



the

www.thewhitewaterpress.com

HITTEWATER Press

Free with Our Compliments  Summer 2013 Volume 4 / Issue 2

ALL AROUND WHITEWATER
DOWNTOWN
UPTOWN
CAMPUS
&
EASTSIDE



STUFF TO DO
SNAP SHOTS
BIT OF HISTORY

TOUCHED
by a
PAW

Walworth County
FAIR

Commercial Bank
100 Years!



Touched by a Paw

by Janna Burhop

“A cat has absolute emotional honesty: human beings, for one reason or another, may hide their feelings, but a cat does not.”

~Ernest Hemingway

It was early one morning recently when the call came in: a young kitten was trapped in a hole in a retaining wall on the Rock River in Janesville. The evening before there was a thunderstorm with heavy rain. The stray kitten was probably seeking shelter from the storm. The police and other people tried to free the kitten, but could not. Two women from the Boys Club of Janesville nearby, poured baby oil on the kitten and used a crowbar to free his paw, which was stuck in a crack in the wall. The rescue took over an hour. The kitten, now named Rocky, was very traumatized by his ordeal. Rocky was examined by a veterinarian for minor injuries and is now a happy, playful kitten, recovering in a foster home. This is one rescue story from hundreds over the past 22 years of cats that were given a second chance through Touched By A Paw.



Clothing and cats might seem an unlikely mix, but they created a perfect entrepreneurial marriage that started 22 years ago. In 1991, I opened an upscale consignment shoppe, Reflections of the Past, with ladies clothing, vintage clothing, theatrical costuming and jewelry, in Whitewater at 182 W. Main St. Several days later, I noticed an abundance of stray cats outside the rear of my shoppe rummaging for food in the dumpsters. I began to feed them, and then I put out a dog house so they would have a place to sleep. Communities such as Whitewater, with college students, often encounter a higher concentration of stray cats.

As time went on, I shared my experiences with customers, some of whom were interested in adopting the stray felines. It's a very natural fit. The people who shop here have been very committed to the shelter.

As the shelter grew, Reflections of the Past was its only support. By 1998, Reflections of the Past could no longer carry both. At that point, I incorporated my cat rescue project into a non-profit organization. A 501 (c)(3) status, enabled the operation to solicit donations. The organization does not receive any government funding. As a rule, we do not accept surrenders. We counsel owners about other solutions. We reserve the space in our shelter for stray, abandoned, injured, neglected and abused cats.

When strays or abandoned cats come into the shelter, they are stepping up from what they came from, improving their quality of life, and most are accepting and happy to be rescued. When a cat has a home and people to love them, and are then given away/surrendered, they are stepping down in their quality of life and are sad, scared, depressed, and some won't eat. They have to go through a big adjustment, and some do not make it. That is a burden on the hearts of all shelters. A lot of the people who surrender animals do not realize this.

From the beginning, Touched By A Paw was instituted with a no-kill policy. While the rescued cats might have a number of issues caused by abuse or neglect, I seek out a solution for even the most challenging situations. Cats deemed not adoptable due to behavioral problems might go to a non-working safe farm where they are housed in a building, fed, given veterinary care if needed, and can roam in and out free. Our vet bills run high at times. On average, Touched By A Paw spends between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per month to care for strays. Monthly donations and occasional fundraisers fund operational costs. Costs depend on the rescued needs such as an leg amputation, an eye removal, burns, broken bones, etc., but we do it because these cats deserve to be rescued and live out their lives.

Touched By A Paw has always been a labor-intensive endeavor, but it has been a true labor of love. We are trying to save animals with no chance whatsoever. We

rescue as we have room and finances. Every cat or kitten that comes to Touched By A Paw is examined by a veterinarian, given distemper and rabies vaccines, as age and weight allows at the time. They are spayed or neutered, microchipped and dewormed. Surgeries and treatments are done for rescues as needed. When all the above is done and the cat/kitten is ready, they are pictured on our website with their stories and become available for adoption.

The care of the cats comes from a group of compassionate people (volunteers), who give freely of their time and hearts to do the work it takes on a daily basis to provide loving care for these precious feline orphans, until they can be adopted. Some volunteers have been with Touched By A Paw for years. Many have said it's a blessing to them and a privilege to volunteer at Touched By A Paw, and has enriched their lives. Many life-long friendships have been born between volunteers who met at the shelter. I love and thank them all for their dedication and sharing my passion.

I am not at all surprised I am running a cat rescue in the back of my shoppe. When I was eight years old I rescued two kittens I found. I used my allowance to buy kitten formula and fed them with my doll bottle. I asked my mother if I could keep them. My mother, thinking they wouldn't make it, said yes. They both lived! At age 10, I was making habitats for stray cats out of wooden crates. I would sneak out of bed late at night worrying my strays were cold in their crates on our back porch. I would put on my snow suit and wrap them in blankets and hold them. I had a difficult childhood and found comfort in cats. They loved me and repaired my soul. I owe them. I have a strong faith and believe I am doing exactly what God intended me to do with my life. He gave me the gift of compassion, and the wisdom and strength to rescue his animals. We are all given different gifts. If we listen to our hearts, we will know what they are, and we will be given the wisdom and strength to use them. I believe God put domesticated animals on the earth to nurture our souls because they love us unconditionally.



Cats might be the focal point of Touched By A Paw, but their human counterparts are just as much a part of the equation. It's really not just about cats, it's about people, and you see that in how the volunteers' lives have been enriched by being a part of this. We have everyone helping out here, from youth doing community service, stay at home moms, persons with handicaps, retirees, to the elderly. Hence our motto – “People helping cats, helping people”.

How you can help? Touched By A Paw is currently in need of canned and dry cat food, clumping cat litter, trash bags, dish soap, big bottles of hand sanitizer, copy paper and paper towels. Other wish list items include: cat treats, toys, baby blankets, fleece blankets or material, rubber backed throw rugs, cat beds, kitty condos, cat furniture and scratching posts. Monetary donations are welcomed as well.

To inquire about volunteer opportunities or for more information, call [262.473.4769](tel:262.473.4769) or visit www.touched-byapaw.org or like us on facebook.

Donations to Touched By A Paw are tax deductible. Consider a monthly donation or matching gift programs through an employer or estate planning gifts.

You may also mail a donation to **Touched By A Paw** @

182 W Main Street, Whitewater WI 53190

or click on PayPal on our website and on facebook ❖

