

2021 calendar sales and membership donations from Balloon Juice = \$4465.00

Due to COVID and the restriction on things we do more frequently, chip clinics and fundraisers, we found ourselves rechanneling our energies and financially aiding more individual cases i.e., we changed budgeting allocations and were able increase our aid for low-income spay and neuter, vaccinations, urgent medical, emergencies plus offering bridging loans.

This money gave us a lot of cushion to allocate to pet emergencies – individual cases where we can make a real difference.

These are just a few of the more intense cases, and also some explanations of the situations that your membership may or may not be educated in, but are common in the rescue world:

Story 1: Totoro



– one of our Facebook members had a daughter with a friend whose family had Toto. The daughter was concerned about him, a Russian Blue, one year old, acquired from the Denver Dumb Friends League with other kittens. As the kittens matured, two bonded and started to pick on T. He developed feline herpes and dental problems, wasn't grooming himself, and was drooling constantly and not eating. The wife was divorcing her husband and moving, she wanted to rehome the cat, but he wasn't a good candidate due to his condition. We set her up with a wellness exam with a vet: all his teeth had to be potentially pulled, there was an autoimmune issue (severe stomatitis), and stress caused flare-ups. The vet recommended rehoming ASAP to get T out of the stressful situation. We paid the bill for the wellness check, a lion shave, and the back teeth were removed, but the cost was high. The wife wanted it done but couldn't pay for it up front. We were able to cover the bill initially, and she paid it off as a loan.

We created a rehoming post, and a lady in town who had just lost her senior cat, committed to a foster to adopt contract. She was willing to take him to her home, transport him for follow up vet checkups, and if all went well, she would adopt. His mouth has healed, his coat is growing back, and he settled into his new home the very first night.

The family wanted to put him to sleep because his condition was very painful, and they could not afford to pay for timely treatment. We didn't have to do that; he was otherwise healthy. A year ago we wouldn't have been able to loan the money.

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Easter

– we met this dog four days prior to taking to an emergency vet, she appeared abandoned, and had wandered onto a family's lawn on Easter Sunday. She was very wobbly and was wrapped in a vest. We were called for help and did a chip check and a basic physical assessment. She had massive lumps and bumps within the fur of her belly. She appeared to be a breeder dog, and the owner had placed rubber bands around her teats. We transported her to the ER in COS, all mammary glands were severely enlarged with cancerous tumors, she was a hospice case. The finders were doing a wonderful job taking care of her, but couldn't afford the vet bill, and once they were made aware of her condition were not in a position to provide hospice care until it was time to put her to sleep. This pup was basically ignored and left to roam, we thought she was about 8-10 years old, but she was only 5-7. The owner could not be found, so there was no one who could authorize euthanasia. We do not have a shelter, we are foster-based, and an owner is necessary for a humane euthanasia determination. We then took her to the Fremont Humane Society, surrendered her to them. Another exam confirmed the advanced stage cancer, and x-rays showed her back was crippled, she had muscle tone in her front legs but none in back. They got her started on fluids to see if she was a candidate for "fospice" (foster hospice), but she declined so much overnight that they made the call for humane euthanasia.

The last 3 ½ days were probably the best of her life in a long while... and She haunts us to this day.

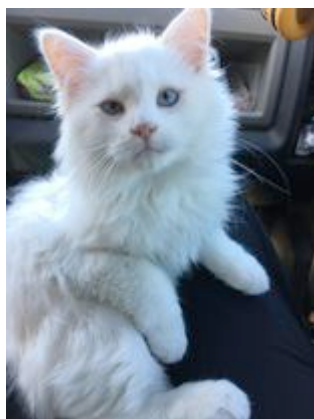
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Thalia

--is a 15-year-old companion dog for a low-income disabled individual in town. The owner had been taking her to a vet due to overall health concerns, she was diagnosed with diabetes. Owner could not afford anything beyond the initial examinations, and tried to maintain her with diet modifications. We got a call the day she had a diabetic crisis, got her into an ER for an over the weekend stay and stabilization. We had her do a follow up 2 weeks after to determine her status, a comprehensive blood panel determined she had Cushing's disease underlying it all, and the diabetes was a secondary component. Thalia has been stabilized regards her glucose levels, but there is nothing more that can be done to help her underlying condition. We are offering support and guidance to the owner giving her time to say her goodbyes. We were able to cover all the bills.

