Wednesday, February 10, 2016 was a momentous day for the animals of the National Capital Area. The Washington Humane Society (WHS) and the Washington Animal Rescue League (WARL) announced a definitive agreement to merge the two organizations. This historic merger has created the first end-to-end animal care organization in a major U.S. city.

Founded in 1870 and 1914 respectively, WHS and WARL have long worked together to benefit the animals and people living in the District. As we have collaborated over the past decade, we have become more alike with regard to our philosophies and practices. Both organizations have been on the leading edge of what are now considered best practices in the field of animal welfare with customer and animal-centric adoption policies; an unparalleled commitment to saving lives; care assistance for pet owners in need; and a collaborative, open approach to community partnerships.

As we continued to grow and evolve, it became apparent that we could expand our impact and reach if we created one united, dynamic, industry-leading animal welfare organization in the Nation’s Capital.

As we announce this merger, our shared vision is finally a reality.

- Together, we will run every major animal welfare program in the Nation’s Capital: rescue and adoption, animal control, humane law enforcement, low-cost vet care, spay-neuter services, behavior and training, humane education, and more.

- Together, we will be able to profoundly strengthen the safety net for animals in our region, offer subsidized vet care to families in need, provide citywide behavior training to keep pets and families together, expand our spay-neuter efforts to end pet overpopulation, and protect animals in our area from cruelty and harm.

- Most importantly, we can now create a unified vision, backed by powerful and creative programs, to establish a model urban community for all animals – pets and wildlife alike – and the people who love them. Continued on Page 8
THE INSIDE SCOOP

Sir Walter Scott once said, “Cats are a mysterious kind of folk. There is more passing in their minds than we are aware of.”

Having spent a lot of time with these wonderful animals, I couldn’t agree more. My life path was forever changed when a small feral kitten joined my family. In his own mysterious way, Merlin provided comfort to my daughter while she learned to deal with the effects of Tourette Syndrome. His purring and presence gave her the strength and focus to face some significant challenges. Merlin gave her something that no human being had been able to give, and although we lost him many years ago I think of him often as I watch my beautiful, successful daughter move powerfully in the world.

Many ancient cultures honored cats, especially in Egypt. The goddess Bastet, commonly depicted as a cat, was among the most prominent of deities. She was the keeper of hearth and home, and the guardian against evil spirits and disease. Over the centuries, households and families throughout the world have included valued feline members.

In my family, we have shared our lives with countless cats and kittens. One of the three current keepers of my hearth and home is WHS adoptee Mr. Pibb; he came to us several years ago after retiring from his role at WHS.

In 2008, WHS was struggling with very significant over-abundance of cats, and our spay neuter programs were just ramping up. We had more volunteers interested in dog activities than in cat socialization so we had to think creatively to engage the community in our cat programming and outreach. Our continually creative behavior and training team decided to train Mr. Pibb using positive reinforcement methods. Mr. Pibb exceeded expectations and become an integral part of our humane education program, teaching hundreds of young people in DC that the purring of a content cat is a beautiful sound.

Eventually we developed many programs to better serve cats. In 2013, we launched our hugely popular Designs for Felines, which supports our Cat Neighborhood Partnership Program (CatNiPP). Participating architects design creative outdoor shelters for community cats to use during the winters’ freezing temperatures. This year’s event was closely followed by a blizzard that dumped over two feet of snow over much of the region. Awareness of our CatNiPP program, together with the shelters built by staff, volunteers, and architects, helped many homeless cats to weather the storms.

Nearly eight years of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) efforts have helped reduce the numbers of cats being born outdoors. Our dedicated staff and volunteers work tirelessly to facilitate TNR, and there are countless caretakers throughout the District who quietly feed and monitor the health of the feral and community cat populations. As the program grows, we are watching intake levels decline as more cats are sterilized.

Yet the challenges of cat overpopulation are far from resolved. We have to work together, as a community of animal lovers, to continue our progress. The recent merger of the Washington Humane Society and the Washington Animal Rescue League is a way to deliver consistently improving services to the felines in our community. Our Oglethorpe Medical Center provides low-cost vet services to income-qualified individuals to help keep their cats healthy and at home.

