

### KAR Rescues 43 Cats and Kittens from Foreclosed Home

By Anne Pancella


The phone call came in on a Monday in March. A woman whose home was being foreclosed on was asking for our help with a large number of stray cats that she had left behind in her former home. The cats needed to be out by Friday or she would have to take them to Animal Services. There were at least four momma cats nursing newborn kittens, she said, four additional pregnant cats, and a couple of unaltered male cats. All were friendly. The heat was off, the house was empty, and there was two feet of water in the basement due to spring flooding of the nearby Kalamazoo River.

This was not the first call for help we had gotten from that area, which is close to the county's Animal Services facility. Residents suspect that many of the stray cats that keep appearing come from people bringing cats to Animal Services who change their minds when they get there and release them nearby. Neighbors confirmed that these cats had turned up a few months earlier. At first they lived on

the caller's front porch, but as they started giving birth, she moved them inside to help the kittens survive the bitter winter. Now they were alone in her cold, damp house, and time was running out.



KAR cat fosters stepped up to take the cats when they heard of their plight. Nine different foster homes split the 25 cats and kittens removed from the home that week. When the four pregnant cats taken from the home delivered an additional 18 kittens in the following weeks, the total number of cats and kittens saved from that one house rose to 43.

The future looks bright for these 43 cats. KAR volunteers will ensure they are adopted into good homes, and because they will be sterilized prior to adoption, they will not contribute any more unwanted litters. 



### Happy Tail—Homer

By Lynn Bolhuis

Little did he know, Homer was facing his last day on earth. By some miracle, Bonnie Vermeulen visited Kalamazoo Animal Services in early October, looking for her first foster dog. Bonnie wanted to make the right choice yet she was overwhelmed by all of the animals in need. She walked up and down the aisles, peering into each cage. Bonnie came upon Homer and his face grabbed her attention. He looked sad, like he needed a friend. Bonnie decided to take him out of his cage and get acquainted. She was impressed by his sweetness, calm demeanor and gentle spirit.

Homer was a stray that had been picked up by Animal Services wandering the streets of Kalamazoo. No one had come to claim him and Homer's time was up. Bonnie decided she had to get him out of there to save his life, and that is just what she did.

Bonnie took Homer, a 40-pound German Shepherd mix home with her that day. He was the perfect foster dog. Homer got along fabulously with Bonnie's German Shepherd, Mya, and with all the cats and kittens in the house. He was already housebroken and knew quite a few commands. Homer loved to sit next to Bonnie and give her a hug by burying his head into her leg. He also loved to cuddle and play. Homer and Mya had many hours of fun together.

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## KAR Friends

Looking for great tips and information on caring for your pets? Our monthly eNewsletter, *KAR Friends*, provides helpful pet-related articles, heartwarming dog and cat rescue stories, upcoming events, and valuable



coupons and special offers from sponsors. Go to our web site to sign up today!

## Community Fundraising Efforts

A sincere thank you to the following businesses, organizations and families who recently held fundraisers to benefit Kalamazoo Animal Rescue:

- Barks 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Alfred E. Bike
- Kalamazoo District Office, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Adam Lutz and Friends
- Paths of Silver
- Portage Central Middle School
- Portage North Middle School
- Anna Puca and Friends
- Suzanne Toyryla

## Frequently Asked Questions About Fostering

*An Interview with Dog Foster Volunteer, Lynn Bolhuis*

**Q:** What made you decide to foster?

**A:** My husband and I have two dogs. We've considered adopting another one but thought fostering would give us a chance to help a dog in need until a good home is found.

**Q:** How did you get involved with KAR?

**A:** I saw KAR at local pet stores on a couple occasions. One day I decided to talk to a volunteer about getting involved. After expressing interest, I attended an orientation to learn more about the rescue and then a special training session on dog fostering.

**Q:** What appealed to you about getting involved with KAR?

**A:** Two things actually. The first is that all KAR animals are cared for in foster homes by volunteers. The second is their mentoring program. It was so helpful to have an experienced volunteer guide me through the ins and outs of fostering, and then help me to place the dog into a carefully screened, permanent home.

**Q:** Do you get to pick your foster animals?

**A:** Yes. When selecting a foster, I look for a dog that will get along with my pack. I also have interests in certain breeds and dogs that require additional training and socialization.



