

GBHS

JULY 2017

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

**A SUMMER S.O.S.:  
RECORD NUMBER OF PETS  
RESCUED & IN NEED OF HELP**

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GREATER BIRMINGHAM  
HUMANE SOCIETY

# YOUR GIFT of time SAVES LIVES

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Greater Birmingham Humane Society. Ranging in age from 7-87, they perform tasks as simple as walking dogs and playing with kittens to assisting Auburn vet students during spay/neuter surgeries. Many of our volunteers generously give weeks of their time to helping us save homeless animals' lives.

Jennifer Cole began volunteering with us in 2015 and amazingly, she has already logged over 700 hours

while holding down a full-time job! She has participated in almost all aspects of the shelter, from walking dogs to cleaning kennels to representing us at offsite adoption events. She even learned how to do adoptions



to help out the staff on busy days. Recently, Jennifer became a lead volunteer and now conducts all new volunteer Canine Caregiver training. Because of the sacrifice, service and compassion of volunteer leaders like Jennifer, our mission is attracting and retaining more volunteers than ever before!

"Volunteers are critical to helping our animals deal with shelter stress. They help GBHS stretch our budget beyond what we can afford to provide. Volunteers are able to devote hours to one homeless animal. This is time all our animals deserve but impossible to give without volunteers like Jennifer."

-Courtney Underwood  
Director of Volunteers &  
Community Relations

## WANT TO HELP WITH THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS?

Our Amazon Wish List has been updated online at [GBHS.org/Donate](https://www.gbhs.org/Donate)  
Current Items in Need: Puppy and Kitten Food, Kitty Litter, Kong Toys for Dogs and we are always in need of Newspapers.



## STAY JULIET

### Your support helps a family's beloved pet to stay home

In April, a man named Aron approached GBHS to surrender his beloved family dog, Juliet, and her litter of puppies. Aron explained that his family had been unable to afford spay/neuter surgery for Juliet and even though they loved her, they could not afford to care for her puppies.

Your generosity and the PETS FOR LIFE team stepped in. Juliet was sent to the GBHS Shelter Hospital where she was spayed, vaccinated, treated for fleas and ticks and returned home to her family, all at no cost thanks to the Pets for Life program funded by generous donors.

"When I took her home, she was greeted by her family members. They were surprised and overjoyed that their best friend was home!" said Pets for Life Program Coordinator, Suzy Phan. "We delivered Juliet with a crate, bedding, leash, collar, toys and new bowls – all donated by generous contributors to the shelter. These supplies ensure that Juliet will be able to start a new healthy life inside her home," added Phan. Thank you GBHS PETS FOR LIFE Sponsors and Donors – to date your gifts have helped keep more than 500 pets in their low-income owners' homes.



## NOT EVERY ANIMAL IS GOING TO HAVE A HAPPY ENDING

**But with your support, every animal receives the love, time and dignity they deserve.**

When GBHS took over animal control, our board, staff and volunteers worried about what we would see. We knew there would be animals we could not save, but we decided that if we did take in a critically ill or injured stray animal – we would ensure their final hours were filled with comfort, love and dignity.

Midfield Police Department called GBHS Animal Control Officer, Holly Baker, for assistance on an abandonment call – Holly was shocked at what she found.

An emaciated dog lay partially covered with a tarp, still carrying a heavy chain wrapped around her neck. Holly thought the dog was dead and leaned down to stroke her muzzle. Thrown out like garbage and left to die, the dog used all the strength she had left to lift her

head and wag her tail. She was rushed to our shelter hospital where Dr. Latham and our Auburn Veterinary Students got straight to work providing her with fluids and treating her many ailments. They also gave her a name – Lucy. She was infested with intestinal parasites and heartworms. Her body was covered in fly larvae. She was half her normal body weight and covered in her own feces.

Lucy fought hard under intense veterinary care for several days. Sadly, a life of severe neglect won out over state-of-the-art veterinary medicine. Although Lucy passed away on the third day, the donations provided for her care were not in vain – for seventy-two hours Lucy received more individual love, attention, nutrition and care than she had in her entire life. Her fighting spirit affected everyone but most of all the Auburn students. Because of your donations to the externship program, these students are able to see what happens to animals when state & local policies fail them.

GBHS continues to try to change state and local policy relating to tethering, spay/neuter access, and puppy mills. Your donations gave Lucy the opportunity to die with dignity, which

would have been impossible without your generosity. We can't save them all, but we can offer them all some of the best minutes, hours and days they have ever experienced. Your donations help us spread the belief that all life matters and we must never give up.