I am often asked “How can I help?” We have some targeted giving opportunities for cats. Please go to our website at www.washhumane.org and select “Support Us” from the banner to see the various ways you can help cats. A gift to CatNiPP allows us to continue to sterilize and provide basic healthcare to feral and community cats. A gift to the Feline Friends Fund supports enrichment programs for our shelter cats as well as adoption efforts. Through Amazon.com you can access our Wish List and provide in-kind donations of food, toys, and treats. Those are just a few of the many ways you can show your devotion to these ancient and mysterious creatures who grace us with their companionship.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support to help us successfully care for the cats who call the District home. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Lisa LaFontaine
President and CEO
ceo@washhumane.org
The third annual “Designs for Felines: Giving Community Cats Shelter” was held on January 20, 2016 at The Blind Whino Arts Club in Southeast DC. This meow-velous event was enjoyed by more than 300 guests and a record-breaking $17,600 was raised to benefit the programs and services of WHS, particularly the community Cat Neighborhood Partnership Program (CatNiPP). We are so thankful to our generous supporters for showing just how much DC loves DC animals.

This year we had a variety of participating teams including architecture firms, college students, and friends each designing and building creative and functional outdoor shelters.

After guest voting concluded, and much deliberation from our esteemed judges, the following teams were awarded top shelter designs of the night.

Congratulations to all of our participants and thank you for your support! Thank you to our wonderful sponsors for their support of this year’s event including Page Southerland Page, Inc., Friendship Hospital for Animals, pHinicky pHeline Cat Café, The Blind Whino, Bluejacket Brewery, NOVADog Magazine, The Virginia Maryland Dog Magazine, and Inside Look TV.

Check out photos from this year’s event at www.washhumane.org/D4Fpics. We look forward to seeing everyone next year at the 4th Annual Designs for Felines!

PUPS IN THE PARK

Bring your dog to the baseball game!

Every year the Washington Nationals welcome four-legged fans for WHS Pups in the Park.

If you’re bringing your dog, don’t forget to buy a dog ticket! One hundred percent of the proceeds from dog tickets ($10 each) benefit the Washington Humane Society.

SAT. APRIL 23 VS. TWINS
SAT. MAY 14 VS. MARLINS
SAT. MAY 28 VS. CARDINALS
MON. JUNE 13 VS. CUBS
THURS. SEPT. 8 VS. PHILLIES
SAT. OCT. 1 VS. MARLINS

Get your tickets quickly, they sell out fast!
www.nationals.com/pups
Washington, DC boasts a wide variety of wildlife within its boundaries. One can frequently observe large mammals and birds like deer and bald eagles (the national bird) all the way down to chipmunks and the occasional migrating hummingbird. With the arrival of Spring comes a new batch of furry and feathered critters in the District. In an ideal situation, the animal parents would be making their nests or dens in parks or trees. However, in a heavily urbanized area that contains both natural parks and constructed houses, close encounters with wildlife may be unavoidable. Taking steps to critter-proof your home to prevent wildlife from entering your residence is the best way to minimize any unwanted encounters.

Critter-proofing your home or business can be as easy as walking the perimeter of the building and looking for a few vulnerable spots. As a general rule, if an animal can get their head through a hole, they will be able to get the rest of their body in as well. Holes in siding or pieces that are not properly secured can present easy access to an animal looking for shelter. Raccoons are very adept at manipulating objects with their paws and can easily remove a loose piece of siding. Make sure that any missing or loose pieces of siding are replaced or secured. A properly attached chimney cap can prevent birds from nesting and raccoons or possums from entering the flue. Under porch roofs or awnings, one should look for twigs or sticks that are being arranged in a nest shape. Birds will gladly set up a nest in an area where they are covered from the elements.

Active bird nests, or nests that contain eggs or young birds, are federally protected and cannot be removed. Occasionally if a bird nest is allowed to remain in place, a young bird that is not yet able to fly may fall out of the nest. If the young bird appears uninjured with no broken bones, it can be picked up and placed back in the nest. It is a myth that once a young wild animal is touched by a person, it will not be accepted by the parents. Similarly, young animals that are still being taken care of by the parents can be placed as near as possible to the adult to re-unite them.