Lynn and foster dog, Layla.

**Q:** Don't you worry your pets will catch something from the foster?

**A:** KAR has procedures and guidelines in place to help protect my pets as well as the foster. A new foster is quarantined for a period of time. This is designed to prevent my

animals from catching something as well as allow medical treatment to begin for the foster dog.

**Q:** How do you integrate your foster with your own pets?

**A:** I follow the techniques of Cesar Millan, *The Dog Whisperer*. Once quarantine is over, we integrate the dogs by going on a long, long walk. My husband walks our dogs and I walk the foster. After a time we allow the dogs to sniff one another as we walk. Then, we pair each of our dogs with the foster and walk some more. We end up with one of us walking all three dogs together as a pack.

**Q:** How much time does fostering require?

**A:** Fostering requires an investment

of time but yields many rewards. All animals need to be taken to a vet for medical care. I work with my fosters on crate training, making sure they are housebroken and that they know some basic commands like sit, down and stay. Additional time is spent taking fosters to adoption events, talking to potential adopters and conducting home visits.

**Q:** Do you have to pay for veterinary expenses?

**A:** No, KAR covers the cost of medical treatment for foster animals.

**Q:** Who decides who will adopt the foster?

**A:** As the animal's foster, I do. I take into consideration the adoption application, input from our screening volunteers and observing how the dog interacts with the potential adopter in their home. I also try to make sure the dog's energy level, temperament, friendliness towards people and other animals is consistent with what the adopter is looking for.

**Q:** Is it hard to let the foster go?

**A:** Yes. It's hard not to get emotionally attached to animals. I can also say that saving a dog is very rewarding, as is seeing your foster and adoptive family "click" before your very eyes. I foster because I love dogs and want to find them forever homes where they will thrive and be loved for the rest of their lives. 🐾

## Homer (continued)

Homer did so well in Bonnie's home that she seriously considered adopting him. At about the same time, a couple of adoption applications came in for him. One of the applicants, Esther, came to meet Homer with her niece. Esther raised her family in a large farm home with lots of acreage and they always had a family dog. Esther lived alone but was often surrounded by many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was looking for a gentle dog that would enjoy being lavished with hugs and kisses by adoring children.

During the visit, Bonnie could see that Homer and Esther would be great companions for each other...a match made in heaven! As a matter of fact, as Esther said



Bonnie, Esther and Homer.

good-bye to Homer following their initial visit, she was brought to tears at the thought of leaving him.

Needless to say, Esther proceeded with the adoption process so she could bring Homer to his new forever home several days later.

Since being adopted, Homer has gained some notoriety of his own. Esther's granddaughter, Lisa, is a veterinarian with Pfizer. She arranged for Homer and Esther to be profiled on Pfizer's Veterinary Research and Development web site to promote the benefits of pet companionship.

According to Lisa, "Homer has been a delightful addition to Esther's home and heart. She is buzzing around enjoying things so much more with Homer in her life. Homer has assumed many roles including companion, alerting service dog, greeter for company, and even 'Esther locator' for family." 🐾

## Happy Tail—Sundancer

By Nancy Dolan

Sundancer's story in his own words: I'm sure you remember what a bitterly cold winter we had. Well, I was living outside in a remote area when I found my way to a building where a kind woman worked. It was against the rules to have animals inside so she leaned a board against the building and I found shelter there. I was starving so she gave me her yogurt. With the weather turning dangerously cold, she contacted the nice people at Kalamazoo Animal Rescue. A volunteer arranged to meet her to pick me up; it was almost midnight and minus two degrees below zero. I jumped inside the cat carrier and purred the entire drive because the blanket was soft and warm and I had a wonderful feeling my life was about to change.

First things first, I was immediately seen by the veterinarian for a physical exam, neutering, x-rays for an injured leg, and treatment for a stuffy nose. Then, after several weeks of TLC in my foster home,

my photos were posted on the Internet and I was made available for adoption, for all the world to see...wow!