## YOU HELPED FIND LIZ HER FOREVER HOME

Liz was a 17-year-old ginger tabby. The reason for her surrender was not noted on her kennel card, but she had clearly been someone's much loved pet. Liz was pretty scared when she first came to GBHS and she seemed understandably bewildered by her new surroundings. She stayed in the upper section of her condo behind an opaque door, but she responded well when staff and volunteers opened the door

to show her attention. As a senior kitty who didn't seek attention from potential adopters, Liz's prospects for finding a new home seemed dim. Then one day a sweet young couple came into GBHS and asked for a senior cat. They had recently lost a 20-year-old cat and knew how much love a senior cat has to offer. When they saw Liz, their lives were forever changed and it was love at first sight for Liz too.

**Because of your donations and the dedication of our volunteers, Liz was adopted. Matching pets to the perfect home is something that we do every day at GBHS. Thank you for making that happen!**

# YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A COMMUNITY SAFER

GBHS volunteers and staff knew Charlie was special the minute he was taken off the animal control truck. "His tail never stopped wagging and every time I would check on him in his kennel he wanted to play. He could turn anything into a toy - 24 hours a day! He never rested and he never fretted!" said Heather Stout, Licensed Vet Technician at Animal Care and Control.

Because of your donations, GBHS is among the few shelters in the United States with a full-time Animal Behaviorist. Lindsey Coble was recruited

from California in 2014 to manage all animal evaluations at GBHS. "I spent a couple of hours with Charlie and knew Heather was right - he would make a great candidate for a K9 unit," said Lindsey. "These animals go through rigorous screening and training, and those that seem a perfect fit, sometimes can't pass the tests to become full-fledged K9 heroes," she added.

Somebody forgot to tell Charlie that!

K9 Specialty Services of Alabama chose to take Charlie and before we knew it - Charlie was CERTIFIED IN NARCOTICS on March 5, 2017! He began his career in law Enforcement the week of March 6, 2017 and to date, he has been responsible for 10 arrests (with the court cases pending).

Charlie continues to train weekly and will soon be certified in tracking.

The training and placement of Charlie is a great achievement and was a team effort of the GBHS staff, K9 Specialty Services of Alabama, but most of all - you.



## FROM SHELTER DOG TO SERVICE DOG

**Your generosity lands  
Lily a new life!**

"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole." - Roger Caras

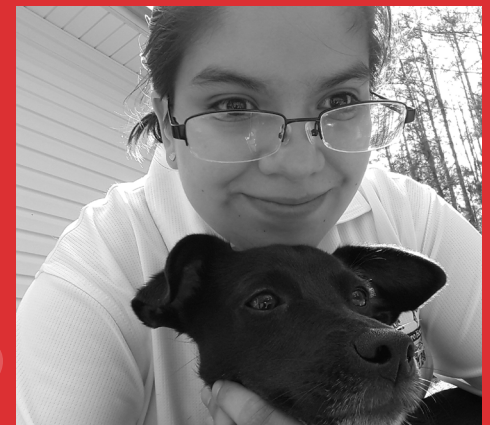
Gabby Coghlan is an undergraduate student at the University of Montevallo studying psychology. To everyone else she appears to be like every other 22-year-old college student. However, Gabby is faced with disabilities not visible to the human eye.

For months, Gabby had been looking for a dog that could help calm her by its presence. These animals are known as Emotional Support Animals and often get confused with Service Dogs. Gabby came to GBHS' adoption center and saw Lily, a terrier-retriever mix puppy. She knew immediately this was the dog! Lily was adopted from GBHS and became Gabby's emotional support animal. As the months progressed the difficulties Gabby had been experiencing became fully diagnosed disabilities. Gabby decided Lily would begin training to physically mitigate her disability and become a full-fledged Service Dog.

Now at seven months old, Lily has learned many new service dog tasks. She is also showing an aptitude for blocking and grounding as well as alerting Gabby to approaching anxiety attacks - a symptom of her Dysautonomia. Gabby and Lily also work hard to raise awareness about service dogs and together they teach the public appropriate ways to act around these special animals and their handlers. Lily now has a Facebook page that updates her followers on her day-to-day activities. You can like and follow her progress by searching, Lily the Service Dog in Training.



**Gabby and Lily also work hard to raise awareness about service dogs and together they teach the public appropriate ways to act around these special animals and their handlers.**



# ADOPTION AMBASSADORS

You are the heart of this campaign - and it's working!

