



# KALAMAZOO ANIMAL RESCUE

Phone: (269) 226-8570

## KAR Friends

January 2014

### In This Issue

[Pets With Disabilities Are Adoptable Too](#)

[Ask The Vet: Symptoms of Age-Related Disabilities and Disorders](#)

[Doggie Den ~ Petey](#)

[Cat's Corner ~ Nemo and Oscar](#)

Dear Reader,

Happy New Year! To celebrate 2014 and our sixth year of publication, **KAR Friends** is sporting a new look. The first issue of the New Year is devoted to raising awareness about special needs pets. Dogs with disabilities and felines with frailties may require a little more care from their human companions, but they are equally deserving of loving home and family, and they have KAR as their advocate.

In keeping with the theme, our animal spotlights shine on three pawdicated pets looking for their forever families: Nemo a previously sick and injured kitten, Oscar a one-eyed cat, and Petey a dog who was hit by a car and needed surgery to repair his hip.

Please feel free to spread the word and forward our eNewsletter to friends and family. This small gesture could help to find a forever home for one of our adoptable cats or dogs, making their New Year the best ever!

Danielle Wallis  
Marketing Coordinator

## Pets With Disabilities Are Adoptable Too

By Lynn Bolhuis

Companion animals come in all shapes, sizes and colors, as do pets with special needs. A dog or cat may have a disability from birth while others may develop it as a result of an illness, injury or trauma, or due to the aging process.

Pawdicated animals are able to adapt to life with their disability. "Often it's much harder for us as people to get over our prejudices about special needs pets than it is for the animals to get over their disabilities," said [AAHA veterinarian](#), Dr. Robin Downing. "Animals are amazing in their ability to recover and adapt to life with a disability."

Depending on the nature of the handicap, a cat or dog may need some extra assistance from their human caretaker or perhaps some high tech wheels in the case of a mobility-challenged pet. With the proper care, special needs pets are able to have a full and happy life. KAR has helped many handi-capable dogs and cats find loving forever homes.

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## Birth Defects

Pets may be born with a disability. Examples of birth defects include [hereditary deafness](#), vision impairments, missing or deformed limbs, and a condition known as swimmer legs syndrome where the legs sprawl out as if the [puppy](#) or kitten is swimming. With the latter condition, [physical therapy](#) may help the pet gain strength and mobility. This was the case for two KAR animals, Chance and Crumb.

[Chance](#) was a little Boxer-pit-mix puppy that came into the rescue in early 2011. His foster mom noticed that he had some issue with his back legs. She worked with the veterinarian to create hobbles that he would use for several weeks to train his muscles to work properly and gain normal mobility. This treatment worked and he was adopted by a loving couple.



[Crumb](#) came into KAR last August and was found to have three limb deformities. The vet said there was hope so ten times a day, his foster mom massaged, stretched and worked this tiny kitten's legs. He gained about 90% strength and mobility in his limbs before going to his new home right before Christmas.

## Disease or Injury-Related Disabilities

A pet may become disabled through contracting a virus or disease, such as with [Feline Leukemia Virus](#) or [Feline Immunodeficiency Virus](#), or heartworm disease. A handicap may result from an injury that leads to paralysis, or the loss of an eye or limb. Through the years, KAR has provided care and treatment to many heartworm positive dogs like [Sasha](#), and found homes for FeLV kittens like [Juliette and Maya](#), and doggie tripods like Louie or [Tresa](#).

## Sensory Handicaps

Our beloved pets may gradually lose their vision or hearing as they age, while other animals are born blind or deaf. If you suspect your cat or dog is losing their sight and/or their ability to hear, here are some signs to watch for:

- Vision Loss – your pet may increasingly trip or bump into things, have trouble locating toys or their food bowl, misjudge heights, act jumpy, and frighten or startle more easily
- Hearing Loss – your pet may stop responding to voice commands or loud noises, appear to be disobedient, not be aware of your presence until you touch him/her, and be difficult to awaken

The rescue has helped many animals with sensory handicaps including [Prim](#), a deaf cat who liked rats; [Paddy](#) a one-eyed dog that melted the hearts of everyone who met him, as well as Frostie and Lilly.