Easy access to shelter may not be the only perk wildlife is looking for. Access to a food source like a trash can is something that should be eliminated to discourage animals from hanging around your property. Trash from the home and especially food scraps should be bagged and disposed of in a trash can. Lids for the cans may be secured with the addition of a bungee cord or a cinder block. Sprinkling non-toxic materials such as cayenne pepper or spraying the inside of the can with vinegar may also help in deterring any hungry visitors.

Easy access to shelter and food are the main attractants luring wildlife to your property. Having a vigilant eye and being proactive about maintaining your property will greatly help in deterring wildlife from moving in. If food sources and shelter are eliminated, critters will be encouraged to forage naturally and seek shelter in natural areas such as trees or burrows.

Wildlife is very capable of foraging and finding natural shelter, and they should be encouraged to do so in their natural habitat. Encounters with wildlife in the District can be entertaining and educational, but it is important to remember that wild animals can also be dangerous if provoked or if they feel threatened. By taking steps to eliminate sources of food or shelter, close encounters can be minimized.
GOT OUTDOOR CATS? CALL CATNIPP!

By: Niki Cochran, Community Cat Program Manager

CatNiPP is a Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) program that contributes to the long-term management of feral cat populations in the District and breaks the cycle of trap-and-remove. TNR works because it addresses the root of the problem – breeding. Due to the high demand for this service, WHS has also provided TNR assistance to many communities in Maryland and Virginia.

A QUICK LOOK AT THE TNR PROCESS:
- Cat is trapped by CatNiPP staff, Animal Control Officer, or volunteer
- Cat is taken to the National Capital Area Spay & Neuter Center
- Cat is sterilized, vaccinated, and receives an “ear tip” (universal sign to mark TNR status)
- Cat is returned to same community the following day

WHS is regularly called by residents who spot cats and kittens in their alleys and yards. They’ve noticed more kittens born each year, are worried about them surviving out on the streets, and express concern with the number of cats increasing each year. They want to learn what they can do to help these animals without causing harm to them. CatNiPP offers a humane solution that they can turn to, protecting these cats by controlling the population and keeping them healthy.

In 2015, CatNiPP experienced much success and WHS was able to perform TNR on 2,300 feral cats in the District alone. We have helped over 14,000 cats from Maryland, Virginia, and DC since the launch of the program in 2006. The program’s success is due to the dedicated group of volunteer trappers, Animal Control Officers in the field to assist neighbors, and a grass-roots approach to ‘recruiting’ colony caregivers to help with TNR. WHS has many areas of ‘completed’ TNR colonies where no new kittens have been seen for several years! Areas with a high volume of complaint calls have tapered off, indicating the cat populations have stabilized and the program is effective.

Finally, we come to the kittens. While it is hard to “deferalize” a cat, it is a completely different story with kittens. Cats between six and ten weeks of age are young enough to be socialized and adopted; we just need the manpower to make this happen. Working with a small group of foster parents who specialize in socialization, WHS has been able to find permanent homes for these adoptable kittens. But we could always use more helping hands! If you are interested in volunteering or donating to CatNiPP, please call 202-608-1356.
CARL’S STORY: A FOSTER KITTEN’S ROAD TO HIS FOREVER HOME

By: Jennah Billeter, Foster Program Manager

Last year between April and October, the Washington Humane Society (WHS) placed 675 cats and kittens into foster care. As the weather warms up, so does Kitten Season! During this undeniably adorable season, we are bursting at the seams with kittens. If you’re looking to help homeless animals, fostering is a wonderfully rewarding way to contribute.

Wondering what it’s like to foster kittens? Check out Carl’s story...

Hi! I’m Carl. I’m all grown up now, but when I was a wee kitten, I was pretty sick. I had an eye infection and an upper respiratory infection. The medical staff at WHS took good care of me, but they knew that because I was so small and so sick, a foster home would be the best place for me to get better.

This really nice lady came along. She called herself a foster mom, and she took me home. Man, that place was awesome! Cozy blankets, a little house just for me, and lots of love!

I kind of looked like a little flower for a while because I had to wear a tiny cone so my eyes would get better. Just look at how little I was! I was only about four weeks old when I went to foster care. When I was living in foster care, my eyes and my upper respiratory infection got better. I got the chance to learn how to live in a home with people and other animals. Zoey, my foster sister, was always playing with me and giving me cat baths (that wasn’t always my favorite). Chirp, my foster brother, was pretty cool, and he would let me snuggle with him sometimes.