Starbuck was a perfect dog. Unfortunately month after month she was being "perfectly overlooked" at the GBHS adoption center. A young, female pit-mix is not especially unique at our shelter. She was house-trained, good with children, great with other dogs, and loved to cuddle, but these are qualities that are hard to see through a window at the adoption center.

Starbuck was the perfect candidate for the GBHS Volunteer Ambassador Program. Volunteers foster these dogs and act as the "talent agents." The dogs are given special "ADOPT ME" vests to wear and Ambassadors take the dog wherever they go. Starbuck headed out for Friday Happy Hour with her new volunteer foster ambassador and high hopes for finding her forever family! Within four hours she had met her new family.

"We were originally going to wait a few more months before adopting a dog, but we were absolutely smitten!" said Niamh Clarke. Niamh and her fiancé Doug Fields immediately fell in love with Starbuck and her sweet, calm demeanor. They knew she was the perfect addition for their new family. Starbuck now takes turns sleeping in the bed with the couple's four sons and

"loves to come and sit on the patio with her head in our laps." Thanks to you and the Adoption Ambassador Program, Starbuck found her perfect fit!

**823 Pets were Adopted  
in June alone.**

Thank You for saving  
them and helping them  
find their forever families!

## How Adoption Ambassadors Work

When you support this program, you're implementing a lifesaving pet program featuring these key components:

- Volunteers act as talent agents for their foster pets—including finding a match and completing the adoption, right up to handing over the leash or carrier
- Animals are seen by a whole new pool of potential adopters
- Fewer returns, less unnecessary euthanasia
- Ultra-engaging & ultra-empowering for community, staff & volunteers

## Homeless and Neglected Pets Benefit From Your Generosity!

- Creative way to get adoptable cats out of the shelter and into the community
- Increases community service
- Adoption Ambassadors have a private Facebook group to share, collaborate and celebrate
- Ambassadors get exclusive monthly tips and resources like customizable forms and materials to use at their locations
- Access to experienced staff from GBHS and other shelters using Adoption Ambassadors



Starbuck and his Forever Family

You can make  
a difference for  
homeless animals.  
Visit [gbhs.org](https://gbhs.org) today.



# A SUMMER S.O.S. – RECORD NUMBER OF PETS RESCUED AND MORE EXPECTED

Summer is a great time of year. You look forward to vacations, fireworks, fresh summer fruits and vegetables, and long days splashing in the waters of a beach or lake. But for homeless, abused and neglected animals in Alabama it is a daily struggle just to survive. And summer poses three almost insurmountable challenges for GBHS:

1. As the thermometer rises, your neighbors will call with hundreds of dogs and cats suffering from dehydration and sun exposure either in yards or in cars, and we will respond with help.

2. The spring reproduction cycle comes to bear in June and July. Alabama saw little climate change this past fall and winter. The result? A record spring and early summer birthrate. On June 23rd your community shelter broke a record for intakes: 113 in one day. Then five days later we broke that record by rescuing 120 homeless pets!

How do you wrap your head around 1 animal coming into our shelter every 3

minutes on one day?

3. Finally, the consequences of the state vet board's 2014 decision to force us to relocate your shelter's hospital

# 1 ANIMAL EVERY 3 MINUTES ON ONE DAY

operations off-campus coupled with record intake is costing GBHS \$400,000 more each year to meet the animals' needs.

Making matters worse, summer is when GBHS receives the least donations. People are enjoying the season and our animals' needs tend to get overlooked.

We are dedicating this issue of Heartprints to not only tell you about the thousands of animals you recently saved, but also ask for your help – a SUMMER S.O.S.

We are asking you to become a GBHS Partner by joining our monthly recurring giving program. These animals can't ask for your help – so we're asking for them. Please continue to help save lives during these critical months.

As a rescue partner your gift will provide the resources our cats and dogs urgently need:

- Emergency 24/7 veterinary care for suffering animals
- Spay/neuter surgeries that stop unwanted litters
- Food, shelter, and socialization
- Adoption Incentive Programs to stop unnecessary euthanasia and to get pets into safe and loving families.

Please become a Rescue Partner today. Until no animal needs us, we need you. Thank you.

**Allison Black Cornelius**

*Allison*



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## HELP CHANGE LIVES:

Visit [gbhs.org](http://gbhs.org) to donate, or **contact us** about **volunteering** or **adopting a pet** to help restore life to abused & neglected animals.



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