



Charley's Strays, Inc.

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Limestone, December 30, 2016

Dear Friends,

Above is Greta the dachshund and her buddy Remy, of the Thompson family, and all of us at the Shelter, people and animals alike, hope you had a wonderful Christmas and wish you THE BEST for 2017!

Hard to believe it's already 2017. I wonder whatever happened to 2016; barely here and gone already. I guess that's one of the weird things when getting old, loss of time?

I start off with the dismal news first:

We just had a HUGE vet bill to pay for one of our sick cats, which nearly wiped out the meager savings we had managed to put aside. These savings were our emergency fund for a new well. Our current well is 20 years old and is sanding in, meaning we will have to drill a new one sooner or later and costing thousands of dollars or God forbid our furnace in the kennel going out, which will happen probably sooner than we can afford to replace it. So, things look pretty scary right now, moneywise.

As you know, we are all volunteers, with the exception of Rebecca who barely earns minimum wages. She has a part-time job somewhere else to help pay her bills. Ted and Eric work on Saturdays at the Shelter, Mary also helps scooping and cleaning, plus she takes care of all our cats in her home, year round. Jim does the repairing/building/hauling food and supplies to the Shelter, and takes care of the dogs when Reb is on vacation.

So, it's not like in most of the Shelters, where the boss and the employees have a nice paycheck to look forward to at each end of the month. We do not use your donations other than for the animals. With that being said, all I can hope is that we win the Mega Bucks lottery and what are the chances of that? Some of our supporters remember us a bit more often than the

normal twice a year. We are trying to hang on to our Shelter, and it's definitely not for our own gain, but to give some poor animals a home and care.

One way to help animals is instead of giving something to friends and relatives for a birthday or other special occasion, that most likely ends up in the back of a closet: give them a card, saying you donated "their" gift to a Shelter, helping the poorest amongst us. One of our supporters was doing just that with her grandkids for many years. She mailed us a check, I mailed them a card saying that we received a gift in their honor. It's just a thought. This is pretty much what a friend of Cindy Houston who celebrated her 50th anniversary, did: She asked her friends and relatives instead of giving her and her husband of 50 years an anniversary gift, instead donate it to our Shelter. Cindy was tickled pink to be able to send us a nice check for those gifts.

A huge THANK YOU goes to Mr. and Mrs. John and Linda Mawn, and to their daughter who checked us out on the Internet and decided we were a worthwhile cause, and of course to "our" Cindy who initiated the whole process to begin with. Thanks to all of you, and many happy returns to the Mawns whom we would love to hear from again on their 60th anniversary!

And a huge **THANK YOU** to the following supporters of our animals:

Al Smith, Belmont
Bonnie Wiegand
Charles Soares, Burlington
Cindy Houston, Woburn
Dale Critchley, S. Weymouth
Donna Bering, Wakefield
Emile Jorgensen, E. Boston
Galen & Cynthia Thompson
George Watkins, Amesbury
Iris Martinello, Tewksbury
Jean & Ralph Catignani

Jeannine Dickey, Ranglely
Jeffrey & Debra Lieberman
Joe D'Allessandro, Tuftonb.
John & Jackie Lowney
John Walsh, Estero
Judith Crosby, Belfast
Larry & Arlene Hayes
Linda Merriam, Dresden
Manuel German, Reading
Marcus Nordberg
Marian Delarue, Woburn

Mark Resendes, Revere
Mary Eckstein, Andover
Michael Kane, Greenwood
Nancy Capone, Wakefield
Pat Thain, Dracut
Patricia Harrison, Litchfield
Phil Mann, Rowland Heights
R.D. Bournival, Nashua
Rust Pappathanasi, Swampscott
Sally Sawyer, Albany Twp.
The Rancourt Family, Lebanon

Another donation in honor of the Mawns' 50th wedding anniversary found its way to us from P.S. Coakley.

Harry Clark, Jr. also mailed us a check in memory of his parents, Harry and Lorena Clark.

The Friedow Family, a German couple whom I met years ago on the Internet, sent us a donation in loving memory of their daughter Marie-Kristin, and in memory of their dog Claire ". . . once a stray who wandered right into our hearts."

We also received a check from the Sommer Foundation in loving memory of Paul Sommer.

Susan Borsic mailed us a donation in lieu of Christmas gifts for her mom Marian, her sister Gail, and her roommate Christine.

Thanks so very much to all of you who once again remembered our animals!

And this brings me to the end of this month' newsletter.

Best Wishes to all of you for a happy and healthy 2017,

Gabriele, Mary, Ted, Eric and Jim

CAT REPORT – DECEMBER 2016

December has been a sad month – we lost two cats, Agnes and Grover. Agnes was born in May of 1997 and came to us that fall; Grover was born in August 2010 and came as a kitten with his mother and littermates. Agnes collapsed suddenly overnight; the vet thought she might have had a stroke. Grover finally gave up fighting whatever'd been ailing him for months.

A few days after Grover died his sister Ashley developed an upper respiratory infection that was bad enough so she didn't feel like eating. With her brother's history in mind I took her quickly to the vet to make sure it was nothing more serious. Test results were normal and she responded promptly to treatment and seems to be fine again.

Everyone else is well as I write. Feather, the young black and white cat Jen trapped and passed on to us, is having a typically good day. In the morning he went out on the porch with his brothers Lucien and Willow, despite the temperature being below freezing, and bounced happily in for breakfast with his chilled fur all standing up. Then he took a long nap cuddled with some of his friends, followed by a game with a favorite toy, the plastic ring from a quart mayonnaise jar. In the afternoon a friend visited and he decided to stop being shy and sat in her lap and got petted. Now he's enjoying his pre-supper nap. May all your cats and dogs enjoy similarly happy lives...

This month Iris Martinello, Irma Simon, Emile Jorgensen and Al Smith sent coupons, and Pepper Charles gave the cats canned food. They've been enjoying the food and other gifts from the Fleabag Ball, too. Many thanks to everyone who helps us care for our animals, and Happy 2017 to all.