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Niko and Koko:

--A well-meaning local approached us for help with some kittens being over produced at a friend's house. The adults were pets, but free-roaming and intact, so they just kept reproducing. The friend was concerned for the kits going into winter and caught them up and took them home, but was afraid she would have to rehome them due to the expense of initial med care (vet check, vax and eventual neuter). She asked for help with the bills and/or rehoming. We made an agreement with her to cover a certain percentage and she was able to keep both boys.

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Community cats and their kittens:

A colony of community cats is often fed and watered by a caretaker. The caretaker is usually familiar with every resident cat, is aware of transients, and illness, and relatedness, but they are rarely able to afford medical care or spay/neuter for the colony. Community cats can fall anywhere on the spectrum from completely feral to very friendly with people. Most commonly they become a bit more social with the caretaker, but not accepting of strangers.

It takes a long time and a lot of patience to gain the trust of a hard-stray or feral adult cat; they have survived by their wits, their wild ways, and a “fight or flight” instinct. We do not advocate for any relocation of adult community cats. TNR (trap, neuter, return) gives them the best odds for survival. We cover the costs for TNR. The best possible outcome for us is to help animals stay in their homes (even if that home is a colony) and not go to shelters -

Kittens are a different story, the younger they are the better the chances of socializing them and affording them adoption opportunities. This also gives someone the opportunity to offer them a better diet for growth, medications to ward off potential infections from the colony, and reduces the stress of handling as they mature.

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Cindy's colony:

The caretaker (Cindy) of this colony is a low income and disabled senior lady, with a heart for caring for all the abandoned cats that arise in her mobile home block. Renters move and leave their cats behind, most can be social, but are not fixed or vaccinated. Cindy has been caring for all of them over the years, but eventually asked us for help. She has a fertile, trap wise, feral mamma (Grandma) that just keeps producing litters, and her daughters keep producing litters. They are comfortable eating and sunning on her porch, and some even enter the house on occasion, but stay all winter under the trailer. She was worried about the daughters seeming to be sick, and the litters as well. Day by day, week by week, month by month, the adult females were trapped, and vet checked, and spayed. The daughters were compromised with pyometra, and infection, but the ongoing meds that Cindy was able to administer, and the spays helped reverse their conditions. In the meantime, litters were pulled, kittens were examined, and the last litter were still nursing (one month old) when we found one unresponsive while there to help administer medication the day after the litter's first vet check. We rushed her to the vet who determined she was hypoglycemic, was able to revive and stabilize her, but recommended bottle feeding rather than returning her to her mother. Cindy opted to risk pulling the remaining littermates that night when Grandma was trying to move them to an unsafe location where we would not be able to medicate and monitor them. A phenomenal foster took over bottle feeding the trio, transporting to vet checks, and vaccinations, and ultimately to an adopter who was willing to take in all three to complete their weaning schedule.

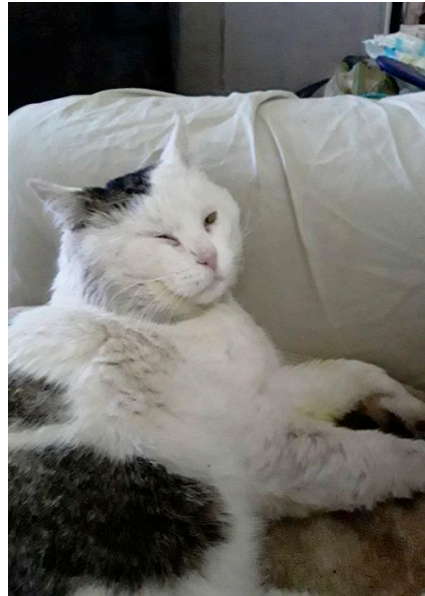
There is no way we could have done all this without Cindy's dedication and constant eagle-eye for anything amiss in the colony, and there is no way she could have paid for any of it except for the cat chow! We are diligently trying to catch Grandma for spaying, and then we try for the males that saunter through! Our spay/neuter account covers the bill for all community cats, and their vaccinations.



