

PAD for PAWS FOUNDATION

Supporting the welfare of domestic animals with resources, education, and services in the communities we serve



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Welcome to Pad for Paws Newsletter

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Welcome to the first issue of the Pad for Paws Newsletter. If you haven't heard of us, you'd probably like to know what is Pad for Paws and what we do. Even if you have heard of us, you might not know about many things we are doing to improve the lives of domestic animals around Helena.

Pad for Paws—An Animal-Welfare Foundation

We are, first of all, a local, non-profit foundation dedicated to the cause of animal welfare in the Helena area. As a small, energetic board of concerned citizens, we believe we can make a contribution to the lives of domestic animals in need. As our mission statement puts it, we exist "to provide support for domestic animals and to provide resources, education, and services that jointly benefit these animals and the communities we serve." What does that statement really mean? Basically, it

means doing whatever we can to alleviate the daily suffering that many dogs and cats face from hunger, neglect, disease, and needless death.



Garry Pistoria and Ann Waickman stocking shelves with pet food

Feeding Hungry Dogs and Cats

At the top of our list is providing food for hungry dogs and cats. In these difficult economic times when almost everyone feels the pinch, many people are finding themselves challenged to make ends meet. And for some among

us—the elderly and others living on fixed incomes, people struggling with a chronic illness requiring costly treatment, and still others who have recently lost their jobs—the pinch is very painful. All of these people are having to make some hard choices about feeding themselves and their pets. There are no simple answers for them. Turning in their cat or dog at the already over-crowded local animal shelter isn't a solution. Nor is abandoning their pet across town or outside the city limits. Besides, the little old lady's or gentleman's dog or cat is a beloved pet, often one who has provided vital companionship to his or her owner for a long time.

Paws Pantry

Here's one area where Pad for Paws has stepped in. Our Paws Pantry program has been very successful in helping

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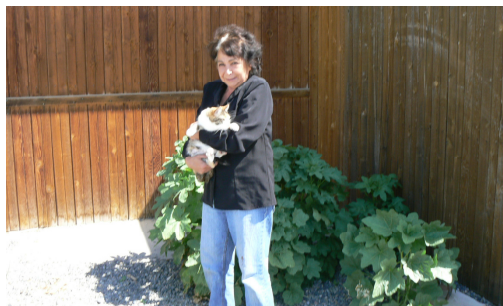
“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Putting a Face On Our Work

At first glance, the work of animal welfare seems overwhelming. At any one time in the Helena area, there are hundreds of dogs and cats, many of them family pets, needing our help with food, neutering, adequate outdoor shelter, and medical treatment. But this statistic doesn't begin to describe the reality of these animals' lives, the urgency of their needs. Each one of them has a valuable life, a personal story. For us at Pad for Paws the real work, the real joy, comes from reaching out to one animal and one owner at a time to do what we can to improve the quality of their lives.

We'd like to share a few of the stories with you. Here's Lois and her cat Booboo recently at Bridger Veterinarian Clinic, where Booboo is about to receive treatment.



Lois and her cat Booboo

Always having a soft spot for the underdog, Lois and her husband have also provided homes to two dogs and a very elderly cat, all of them rescues from shelters and abusive environments. When Lois's husband recently lost his job, the family was thrown into crisis and struggled with difficult choices about caring for their pets. Fortunately, Lois discovered Pad for Paws, who has been providing food and vet care until Lois's husband can find another job and the family can get back on its feet. Lois is overwhelmed with Pad for Paws' rescue and continued support: "We cannot find words to describe the gratefulness and appreciation." She hopes someday soon to "pay it forward."

In addition to providing food, funds and equipment to support spay and neutering

clinics sponsored by Helena Friends of Pets (HAFoP), Pad for Paws helps many financially stressed owners get the medical care that their pets need.



Fourteen-year-old terrier, Annie

Another recipient is Annie, a white terrier cross who was rescued from a shelter 14 years ago. In the past three years, she developed a severe allergy to wheat gluten, an ingredient in most dog food. Along with losing much of her fur, Annie had to endure a great deal of the pain. Over 50% of her body was covered with big, red sores. Finding out about her suffering, Pad for Paws stepped in and worked with Annie's vet to find very special food for her. For two years now, Pad for Paws has been supplying her owner, Mrs. "K," with expensive, gluten-free food to keep Annie free of the misery the allergy causes. Her owner reports that Annie has resumed her puppy-like behavior and looks forward to feeding when she sees cans of her food.

Of course, no Pad for Paws' volunteer's visit to Annie and her two brothers—Kalif, a dachshund, and Toby, a Yorkie/Poodle mix—would be complete without a treat or two. Little Toby likes to promenade around the house with his treat dangling from his mouth like a cigar.