When I was about eight weeks old, I was ready for adoption! My foster mom told me she was really going to miss me, but I was ready to find a family of my own. I was a little scared, but let me tell you, I found the bestest forever mom! Look, there she is giving me my first snuggles. I have an amazing life all because my foster mom opened her heart and home to a little guy in need of a little extra TLC.

Here at WHS, we have lots of kittens and cats that could use a loving foster home. We place adult cats who are scared in the shelter environment, have medical needs, or who have been in the shelter environment for an extended period of time. We also need fosters for our momma cats who are still nursing a litter of kittens. We place bottle babies (kittens who are too young to eat independently and need to be bottle fed), under-socialized kittens, kittens who are too young to be spayed/neutered (between four and seven weeks old), and kittens with illness into foster homes. Ready to get started? Fill out a foster application today! Still have questions? You can e-mail foster@washhumane.org.
MEET THE BOARD - PRISCILLA CLAPP

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT BEING ON THE WASHINGTON HUMANE SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

I have had the pleasure of serving on the WHS board for almost 20 years. During those years I have seen the organization transform itself from one with a small board of dedicated volunteers to a meaningful organization with a sophisticated board of directors. The board has evolved in its stewardship of WHS under the current management team. We can focus on broader issues impacting the lives of the animals in the District and develop a vision for the future. I am proud to have been a part of the evolution.

HOW MANY PETS DO YOU HAVE?
TELL US ABOUT THEM...

I have three cats and a sweet little Yorkie mix - all from the New York Avenue Adoption Center. Batman is my oldest. I adopted him with his sister Robin and they traveled with me to Burma. Batman is now over 17 and his sister has been gone for several years. In 2009, I was adopted by another set of siblings I call the “MINIS” – Miniman and Minimouse. Both white with black markings like Batman. Yes, you could say I have a type. My little Yorkie mix, Kobe, started as a medical foster. He had two broken legs and I volunteered to nurse him back to health. Now he is my faithful companion, often joining me on trips to the WHS offices where he can visit with his old friend, Edgar.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ARE PARTICULARLY EXCITED ABOUT FOR WHS’S FUTURE?

For the past 20 years, I have dreamed of a facility that would provide superior animal care and humane education for all District residents. Now that dream is coming true and I am excited to be a part of it.

WHAT IS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE VERY PROUD OF?

Over the past 20 years, WHS has made incredible advances in cat care. The shelter conditions have improved for our feline inhabitants with spaces that allow greater socialization. The cat programs have become more robust with the success of our Trap, Neuter, and Return initiative and CatNiPP. I have seen the humane treatment of cats improve with more cats being adopted, fewer cats being unnecessarily euthanized, and a significant decrease in unwanted cats. Those are accomplishments that are near and dear to me.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ANIMAL, AND WHY?

I couldn’t possibly choose just one animal. I love them all!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE STORY TO SHARE WITH OTHERS ABOUT WHS?

Of all the animals WHS has saved and put into forever homes, those that I have personally helped hold a special place in my heart. I have a god-dog, Daisy, whom I helped place. She now lives in a wonderful home and gets to run with the horses. I also helped place a wonderful pitbull mix, Penny, who was cared for during Bark Ball by a friend’s daughter. Now Penny is part of a loving family and is a wonderful example of the animals we have available for adoption. My favorite stories are those I hear from families who have opened their homes and their hearts to animals I have introduced to them.
Lisa LaFontaine, President and CEO of WHS, has become President and CEO of the combined organization, with Roger Marmet, former chairman of the board of WARL, serving as board chair. A new name and brand for the combined organization will be announced in coming months.

“This is a historic day for the animals of our region,” said Lisa LaFontaine, President and CEO on the day of the announcement. “Washington will be the first major city to bring together every animal-related program in an end-to-end system for area residents and animals. By unifying the District’s two iconic animal welfare organizations, we are creating a model organization that can tackle the systemic challenges facing animals in our region and nationally. Together, we can achieve our vision of a community where there is a loving home for every unwanted animal, affordable medical care for every sick and injured animal, an end to animal abuse and cruelty, and stronger bonds between animals and people through education and training. Both of our organizations shared a single guiding principle throughout this process - that we should do whatever is best for the people and animals of our region.”

