date
* Used a prong collar on a dog who pulled really hard
* Had dogs in an apartment with no yard and had to use a ‘tie out’ to let them outside
* Surrendered a dog that was ‘just too much for me’ during a hard time in my life
* Let my dogs run free in areas not designated ‘off leash’
* Adopted a cat as a Valentine’s Day gift and then rehomed her because she didn’t get along with my dog

Two of my dogs were adopted at a time in my life that I was especially ‘irresponsible.’ I was a broke 20-something-year-old who was in and out of college, worked odd hours and had an active social life. I was not an ideal pet owner. However, I was lucky enough to go to my local dog pound where there were virtually no adoption restrictions. I adopted two dogs who completely changed my life.

They were by my side through various relationships, moves, jobs, schools and struggles and they became family to me. It’s because of them I have dedicated my life to helping animals just like them. When I look back at that time, I’m so grateful that pound let me take those dogs home. I wasn’t a perfect candidate for adoption and I could have easily been rejected, but they said yes. Because of that low barrier adoption process, I am where I am today. Because they said yes, I’ve had a chance to make up for all of my ‘irresponsible pet ownership’ past and present by helping save literally hundreds of thousands of homeless cats, dogs and other animals.

After leading government animal shelters for eight years and working closely with thousands of foster caregivers and hundreds of rescue groups, I’ve learned something. People will mess up. They will adopt a pet and realize it’s ‘not a good fit.’ They will find they have hit a particularly tough moment and life and need a safe way to rehome their animal. They will have a baby and decide their animal isn’t safe around their baby and choose to surrender their animal. People will be people and pets will sometimes lose out because of that. But I also learned this: People who adopt animals want to do the right thing and they start with the best intentions. When they mess up, it’s our job to help provide them support and resources, help them rehome their pet if it truly isn’t an appropriate fit, and in many cases, give them whatever we can to help make the human animal relationship successful.

*We have to be a lot more forgiving of people’s mistakes and make the shelter a shame-free place where people can be truthful, vulnerable and imperfect.*

What are the ways you have been an ‘irresponsible pet owner’? Do you think those things should have then or should now prevent you from having a pet? What could we do differently to meet people where they’re at and help them be successful in their relationship with a pet?

KRISTEN HASSEN - Kristen is the Maddie’s® American Pets Alive! Director.

I hope you all have a fabulous weekend!

Best,

Holly