

# KALAMAZOO ANIMAL RESCUE

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## OUR SPONSORS



## KAR Friends

May 2009

### Dear Reader,

Did you know dark-colored dogs and cats have an even harder time of getting adopted? Our feature story talks about the plight of black animals and what you can do to help.

This month's Doggie Den tells the rescue and adoption story of Bear, a black Lab mix. Our Cat's Corner provides useful information about why it is so important to keep your cats indoors and how to keep them content.

Danielle Wallis  
KAR Marketing Coordinator

Lynn Bolhuis  
KAR Friends Editor

P.S. Keep watch in your mailbox for our special Spring Edition newsletter filled with more great rescue and adoption stories. If you are not on KAR's mailing list, feel free to send us an email with your name and address.

## THE PLIGHT OF BLACK CATS AND DOGS

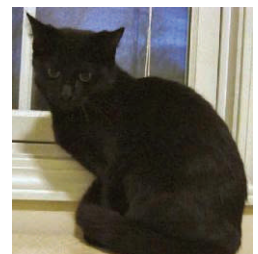
By Danielle Wallis

*Every pet adoption is a life saved, but in the case of black cats and dogs, you're saving a life that's at an even higher risk of being cut short. ~ Sarah*

It is an unfortunate and sad fact that color, black to be specific, contributes to hundreds of cats and dogs being euthanized each year. It is known among rescue groups as the **Black Cat and Dog Syndrome**, and these animals become the unfortunate victims of this tragic problem. By bringing this plight to our readers' attention, KAR hopes to save as many lives as we can for the black dogs and cats awaiting new homes.

There are many reasons why people overlook an animal in a shelter or rescue, but more often than not, black cats and dogs face this unhappy truth because of their dark coat. As a result, they have a harder time finding a new home. Shelter and rescue workers see wonderful, adoptable pets passed by as they languish in their cage because they do not stand out as well or photograph as clearly. They do not have distinctive coloring like a calico cat or a Dalmatian with spots, and are therefore not as highly sought after. If the kittens and puppies are not euthanized, then they are very likely to grow up in a rescue, making it even harder to gain adopter's interests.

Many people in this country have superstitions and believe that black cats and dogs are unlucky; however, the opposite is true for our British counterparts. For instance,



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

[Visit the "Events" page on our website](#) for upcoming adoption (and other) events.



See Past Issues of  
KAR Friends  
HERE

## THE PLIGHT OF BLACK DOGS AND CATS (continued)

owning a black cat is supposed to bring good fortune and bless your family and home. In fact, most cultures see black cats and dogs as being a prized possession.

Even if you are unable to adopt another animal, please help spread the word to friends and family that black dogs and cats make excellent companions. Perhaps they will think twice when selecting their next pet. For those of us who share our lives with these animals, we know that color means absolutely nothing so far as temperament and behavior go. Black cats and dogs make wonderful additions to the family and are just as playful, loving and intelligent as animals with more "interesting" markings.

Join KAR in taking action to stop the Black Cat and Dog Syndrome before more feline and canine companions are destroyed due to color.

Additional Resources:

- [Kalamazoo Animal Rescue](#)
- [Montgomery County Humane Society](#)
- [Black Pearls of the Dog World](#)
- [Pet Haven of Minnesota](#)
- [Itchmo](#)

## SPECIAL EVENT

*Do-Dah Parade*

"It's the official parody of anything and everything. This is the one time where silly and satire rules the streets of downtown Kalamazoo. Join over 80 businesses, nonprofit organizations and community individuals as we enjoy the absurd, the goofy, and the downright un-political nature of a parody. It's the Do-Dah and it's reined the streets for years." [Sponsored by DKA Charities.](#)



**Date:** Saturday, June 6, 2009

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

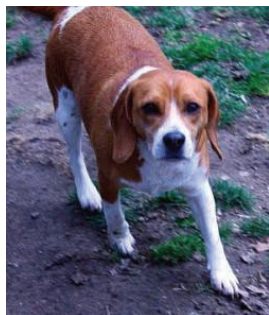
**Where:** Traditional Downtown Kalamazoo Parade Route

KAR will be participating in the parade again this year and our theme is camping, inspired by the "Ain't no bugs on me" K9 Advantix commercial with the cute puppies and catchy theme. We will be walking the route with many of our foster dogs who are looking for their forever homes.