The merger has been approved in unanimous votes of both the WARL and WHS boards, and the two organizations have been working at the leadership level for the last several months to lay the groundwork for a smooth and efficient combination. Given the significant and growing responsibilities of the combined organization, the organization expects to have a larger combined staff as programs continue to expand and grow.

“When we looked at the incredible opportunities through this merger, the answer was clear,” said Roger Marmet, chairman of the board of the combined organization. “This merger will allow us to save more animals, help more animals, protect more animals, and find more animals permanent loving homes. Even better, it creates a one-stop destination for residents for all animal-related needs, whether a search for a new companion to join their family, financial assistance with veterinary care or pet food, assistance with behavioral problems, vaccination or spay/neuter services, or help from officers for a lost, injured, or abused animal.”
WHS and WARL will bring together a comprehensive set of animal care and protection programs that currently touch the lives of more than 60,000 animal annually, including:

- **Rescue and Adoption** – With a combined 90% save rate for animals, WHS and WARL have built national models for effective rescue and adoption programs, and offer public access to two major adoption facilities.
- **Humane Law Enforcement** – Under its 145-year-old Congressional Charter, WHS serves as DC’s “animal cops” protecting the District’s animals from cruelty and harm.
- **Low-Cost Veterinary Services** – WARL’s state-of-the-art medical center provides veterinary care to all families in the District, regardless of their ability to pay.
- **Animal Control** – WHS serves as the District’s animal control agency, responding to nearly 1,500 calls per month for animal emergencies ranging from lost and injured companion animals to injured wildlife.
- **Behavior and Learning** – WHS and WARL offer a wide range of education programs for pet owners to help strengthen relationships and address common household problems.
- **Spay/Neuter Services** – WHS runs the region’s only high-volume low-cost spay and neuter center, helping address the root cause of pet overpopulation.
- **Pets for Life** – WHS goes door-to-door in under resourced communities to help pet owners get information and access to veterinary services, vaccinations, behavior training, spay-neuter services, and other important resources.
- **Other Programs** – WHS and WARL also offer programs ranging from humane education programs to a “Safe Haven” program for the pets of victims of domestic violence, and a pet food bank for families facing difficult financial times.

**LITTER BOX SET UP**

By: Melissa Morris, Behavior & Training Counselor

Litter box issues are one of the most common reasons cats are surrendered by their owners. Cats may start pottying outside the box as the result of a large variety of issues, ranging from medical reasons to stress from a change in the household. Here are some tips to help set your cat up for success.

First, the location of the litter box is important. Ideally, it should be somewhere easy for the cat to access, but out of the way of a lot of household traffic. No cat wants to potty where there are a lot of people or other animals always walking by. A bathroom or a quiet corner of a bedroom are usually good options. It is important to ensure that the cat is not going to be disturbed while using the bathroom. Having a dog stick his head in the litter box while the cat is trying to potty is a quick way for the cat to develop a negative association with the box. However, some may consider putting up a barrier like a baby gate to the room to help keep other animals out.

**How many litter boxes should you have?** The ideal formula is the number of cats plus one. So if you have two cats, you should have three litter boxes located throughout the house. This way, the cats don’t have to wait until another cat is finished or accidentally run into another cat while on their way to the box.

As for the litter box itself, you want to make sure that the litter box is large enough for your particular cat. The ideal size is 1.5 times the length of the cat. I recommend starting with an uncovered litter box at first. You can always try adding an additional covered litter box later to see if the cat is comfortable with it.

There are many different types of cat litters available. I recommend starting with an unscented, scoopable litter. If you ever want to switch litters down the road, be sure to start with only one of the litter boxes in order to see if the cat likes that particular litter. That way, if he doesn’t like the feel of it, he can still use the other box with the familiar litter. If, after two weeks, he is using the new litter regularly, you can phase out the old litter.

The most important factor when it comes to litter boxes is cleaning. No kitty wants to use a dirty box. Litter boxes should be scooped at least twice a day. This will not only be more pleasant for the cat, it will also help control any odor.

