

Spike's journey from a cold bench to a happy home

When you look at Spike's gentle and playful demeanor today, it's hard to imagine that just a few months ago, he was abandoned in a neighborhood park.

This gorgeous blue-eyed dog waited alone, tied to a park bench in cold, rainy weather, before a good Samaritan spotted him and called for help. Law enforcement quickly assessed the situation, and our Animal Control Officer was called in to bring Spike to St. Hubert's.

Spike was very scared when he first arrived at the shelter. Our behavioral team noticed he was especially sensitive to sudden movements or noises — which was understandable considering what he had just endured. But thankfully, Spike warmed up quickly once he knew he was in a safe and loving environment. Within a few days, he was handing out face licks to our staff and asking to play tug-of-war.

Like every animal who comes into St. Hubert's, Spike's treatment was curated to his needs, and he was given the space he needed to heal. Then when the time was right, our dedicated staff made sure to place Spike with a loving family who could fit his lifestyle needs.

We met Spike during one of the most difficult moments of his life, but with help from kindhearted supporters like you, we ensured his story would have a happy ending.



How a historic rescue brought Belmont to St. Hubert's

At St. Hubert's, we know we must always be prepared to act — and that's exactly what we did when we received a call about a case of severe neglect in a home in South Bound Brook, New Jersey.

Initially, a concerned neighbor had called law enforcement to complain about a foul odor coming from the home. When our staff arrived, they quickly realized that the odor was actually ammonia — a poisonous gas coming from an extreme buildup of cat urine. As our team moved through the house, they could not believe what they found — over 100 neglected cats and kittens living in hazardous conditions. Many of the cats were underweight, and some had severe eye and respiratory infections. It was a heartbreaking scene.

In total, our team rescued 113 cats, including 46 neonatal kittens. One among them was **Belmont**, a sweet cat facing a long journey to recovery. When Belmont arrived at St. Hubert's, he was deathly thin and scared of those around him. So, after our team cleared him of infection, they made sure he was placed in a foster home that would relieve the stress he was feeling and allow him time to heal.

While living with his foster, Belmont blossomed physically and emotionally. He slowly put on weight and began showing signs of his feline instincts. Then, when he was ready, he was adopted by a loving family who could provide Belmont with the peace and stability he deserved as well as comfy couches for naps.

We are so grateful for all you do to give vulnerable animals like Belmont a second chance at a fulfilling life. As Belmont's former foster says, "Belmont is a living depiction of resiliency," and your support was all he needed to overcome his past and move toward a happier tomorrow.

A Message from Lisa LaFontaine

Dear friends,

No matter how long I do this work, the individual stories of survival, hope, and the people who make it all possible still move me at a deep level. These experiences and stories sustain me and so many of my colleagues. It is why we choose to devote our lives to people, animals, and the human-animal bond.

In this issue of *Humane News*, you'll read Belmont's story; his happy ending was made possible when the South Bound Brook Police Department called to tell us about reports of a foul odor coming from a neighborhood home.

Upon arriving at the home, our officers discovered that the odor was ammonia coming from a toxic buildup of cat urine. And there were many more cats than we expected — 113 in total — suffering in these conditions. Thankfully, we were able to rescue all the cats, including Belmont. This gentle guy was severely underweight when he came to St. Hubert's. But after receiving loving care from our staff and being placed with a kindhearted foster, he began to heal — both emotionally and physically. Now, Belmont is with a loving family and is the center of their universe.

Belmont's story is just one example of how your support allows our team to answer every call for help. It's a privilege to work beside so many people who make things better in our communities for animals and the people who love them.

In this issue, you'll also see multiple examples of how we have answered the call for help, with a big shout out to our emergency response team, our dedicated volunteers, and supporters like you who make our work possible.

Everybody on the St. Hubert's team is critical to our work, from our field officers who respond to thousands of calls each year to our community outreach teams who remove economic barriers to animal companionship, our adoptions counselors who help create families, and our generous family of donors and volunteers who make all this possible.

While the work can be challenging, I am so proud to be part of a collective of amazing, inspiring people who regularly answer calls for help from near and far. As we head into our busiest months, with our animal populations and call volume expected to rise, I am deeply grateful to each of you for supporting our mission.

Enjoy your summer!

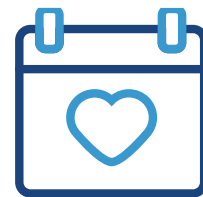


All the best,

Lisa LaFontaine
President and Chief Executive Officer

WAYS TO GIVE BACK

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR



Every gift has the ability to make a lifelong impact. When you join as a St. Hubert's monthly angel and commit to a recurring, tax-deductible donation, you are ensuring that we can continue to meet animals' needs whenever and wherever they need us.



LEAVE A LEGACY

As a kindhearted believer in the power that animals hold to enrich our lives and our communities, you can also help us build a lasting legacy of animal advocacy by including St. Hubert's in your estate plans, be it through mandatory IRA distributions, stock, real estate, or other types of planned gifts.

