



MPA member spotlight: Charlevoix Area Humane Society

By Jeanne Towar

Little did Scott MacKenzie know that attending a going-away party for the retiring executive director of the Charlevoix Area Humane Society (CAHS) would dramatically change his life.

MacKenzie was serving on the search committee to hire a new executive director for CAHS and also looking for someone to chair the marketing committee. He and Alice Marshall, a CAHS board member who also served on the search committee, chatted about that at a party.



"I said I was hoping he would chair the marketing committee," Marshall said. "Instead he became our executive director after the candidate we had selected declined the position. Hiring Scott turned out to be the best decision we could have made.

"He knows so many people and is deeply involved in our community," she added. "He is always willing to step up to whatever he can do for the animals.

"He has done a fabulous job. He never says no, but always says, 'let's try it.' He puts himself out there and stirs up the kind of love and caring for our animals that's so important for a shelter director," Marshall concluded.

Even though MacKenzie had little training in running an animal shelter, he grew up in a family that was always passionate about animals. There were always at least two dogs, a cat, sometimes gerbils, ducks, roosters and even a potbellied pig in his home. His mom served on the board of directors of the humane society in the town where he grew up.

"I always felt special bonds and connections with animals," MacKenzie said. "I went home from the party and discussed the shelter job opportunity with my wife Jane. Nine years later, I'm still here."

CAHS was founded in 1974 in a garage on the county jail property. A new shelter was built in 1998 and now serves about 600 dogs and cats annually. MacKenzie and his staff have a very close, positive relationship with Charlevoix Animal Control. If animal control can't find the pet's owner, CAHS spays or neuters, microchips, vaccinates and provides full vet care to the animals prior to finding them a new home.

Under MacKenzie's leadership, CAHS achieved the status of No Kill, with live release rates as high as 98% annually. The shelter serves Charlevoix County, including Beaver Island, and if they have capacity, will pull animals from other neighboring counties and from around the state.

MacKenzie has been involved in community service throughout his adult life. Prior to becoming CAHS executive director, he had served as director of the Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce, was a three-time president of the local Kiwanis Club and, most recently, was director of midwest sales for Signify Networks.

MacKenzie has put his community connections to good use, particularly in the fundraising arena. In addition to CAHS fundraisers, he is a professional auctioneer who enjoys helping other charities, particularly animal welfare organizations, raise critical funds.

As Scott MacKenzie Auction Services & Fun Raising, he averages two charity auctions per month. In October, he emceed Lenawee County Humane Society's Howl-O-Ween Ball and All About Animals' Spay-tacular Party for Paws, their most successful annual auctions ever.

"He did an amazing job," said All About Animals Founder and President Amber Sitko. "He was funny and engaging and more in tune with our world."

Last year, CAHS opened HomeAgain Upscale Resale, a retail store in downtown Boyne City selling donated home accessories, furniture, artwork, vintage and designer clothing, and there's even a pet corner. "It has turned into one of the most major fundraisers to support our shelter mission," MacKenzie said. "People donate some really nice things and we sell them at reasonable prices." All proceeds benefit CAHS.

Early in his shelter director career, MacKenzie attended conferences and workshops to network with as many animal welfare professionals as possible and get up to speed as quickly as possible.

"I appreciated the work that Michigan Pet Alliance was doing to help folks like me, and when I was offered a seat on the board of directors, I was excited to be more intricately involved while helping make a positive difference," MacKenzie said.

"Scott is very good at making connections and seeing possibilities," said MPA Board Chair Deborah Schutt. "With these attributes, he has made an excellent board member for MPA."

Charlevoix Area Humane Society
614 Beardsley St., Boyne City

HomeAgain Upscale Retail
118 Water St., Boyne City

SCENT WORK: The Secret to a Calm Dog

By Laurie Horn



Smell is a dog's most powerful sense. The percentage of the dog's brain that is devoted to analyzing smells is actually 40 times larger than that of a human! So, how does it work?

Air entering the nose is divided into two separate folds: one for breathing and one for determining scent. The air being evaluated for scent then hits their olfactory receptor cells (125 million in dachshunds, up to 300

million in bloodhounds). Humans only have 5 million receptor cells. Finally, the 20% of their brain dedicated to their olfactory system evaluates scent information in concentrations up to 100 million times more than what humans can detect. When our dogs sniff a specific object and take in its scent, it's not the solid object they are scenting at all, it's the chemical compounds within that object turning into gas.

A simple scent can have a host of complex meanings for our dogs as scent is directly linked to both memory and emotion via the limbic system. Smell memories last for life and we can use scent to elicit positive emotion to assist in cases of fear and phobia.

Scent work is a positive, challenging activity that allows dogs the opportunity to use their strongest sense in a way that's fun, engaging, and that builds confidence in shy and anxious dogs. The shelter can be overwhelming. There are a lot of stimuli – barking dogs, unfamiliar people, loud noises and unfamiliar smells. All of this adds to the anxiety and insecurities in an already fearful dog.

Consider something as simple as spraying calming lavender as you walk through the kennel area. You can also use pet-safe oils in the final rinse when you wash their blankets to help calm them.

Adding a few simple scent games to your routine that harness their natural sniffing behavior calms them down and they are better able to relax and rest. Blood flow to certain areas of the brain increases when the dog is sniffing hard, thus calming and tiring the dog. Scent work tires them out both mentally and physically! A 15-minute sniffy walk is the equivalent of an hour jog and they will be more relaxed and less likely to exhibit destructive behavior.

By introducing dogs to the basics of scent work, it draws out the shy/fearful dogs and calms the hyper/anxious dogs, making them more appealing to adopters. It also gives their new family an activity to do together to begin to build a bond between them.

Excerpt from [SCENT 4 SHELTER DOGS](#), by Laurie Horn

About Michigan Pet Alliance

MPA Vision:

To achieve the best quality of life for Michigan's companion animals.

MPA Mission:

To work in collaboration and 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:
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