Unfortunately our cats would not appreciate the noise so they are staying home. Last year we had loads of fun and got an amazing response from the crowd. We are hoping to make this year an even greater success. Please come along and support us!

If you have adopted a dog from Kalamazoo Animal Rescue in the past, you are invited to walk the parade route with us. Please send us an email to let us know you would like to participate and we will send you more event details.

## PETS OF THE MONTH

[Red](#)[Kaylin](#)**BEHIND THE SCENES**

*Volunteer of the Month, Tamsie Haskell*

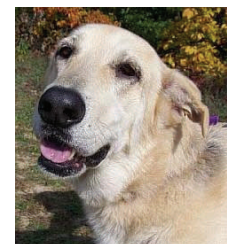
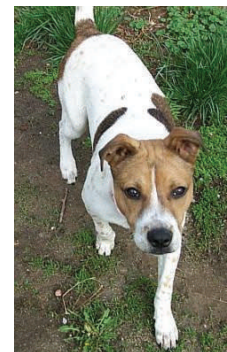
Tamsie has been a KAR volunteer since April 2005. Over the past four years she has been active on the board of directors and served as vice president for one year, she was the dog team and veterinarian liaison, an intake coordinator, dog team coordinator and she handled other special projects as they arose.

In addition to all this, Tamsie has been a diligent dog foster who has saved over 100 animals. She is particularly interested in fostering older dogs and ones that have special needs. Adult dogs are generally more laid back, already housetrained and very grateful. They are also more easily integrated into her own pack of seven dogs, many of which were acquired because they could not be adopted out.

Tamsie is a dog lover who believes, "If you can even save one dog, then that's one life saved." After a couple of years fostering dogs, she took out the carpeting and fabric-covered sofa in her home and replaced the floor with hardwood and the sofa with leather – not as comfy but much more dog friendly.

While saving dogs is very rewarding, saying good-bye is still difficult, even after years of fostering. Knowing that your foster dog is getting the best home available is a great source of comfort to her. Tamsie enjoys getting updates from people who have adopted dogs she has fostered. "The happy endings make it all worthwhile," she says.

Since leaving the board, Tamsie has had up to 11 dogs in her home this past year. She and her husband plan to take a much deserved break from fostering so they can enjoy their cottage in South Haven.

**DOGGIE DEN**

*Loveable Bear*

By Dusty Reeds

Bear needed refuge when his owner was moved into a nursing home. He and another dog, as well as ten cats were taken in by KAR volunteers to be fostered and adopted to new homes.

Bear is a Lab mix and he was quite skittish and shy when I first met him. I almost didn't take him because I wasn't sure whether he would warm up to me. Fortunately for Bear, I decided to foster him and the other dog.

I took Bear to the vet for a check up and they raved about what a nice dog he was. I spent more time getting to know him and, within a short time, fell in love with Bear. He turned out to be such a nice, gentle guy who really just wanted love and attention, and someone to spend time with him.

It didn't take long for Bear to overcome his shyness once he settled in at my house. He got to the point where he loved to greet people who came to visit with licks and kisses. Bear got along well with the other foster dogs and cats in my home. Despite his pleasant personality and easy going nature, several months passed with no adoption interest.



## KAR LINKS

- ADOPT a [Kitten, Cat](#) or [Dog](#)
- [VOLUNTEER](#)
- Become a [FOSTER FAMILY](#)
- [Senior Cat Companions](#)
- KAR [Website](#)



Make a [DONATION!](#)

## DOGGIE DEN (continued)

I took Bear to an adoption event at the Rave Theater for the opening of the movie, Hotel for Dogs. He was a little nervous about the environment but soon realized that people would give him attention and pet his head and back. He enjoyed the affection so much that he was eager to get in the car and go for rides from then on. Car rides were great but Bear's favorite past time was hanging out with me.

After months of waiting, Bear finally found a family of his own and is living the good life. He loves to romp around in the snow and follow his people wherever they go. In a recent email the family said, "We are so glad we have him. We call him Running Bear outside and Teddy Bear inside. He has been a Godsend."