LEARN MORE



If you'd like to explore your giving options further, please go to www.sthuberts.org/donation or reach out to Director of Development Kim McGorty at **973-647-5714** or kmcgorty@sthuberts.org.



Logan and Ashley Ryan opened their home when we needed it most

Logan Ryan, NFL defensive back, and his wife, Ashley Ryan, are longtime animal advocates, but their commitment to fostering began in 2019, with a wish from their daughter, Avery.

Avery, who was 4 years old at the time, begged her parents for a kitten. Since the family already had other pets and couldn't commit to a new member of the family just then, Logan and Ashley agreed to foster a kitten instead.

That first experience created a love for fostering, and this passion for animal welfare only grew for the Ryans in early 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began. The Ryans recognized the power that animals had to bring comfort during troubling times. They also knew their family, who would be staying home more often during quarantine, could help the shelters at a time when the need was greatest.

One day, Logan and Ashley saw just how fulfilling providing shelter to a vulnerable animal can be when they found one of their favorite foster kittens, Cocoa Puff, laying upside down on Avery's lap getting a belly rub. "It has been a true pleasure watching Avery's compassion grow as she welcomes new kittens into our home," they said.

Since the summer of 2019, the Ryan family has fostered over 30 kittens for several shelters nationwide, including St. Hubert's. Their foster animals included neonatal kittens and their moms, injured kittens, and kittens who just needed time to grow before being adopted.

In Ashley's words, "There are all types of animals out there with many different needs. If fostering is something you've considered, reach out to the shelter to see what pets may be a good fit for you! Coming from the big dog-loving animal advocate who fosters teeny tiny kittens, you may be surprised!"

If the Ryan family's experience inspires you, we hope you'll consider fostering! We know choosing to foster is a big decision. Below are some answers to potential questions you may have:



WHAT KINDS OF ANIMALS ARE MOST IN NEED OF FOSTER CARE?

Staying in the shelter is stressful for all animals, but homes are most often needed for:

- Dogs over 40 lbs. who are stressed in the shelter
- Animals who are sick or recovering from an illness
- Animals who need behavior training or socialization
- Animals who are shy or timid
- Moms with nursing kittens or puppies
- Animals too young to be spayed or neutered
- Pets whose owners are victims of domestic violence, eviction, or other emergency situations

DO I NEED SPECIFIC SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE TO FOSTER?

You don't need to have previous animal experience to become a foster! All you need is compassion, a love of animals, and a willingness to learn as you go.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FOSTER?

While St. Hubert's provides all the supplies you'll need to care for an animal, you will be responsible for the animal's daily care. We will also ask you to transport the animal to the shelter for routine checkups and vaccinations as needed. Most importantly, you'll serve as the animal's strongest adoption advocate when they are ready to find a loving home.

I'M READY TO FOSTER AN ANIMAL IN NEED. HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Great! Please email Steve Valentin with any questions you may have at svalentin@sthuberts.org. Or, if you already have all the information you need, you can fill out a foster application here: www.sthuberts.org/foster-a-pet



What your cat might be trying to tell you

Dear Adrienne: My cat loves meowing in the mornings, afternoons, and sometimes even late into the evening. Why does my furry friend meow so much? What are they trying to tell me? -CatWhisperer921

Dear CatWhisperer921: There are many reasons why your cat may be meowing because — just like humans — cats use their voices to communicate. From a young age, cats learn that meowing can be useful. As kittens, cats will meow to let their mom know that they're hungry. Once their mom hears them, she'll get closer to allow them to nurse.

When cats transition to living with people like us, they quickly realize meowing also works to get our attention. Picture yourself busily working at your computer when you hear your cat meow. You pick your head up to see your cat sitting by his empty food bowl. Then you look at the clock and realize it's an hour past dinner, so you race into action to fill kitty's tummy.

Anything your cat enjoys (petting, play, food), when given in response to a meow, will be considered a reward and encourage more vocalizations. While meowing itself shouldn't be a cause for concern, you should look out for more general changes in your cat's vocalizations. For example, if your talkative cat suddenly stops meowing or if your normally quiet cat turns into a chatterbox, then it may be a sign of an underlying medical condition. If the unusual vocalizations persist, you should call your veterinarian. If your cat is not yet spayed or neutered and you notice your cat is yowling, make an appointment as soon as possible to talk to your veterinarian.

There are other reasons why your cat might be trying to get your attention. They might be bored and asking you for new activities and toys. Or they might be lonely and looking for some more quality time with you. Ultimately, the most important thing you can do is listen to your cat. These animals each have their own personality. Some are naturally talkative, while others are more reserved with their words. Either way, they are all fantastic.

OUR MISSION

St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center is dedicated to the humane treatment of animals. We believe in and provide services that support the human-animal bond and seek to foster an environment in which people respect all living creatures.

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