[Frostie](#) was a fortunate young dog who found her way into KAR during the winter of 2010. Her foster mom discovered she was deaf when Frostie didn't respond to her name being called, but awoke at the vibration of her knocking on the arm of the sofa. A widow who knew sign language adopted this special needs pup and she communicates with Frostie using hand signals.



[Sweet Lilly](#) had taken up pool-side residence at an apartment complex the summer of 2011. This feline was quite friendly towards all the guests and they wanted to ensure she found a good home when they discovered she was deaf. Lilly learned

## Pets of the Month



[Dex](#)



[Cookie](#)

that if she sat on the stairs at her foster home, she could tell when her foster mom came home because the light changed when the front door was opened. Lilly was adopted by a Western student who was studying to be a sign language teacher and was anxious to see what she could teach the sweet little cat.

To Kalamazoo Animal Rescue, all animals are special. Some of the cats and dogs we rescue are extra special, like the ones mentioned previously, and they require a little more TLC and help in finding the perfect adoptive home. A handi-capable pet is still perfectly able to love unconditionally.

**Additional Resources:**

- [If your dog is going blind or deaf](#)
- [Tips for blind or deaf cats](#)

## Ask The Vet

### *Symptoms of Age-Related Disorders and Disabilities*

By Karren Jensen  
Reviewed by Bruce Withers, DVM  
[Eighth Street Veterinary Care](#)



Our pets are part of our families and, just like other family members, they undergo changes as they age. We need to be aware of these issues so that we can give them the best quality of life throughout their senior years. Here are a few of the major challenges faced by our canine and feline friends as they get older.

- Arthritis is a degenerative joint disease that is common to aging pets. Watch your cat or dog for signs of painful joints which can include walking stiffly and reluctance to be touched or stroked. A heating pad and soft bedding to cushion sore joints can go a long way toward making your old friend more comfortable. Consult your veterinary health provider for medical treatment for joint pain. Nutritional supplements or prescription anti-inflammatories can be very beneficial.
- Hearing loss occurs in many older pets just as in aging humans. Signs of hearing loss include becoming startled when you come up behind your pet or while they are sleeping, and failure to respond to your voice. You can help your pet adjust to hearing loss by taking care not to startle him and using visual cues to alert him to your presence, such as flashing a light by flipping the switch up and down to let your pet know you are nearby.
- Cataracts and blindness can also make life more difficult for the senior pet but is not as debilitating for your cat or dog as it might be for a human because they already depend upon many other sensory clues to navigate. Many blind pets are able to function almost normally using their hearing, sense of smell, and touch. You can help your pet by not making radical changes to his environment, moving furniture around or leaving things out of place and providing food, water, and other necessities in familiar locations.
- Diabetes often accompanies obesity and for older pets weight gain is often the result of a less active lifestyle. Diabetes can be suspected when your pet shows excessive thirst and urination and a sudden weight loss. This condition can be treated with your vet's guidance, allowing your pet to still live an active and happy life.
- Thyroid diseases and especially hyperthyroidism is common in older cats and is characterized by sudden weight loss and increased appetite. Again, this is a treatable condition but only under your vet's care and supervision. A blood test can

## Adoption Events



January 18th and 25th  
February 1st and 15th



February 8th

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

## KAR Links

- [Volunteer](#)
- [Become a Foster Family](#)
- [Adoptable Dogs](#)
- [Adoptable Cats](#)
- [Adoptable Kittens](#)
- [Special Needs Pets](#)
- [Senior Cat Companions](#)
- [KAR Website](#)



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determine whether your feline friend has developed an overactive thyroid. Dogs are more likely to have a low-thyroid condition and can be easily and effectively supplemented.