It's been several months and you'll be happy to hear that I am now settled into my new, forever home. My human "dad" is a big guy, like me. He always had dogs but decided his lifestyle was now more suited for a cat. We had great chemistry the moment we met. He sent my foster mom an email telling her how I'm doing: "Sunny follows me around the house; at night he roams and explores. He likes to talk to himself so sometimes I wake up to him walking around the house talking, I don't know who he's talking to but he's carrying on a conversation. He's become quite the little character. Now that he's over his fear of the TV he comes into the living room and rubs on me and then tries to get me to come into the bedroom and lay with him. Overall I'm very happy with him; he's very clean and well mannered. Thanks



for the opportunity to be his new owner and thanks for taking care of him for so long. Chad." 🐾



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Gracie Mae was found as a stray. She was adopted in 2008 and is a very special addition to her new family.



Rose, a medium-haired tabby, was rescued from the animal shelter and adopted in 2008.

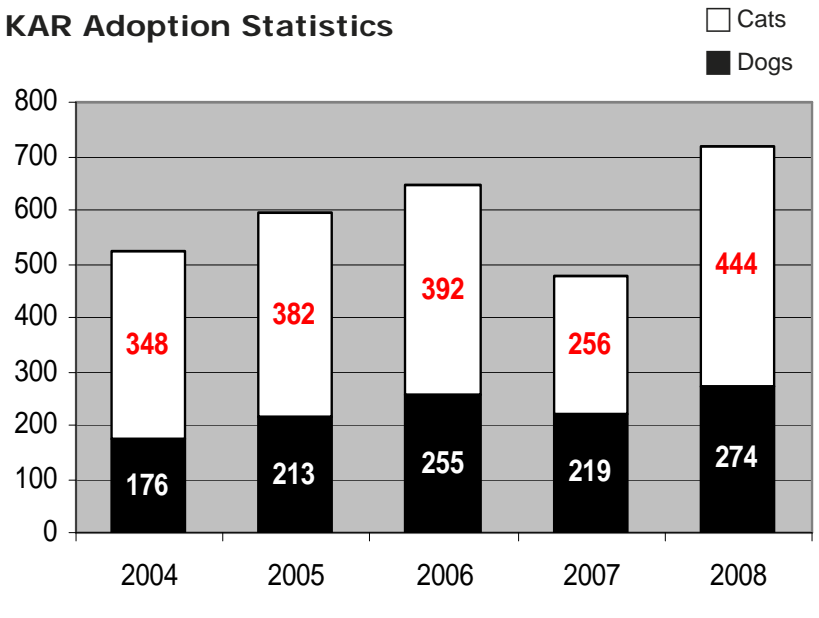


Abbie, a calico, was rescued from the animal shelter after capturing the heart of a KAR volunteer. She was adopted in 2008.



Samson was given up by a family who could no longer care for him. This well-trained poodle is now with a new forever family.

## KAR Adoption Statistics



Silas was abandoned by some renters and fed by an elderly woman for six months. When winter came, KAR stepped in to make sure this boy got his very own forever family.



Rubie's foster mom picked her up from the local animal shelter. This playful puppy now shares her warmth with her forever family.



Theodore lost his mom when she was hit by a car. All alone, a woman called KAR and a foster took him in. No longer lonely, Theodore is enjoying time with his forever family.



Ellie, a purebred Welsh Corgi, was taken in by a foster volunteer when her family could no longer keep her. Ellie offers companionship to loving members of her new family.



Noah, a playful kitten, was taken in by a KAR volunteer. He now shares affection with members of his forever family.



Calypso was found by a KAR volunteer out in the cold and was given a warm foster home. Calypso is now happy with her new forever family.



Luke was brought to KAR with his brother and sister after a kind woman took in their pregnant mother. Luke is now enjoying the love and comfort of a new family.

## 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.

## Adopt

If you or someone you know is looking for a furry companion please consider adopting from KAR. All foster animals live in private homes until adopted. To see the available cats and dogs, visit [www.kalamazooanimalrescue.org](http://www.kalamazooanimalrescue.org).

## Other Ways to Help

- Donations to help us pay vet bills
- Cat and dog food
- Cat litter
- Dog crates and cat carriers

## Look for KAR at These Upcoming Events...

- Do-Dah Parade, June 6th
- Woofstock, July 18th
- Kalamazoo Pet Expo, August 28-30th
- Annual Dinner Auction, November 15th