Sami and his siblings:

We got a call from a couple with a mamma cat and kits under their porch, they fed them, but couldn't allow them in the house (allergic to cats). They were OK with the mamma staying outside, but wanted the kits relocated. They were 6 months old – well past the window of age that is ideal for socializing feral kittens, but it can be done! One of our fosters set up traps and proceeded to trap each kit and then mamma. The adult female was spayed, vax'ed and returned. The kits were vet examined, and fostered, and socialized. Two of the three became very social and were adopted out as house cats. Sami the Siamese did not become trusting of strangers but bonded tightly with his foster mom who happily became a "foster fail". He has since integrated into her home with her senior cat and dogs. Feliway proved extremely helpful in reducing his stress load once his siblings were gone and he was adjusting to their absence.

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Crybaby:

A stray male cat came crying to a local's door, he became very friendly, and obviously belonged to someone at one time, but had just been wandering the neighborhood for over a year. She took him in, and noticed the massive raw injury on front leg, and called us for help. He got a vet check/wellness exam, wound abraded, and medicated, and the finder took him under her care. The wound healed, the finder adopted him, and he was neutered. WMAW covered all the bills as they came in, but a friend set up a Facebook fundraiser for him, and almost all the monies spent were recouped. We have been able to cover the upfront vet bills of an urgent situation, due to having the extra monies, until a fundraiser raises what may be needed.



Whiskey, 2-year-old Boxer, neutered and vaxed, with a partial loan to owner. We don't advertise, but word of mouth lets those pet owners in need know of our flexibility in helping with the necessary spays, neuters, vaccinations etc. of their pets. Low income, disabled, retired veterans, and covid-caused job loss situations are the tough world we now live in, and we are happy to consider helping those in need. No judgements, but hopefully much educating in the process.

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Some numbers:

medical, urgent, emergency and loans \$1789.00 10 kits, 6 cats, 5 dogs WMAW paid

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typical neuter for cats =\$180.00, spay \$250.00 (TNR costs are the same but include vax)

typical neuter for dogs =\$300.00, spay \$350.00

(This is an average from the different clinics that are used, and often give a "bottom end estimate")

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The extra monies allowed us to get involved in more cases, and more extensively, resulting in us having more impact through humane advisements with owners.

It also helped us cement reciprocal connections with the shelters, rescues, and vet clinics outside of Custer County.

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Other projects:

- Pet Waggin – dog and cat chow, dry and canned, at the Share and Care Center in town, two times a month. We have very consistent donors, so we can make sure that the food is higher quality
- Making free tags with phone number and pet name.
- We have a chip reader so that people who find animals on the weekend can get a chip read when the vet is closed
- Facebook group and Facebook page (under construction) and website, are becoming the ‘go to’ places that people with pet problems or questions can reach out. So we educated along the way, when you have an audience willing to absorb the message.
- WMAW Facebook group, our website, and our googlevoice mail are in constant use, from Lost and Found posts, to rehoming, to general help questions. There is no way to count the number of pets we have aided through the social media network.

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--Going forward into the new year:

- Continue to be available to aid, assist and educate.
- Fundraiser auction (online) is under construction.
- Pop ups with recycled, donated pet supplies and educational flyers

WMAW Board

Sandi Dalton
Steve Broeckel
Kevin Zwack
Heidi Ensley