



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter Earns Award for On-site Cat Training Program
Michigan Pet Alliance Honors Animal Welfare Organizations, Shelters, Volunteers

September 6, 2022, Gwinn, Michigan – Today, Michigan Pet Alliance (MPA) proudly announces that nonprofit Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter, Gwinn, Michigan, is the recipient of an on-site cat training grant, valued at \$1,000.

“This award honors a nonprofit organization that demonstrates how an on-site cat training program would increase lifesaving,” said Joe Dobesh, MPA CEO. “Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter (UPAWS) staff and volunteers clearly have the desire and passion to better serve the cats in their care. All they need now is more knowledge.”

In animal welfare, the more you know, the more lives you can help. UPAWS’ dedicated staff and volunteers have received a lot of training materials and in-class experience working with dogs, but are lacking similar training for cats.

“Our shelter works with a lot of scared and fractious cats and we believe with adequate training and by learning new techniques, our engagement with our cats will improve greatly,” said Bill Brutto, UPAWS executive director. “The more skills that our staff and volunteers have, the more cats we can help in the future.

“We want to learn more about how to change the behaviors of some of our felines that sit in our shelter for months. This cat training grant will help us help them with their adoption process and ultimately finding them a new home.”

UPAWS’ goals to improve its cat program as a result of this award include clicker training, targeting, new techniques for handling fractious and scared cats, and how to create more engagement activities and plans for the feline community.

“Throughout the history of animal welfare, cats have gotten the short end of the stick, but thankfully that’s starting to change,” said Deborah Schutt, MPA chairperson. “Cat training and enrichment programs are becoming more and more prevalent in our shelters and we’re seeing the positive results of that. Adoption rates are increasing for cats year over year.”

UPAWS’ mission is to improve the quality of life and welfare for domestic animals and to provide a safe haven while finding lifelong homes for the animals in our care. For more information, visit www.upaws.org.

2022 award categories and recipients:

Karen Brocklehurst Volunteer of the Year

Anne Grzywacz, Ph.D., CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA, St. Clair Shores

Elected Official’s Friend of Homeless Animals Award

Representative Tommy Brann, Kent County

Community Outreach Program: \$3,000 grant

Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance, Douglas

Best Friend to Dogs Award

Jennifer Clarkson, Bloomfield

Fundraising Program: \$2,000 grant

Paws for Life Rescue, Troy

Best Friend to Cats Award

Cheryl Phillips, Northville

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On-site Cat Training Grants: \$1,000 value to each

Little Traverse Bay Humane Society, Harbor Springs
Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter, Gwinn

Grant awards are made possible thanks to the generosity of the Humane Society of Macomb Foundation. For more information on the 2022 awards program and recipients, visit www.michiganpet.org.

On-site Cat Training Grant Award

Most animal shelters today operate some form of a dog behavior program to address the needs of the canines in their care. However, most shelters are lacking a behavior program to help their homeless cats. The recipient of this award will receive a day of hands-on, in-shelter training with cat behavior experts, valued at \$1,000.

Michigan Pet Alliance

Michigan's only professional trade association of animal welfare organizations, the mission of Michigan Pet Alliance is to work in collaboration and to speak with a single voice to eliminate abuse and neglect of Michigan's companion animals and to save all healthy and treatable homeless companion animals through training, technical assistance, education and advocacy. For more information, please visit MichiganPet.org and follow @MichiganPetAlliance on Facebook.

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