There are dozens of stories like this one of Helenans struggling to overcome difficulties and meet their pets' needs. One more story is especially poignant. While unloading pet

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Allow Us to Introduce Ourselves

Board members of the Pad for Paws Foundation are the kind of people who roll up their sleeves and get the job done. What that means is that we do almost all of the work of the Foundation. We collect, bag, and deliver dog and cat food to Food Share, God's Love, and needy families regularly. We contact and talk with business and community leaders to get support for our work. We write materials for newsletters, food drives, grant proposals, fund-raising campaigns, and our website. We deliver pets to veterinarians for shots, spaying and neutering, and medical procedures. We support Helena Area Friends of Pets' spay and neutering clinics with cash donations and equipment purchases. We make grants to animal education programs such as the Human—Animal Bond Program at Carroll College. We also manage our finances, pay for our insurance, and submit tax materials to the IRS. In short, about the only things we don't do are those things that lie beyond our collective expertise—web page design and legal work.



Board members Dick Morgan and Debra Polhemus bagging cat food.

Why do we do all these things? Well, first of all, someone has to help those who cannot help themselves, the animals and people who are off the radar of other community services organizations. But, most of all, it's the joy of doing something good, something that will make the lives of our fellow inhabitants of the planet easier, more enjoyable.

If you would like to join the effort of alleviating the suffering and enhancing the lives of domestic animals in our community, please contact us, or visit padforpaws.org



Toby the Yorkie/Poodle

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food at God's Love, a Pad for Paws volunteer was approached by a young father who struggled to tell the story of his family ravaged by the mother's drug addiction. He explained how his two young sons started to suffer grief and despair when their mother left the family to undergo treatment. On the advice of the boys'

counselor, he adopted a pup from a neighbor dog's litter to help his sons recover their emotional balance. All was going well until his hours at work were cut back dramatically. He now faced the possibility of not being able to afford keeping Andy, his sons' beloved companion. The young father asked for help with the dog's care to prevent his sons' suffering another loss. Pad for Paws is now making monthly deliveries of dog food to Andy and paying for his vet visits and shots. And, as the volunteer happily reports, Andy and the four-year-old son were recently seen at God's Love playing with delight in the back seat of the dad's pickup. Recently, the father told the volunteer that his job situation would be better by fall when he could resume taking better care of his family, Andy included.



Greetings from the Board

We proudly introduce the first Pad for Paws Foundation's newsletter. A 501 (c) 3 foundation, Pad for Paws provides support for domestic animals, including food, shelter, education, and vet services.

As a charitable organization, we depend primarily on cash donations from the public. We also enjoy support from local Helena businesses that partner with us to provide pet food, outdoor shelters, and other supplies.

Since we have no paid employees, the work of our foundation is performed by board members and loyal, hard-working volunteers.

Our efforts are making a difference. In the past year we have donated over 30,000 lbs of dog and cat food to needy families, mostly through Helena Food Share and God's Love. We also deliver pet food and supplies to many homebound seniors and others with special needs.

We are strong supporters of HAFoP (Helena Area Friends of Pets) and assist them with their spay and neuter clinics.

We succeed through the generosity of the Helena community. Please help us. Your donations are greatly needed and appreciated.

Garry A. Pistoria

President

Pad for Paws Foundation



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needy owners to provide food for their cats and dogs. We have organized pet food drives and raised money to meet this growing need. Starting in July, Paws Pantry has provided well over 30,000 lbs. of dog and cat food to hungry pets in the Helena community. Thanks to the quiet generosity of caring people at Carroll College, local businesses, and individuals around town, economically stressed owners have been able to feed their pets without having to cut back on food and prescriptions for themselves. We think that lending stressed pet owners a helping hand is a much better solution to the economic problem than separating the pets from their loving owners. There are already far too many abandoned, suffering animals wandering the streets and vacant lots around Helena.

Stepping Up With Emergency Help

Our work does not, of course, stop with helping owners feed their pets. These same owners are often unable to pay for their animal's health needs. Spaying and neutering, routine health check-ups and vaccinations, treatment for illnesses and medical emergencies, and adequate outdoor shelter are often beyond their means. We are happy to say that with the help of many generous Helenans, we have been able to meet some of these needs.

The letter of Kathy Standard of 3440 Ptarmigan Way that recently appeared in the *Helena Independent Record* expresses the appreciation that recipients feel for the help that they received in difficult times:

I will soon be leaving Helena permanently; I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank the wonderful people of Pad

for Paws for all their assistance while I lived here. Their friendly volunteers walked my dog, Smokey, while I was hospitalized and recovering from surgery. Pad for Paws supplied dog food for Smokey when I was unable to afford it, and most amazingly, they provided assistance with a veterinarian emergency.

Kathy's story is one of many in our community. It's the kind of story that inspires all of us to do all we can for pets and owners in need. We welcome you to join our efforts.