These simple steps should help to set up the cat for a lifetime of good potty habits. If your cat does suddenly start pottying elsewhere, the first step is to take him to the vet to rule out any medical causes.
Honorary Honors and Memorials Listed here were received during December 31, 2015. For more information, please contact development@washhumane.org. Thank you!
Memorials Continued

Sinclair
Brad Greenfield
Skylar
Sheila B. Moreland
Smiley
Ann Lowe & Jon Barrett
Smoky
Julie Brouse
Snowball
Ronald Trone
Sophie Tufano
Jeanne & Frank Tufano
Spanky
Kathy Maxwell
Sparky & Abby
Ruth Ann Evans
Sprots
Caroline Pardoe
Stanley M. Hecht
Martin Kotler
Robert Hohl
Dr. Sukhen C. Chaudhuri
Neil Chaudhuri
Suzie
Thomas Swegle
Suzy & Katy
Michael Greene
Taco
Megan Morryman
Tasha
Taryn, Kevin, & Xander
Teddy
Dianne Battle
Thurgood
Dennis Moore
Timmy, Riki, Jenny, Lucy, & Truffle
Mary Abate
Tinky
Thomas O’Keefe
Tito Levine
Marian Galeano
Toby
Kathleen O’Malley
Toby Rohde
Barbara Rohde
Tom Bandy
Robert Blizzard
Topoli & Feferi
Robert Hunter
Tucker
Madeline Blankenship
Tucker Scharpf
Marianne Scharpf
Tuesday Kirstein
Kerry Kirstein
Vance & Mary Frances Bright
Cheryl Bright
Whitaker
Sandra Smith
Whitey
Charles & Kristen Salvo
Willy Butler
Headley Butler
Xena Warrior Princess Dog
Stephanie Vance
Yggdrasil
Meredith, Freyja, & Kisa Strider
Zephyr
Clare Palca
Zipper & Derby
Ginger Moss
Zoe
Susan Steel

ANIMAL CONTROL FIELD SERVICES: WORKING TO KEEP CATS IN THEIR HOMES

BY: CPL. MEG HOLEVA, ANIMAL CONTROL FIELD SERVICES

Owning a pet is a huge responsibility. Most people know that, but until they are faced with compounding costs, it often doesn’t sink in. As Animal Control Officers, by the time we arrive at a situation, many times pet owners have already hit the final straw and are overwhelmed by issues, particularly with cats. Our first course of action when we arrive on scene is always to assess the environment and the condition of the animal. If both of those things are positive, then we have to figure out why the pet owner wants to surrender the animal.

One of the biggest complaints we get from cat owners is that the cat is being destructive. Examples of destruction can be clawing furniture, defecating outside the litter box, spraying in the house, or breaking out screens. We have heard tales of cats getting out of the house and having multiple litters until the owners are completely over-run and overwhelmed with kittens. Then these cats are surrendered to our already full shelter. It’s never an easy decision to make, and it’s one that we try to help avoid.

Our job as Officers and representatives of WHS is to keep animals out of our adoption centers. Provided that it is in the best interest of the cat, we’ll offer many different levels of assistance. For some cats, we offer the owner cat treats and a scratch pad or two. For others, it’s as simple as counseling the owners on proper litter changing and providing them with more litter boxes. For others, sometimes, we lend a compassionate ear and help find the best solution for the individual situation.

In the case cited earlier of the cat that got out, with the owner finding himself buried under far too many cats, the owner ended up surrendering all of the cats because of how overwhelming the situation had become. As I was leaving the scene, I sat down with the owner and talked to him about possibly keeping the original cat. He shook his head, still far too overwhelmed to even entertain the thought of keeping a cat. I told him that we could offer him support in the form of spay surgery and vaccinations. He wanted to think about it. Later that night, because of that support, we were able to arrange for the original cat to go back to her home, spayed and vaccinated.

A majority of cats, just need basic care: yearly vaccinations and checkups, food, litter, toys, and love. With services like our low-cost vaccination clinics and voucher programs, being a pet owner is more affordable than ever, as long as the community is aware of the services being offered. Outreach and compassion are the first steps to keeping pets in homes. Sometimes it’s as simple as listening; more often it’s being willing to offer support. Keeping animals in their homes starts with empathy towards the people that love them, regardless of their situation.