- Heart disease and cancer are both risks to pets' health as they age, just as they are to aging humans. Be vigilant to observe any changes in your pet's ability to breathe comfortably or any unexplained lumps that develop.

The best way to deal with the health challenges of older pets is to know your dog or cat well enough to be aware of any new issues. When you observe a change, ask your veterinarian to examine your furry friend. This allows health challenges to be identified and treated at an early onset, ensuring the best quality of life for your faithful companion.

## Additional Resources

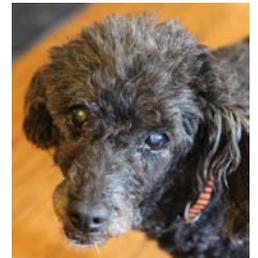
- [Senior dog health](#)
- [Feeding your senior cat](#)
- [Senior pet care](#)
- [Special needs of senior cats](#)
- [Hyperthyroidism in cats](#)

## Doggie Den

*Animal Spotlight ~ Petey*

By Kim Bourner

Petey was struck by a car last spring. He received the tender loving care he needed with hip surgery and a dental cleaning, both covered by the rescue. He is on the mend and is in need of a special home. Since he is an older pet, a home without young children would be ideal.



This gentleman has a few small requests he would like in a forever home: regular meals, he loves Bone Appetit treats, a warm living space, and daily hugs. His foster mom found that when she got busy and wasn't giving Petey a hug each day, he became sad. Once the daily massages, pettings and hugs started again (several times a day is his preferred prescription), he becomes a delightful lad and will sometimes dance in appreciation or share a quick kiss. He found his last grooming session to be the best part of his day. Please consider sharing your home with this delightful dog.

You can learn more about [Petey](#) by checking out his bio page.

## Cat's Corner

*Animal Spotlight ~ Nemo*

By Katie Drenth

Hello there, my name is Nemo and I have quite the story to tell.

It all began last October when I was less than seven-weeks old. I was lost and alone. I didn't know where I was or what had happened to my mother. I was sick and cold; so cold I tried to burrow into the ground for warmth. Then one day I was snatched into the air. I didn't know what was going on, I just knew that it hurt and I was very frightened. Dropped to



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[Email us](#) with any newsletter suggestions or questions!

the ground, I saw a dog looming over me. It had shaken me around like a play toy and would have done so again if not for the woman who came to my rescue. She saw what the dog had done, knew I was hurt and began contacting rescues hoping that one could take me in.

Luckily for me, a wonderful woman at Kalamazoo Animal Rescue knew that I was worth saving. She became my foster mom and loved and cared for me. At my very first vet appointment, I was diagnosed with an upper respiratory infection, eye infections, and a broken pelvis. I was very ill as you can see from my picture. If it were not for KAR I wouldn't be here today. It took weeks and months along with medication, therapy and love before I began to act just like any other happy care-free kitten.



I have grown stronger every day and have so much fun playing with my feline friends. I romp around and chase after my big brother Hunter—you can barely notice my tiny limp at all—and I cuddle up with my new mommy, Miss Purrdy. I love my foster mom and am indebted to her for saving me, but now I'm ready to find my very own forever home. Be sure to check out my [bio page](#) on the KAR website!

### Animal Spotlight ~ Oscar

By Kim Bourner



Oscar was first rescued by a fireman, but then he was abandoned by his family. The fireman saved his life, now he needs a home. This fellow was rescued a second time by KAR. Will you be his final rescuer—complete with a home and love to endure for all time?

In this chilly winter weather, Oscar has discovered the joy of heat registers and napping in the linen closet. He will make a great roommate for someone who can give him plenty of TLC. He gets along well with other gentle, submissive pets. When he feels territorial pressure, he may poop just outside of the litter box in response to the stress. This fellow is missing an eye, but the other one works just fine to give you a wink of appreciation. Check out his [web page](#) if you would like to have your home and closet warmed by this sweet boy.

### About Us

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

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Kalamazoo and the surrounding communities.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent, committed and life-long homes.

Visit our [website](#) for more KAR information!