Bear's dream of having someone to hang out with and a family to give him lots of love and pets has finally come true.

## CAT'S CORNER

*Reasons to Keep Cats Indoors and How to Keep Them Content*

By Danielle Wallis



When humans domesticated cats, they took on the responsibility for their health and safety. Cat's ecological role changed from being wild to being entirely dependent on humans for food, shelter and protection. They no longer fit into the ecosystem as wild predators. Cats that are allowed to roam freely often pay with their lives. Each year millions of cats are hit by cars, poisoned, mauled by other animals or lost altogether. Millions of taxpayer dollars are spent every year by Animal Services to rescue, treat and feed these strays. Did you know that the average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is just two to five years, yet an indoor cat may well survive for 17 years or more?

KAR always recommends to new adopters that they keep their cats inside. We rescued them once and we don't want to have to rescue them again.

Here are some are reasons why you should think twice before allowing your cat to roam free:

1. **Disease:** Outdoor cats are more likely to contract a disease. The two diseases that kill large numbers of cats each year are feline leukemia (for more info [click here](#)) and feline immunodeficiency virus (for more info [click here](#)). Both diseases result in the eventual death of the cat due to a compromised immune system. These diseases are transmitted from cat to cat, so if you keep your cat indoors it will prevent transmission of these deadly killers.
2. **Parasites:** Outdoor cats inevitably pick up fleas and ticks and bring them into the house. Fleas can cause anemia, skin irritations and allergies. Ridding your home of these pests is often difficult and will expose your cats to harmful chemicals. An indoor cat will rarely be exposed to fleas, ticks, ear mites and other parasites.
3. **Poisoning:** Poisons exist on chemically-treated lawns, in bait left out to kill rats or mice, and in anti-freeze drained from cars. Most cats love to chew on greens, but their fondness can be safely satisfied with grass grown in an indoor pot.
4. **Other Animals:** Other cats, dogs and wildlife such as raccoons or coyotes are potential enemies of cats and often engage in fights that leave a cat injured.

**CONTACT US**

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newsletter?

**CAT'S CORNER** (continued)

Outdoor cats can suffer from torn ears, cut eyes, abscesses and other injuries requiring expensive veterinary treatment, or even be killed from the confrontation.

5. **Cruel People:** Shelter workers can relay horror stories about cats that have been abused or shot by cruel children or disturbed adults. An outdoor cat is a likely target for people who collect animals to sell to research laboratories. Outside pets are at the mercy of the people they may encounter.
6. **Traffic:** Most outdoor cats die from auto accidents. It is a myth that cats are "streetwise" about cars. Cats are intelligent and alert, but they stand very little chance against a fast-moving vehicle.
7. **Affect on Wildlife:** Outdoor cats have a serious impact on birds and wildlife. It is estimated that hundreds of millions of birds are killed every year and as much a three times that amount of mammals lose their lives needlessly. Domesticated cats are essentially an invasive species in the local ecosystem that kills native animals.
8. **Unwanted Strays:** If your feline is not spayed or neutered they will reproduce and contribute to the growing feral cat population.

Here are some tips on how to provide a happy indoor environment for your cat. It is important to remember that kittens who are kept indoors usually show no desire to venture outside as cats. With knowledge, patience and time we can change most cats who once roamed outdoors into happy indoor pets.

1. Provide a safe, outside enclosure where cats can safely venture outside. These can be expensive yet hugely reassuring for both feline and human.
2. Provide window shelves or cat trees placed near a window to permit cats to monitor the outdoors from the safety of the indoors.
3. Play with your cat each day. Cat toys can be purchased from stores but surprisingly, paper bags and cardboard boxes can be a source of unending delight.
4. Plant "kitty grass" (available at pet stores) in indoor pots so that your cat can graze.
5. Clean the litter boxes regularly and be sure to have enough. It is recommended that you have at least one litter box per cat in your home to avoid accidents.
6. Think about getting your cat a companion. Another feline will be company and a fun playmate when you are away from home.

Additional Resources:

- [About.com: Cats](#)
- [HSUS.org ~ Safe Cats Campaign](#)
- [HSUS.org ~ Pet Care](#)

**About Us**

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, federally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 1991 and is funded entirely through private donations.

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Southwest Michigan.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent homes.