



## MPA member spotlight: Leuk's Landing

### I Wish I Had a Crystal Ball When Dealing With Feline Leukemia Kitties, But Then Realized It Didn't Matter

By Leona Foster, founder, Leuk's Landing, Inc.

*Leuk's Landing provides a permanent home to cats with feline leukemia and is one of the few sanctuaries in the U.S. that provides options to these special kitties.*

What is FeLV?

FeLV stands for feline leukemia virus. It is a retrovirus that infects cats. FeLV can be transmitted from infected cats through mating or the transfer of saliva or nasal secretions to other cats. If not defeated by the cat's immune system, the virus weakens the immune system, which can lead to diseases that can be lethal. But what does all that mean today?

Besides the kitty being contagious to non-FeLV kitties, probably the biggest deterrent to people wanting to take an FeLV kitty into their home is the concern about how long it will live.



In working with these special kitties for over 14 years, one thing I have learned is that these are the sweetest, most loving kitties you will ever encounter. I have many foster parents, volunteers and visitors who will back up this assertion. Often, people debate which cats are the best—male vs. female, black & white versus orange, etc. When it comes to FeLV kitties, taking in nearly 400 over 14 years, I have yet to run into one that is not the best cat you can ask for. What is hard to believe sometimes is that this is a disease of outdoor cats and many are strays or ferals. With minor exceptions, most of the ferals or shy kitties we take in that have FeLV always become outgoing lovers. I have contended for years that FeLV kitties know they are special.

The philosophy I try to share with people is that this is a classic situation where you have to weigh the quality of a relationship with a FeLV kitty against the quantity of time you may have with it. It's true that FeLV kitties will not live as long as those not infected with the virus. But in long-term foster homes, we have seen them live four to five years.

Even in our sanctuary, where the stress level is higher due to housing 28 cats together, we have had two this year celebrate their 10th birthdays. It is also the case that we have taken in kitties, usually kittens, that have died within a few months of joining us. This is where I would love to have a crystal ball so that we can expect what will happen with each kitty. But that's not a reality and all I know is that once you have an FeLV kitty in your home, you will be addicted to them forever. Sure, it's hard to lose a kitty, but the only way I make it through the day is knowing that we gave them a chance at a great life, even if it is a short one. The alternative, euthanasia because no one wants to take one of these special loving kitties in, is something I cannot imagine.

## Ask an expert

### Concerns About Going Back to “Normal”

By Jane Wolff, CPDT-KA, CTC, CSAT



Ever since March of 2020, the most common question I get asked is whether all of our pets will have separation anxiety after things return to normal. I can understand the concern! Almost 20% of dogs in the U.S. have trouble being alone (*Source: Lilly Market Research 2006*). So, how can we ease our dogs back into regular alone time and make sure they don't struggle with the transition?

I'll start with the really good news — there has been tons of research on this topic. While we do sometimes see an onset of separation anxiety after some large life changes (being rehomed, moving, significant schedule shifts), plenty of dogs experience changes all the time and are completely fine being alone. We think that separation anxiety is likely genetic, similar to other fears and anxieties (*Source: Overall, 1994; Overall and Dunham, 2002; Overall, 2005*). So, if your dog has always been completely fine home alone, there is a high likelihood they will be post-pandemic, too. That being said, there are some ways to plan ahead and ensure a smoother transition back to a more normal schedule.

First, plan ahead! Long before you need to start leaving for work daily, start leaving your house again for brief absences. This will lessen the shock of being together 24/7 to being apart 40 hours a week. I also would suggest having those absences be somewhat “normal.” Get up, do your normal routine, then leave at a somewhat normal time.

Second, watch them! If you are at all worried about your dog's alone time, it's probably a good idea to set up a camera to see what is happening in real time. There are a million in-home cameras on the market these days. My personal favorite brand is Wyze. They are inexpensive, easy to use and have good picture and sound quality. But, you can also start with Zoom or FaceTime. You will need two devices, typically a laptop or tablet and a smartphone. I strongly suggest watching your dog alone in real time rather than viewing a recording, so you can come home early if there is an issue.

Signs your dog may be struggling alone include:

- Barking, whining or howling
- Pacing
- Drooling
- Panting
- Destruction or escape attempts
- Accidents while alone (dog is otherwise housetrained)

If you see any of these signs, there is help! Dogs recover from separation anxiety all the time and there are tons of resources out there. Finding a trainer who specializes in separation anxiety, like a certified separation anxiety trainer (CSAT), is a great first step. There is also a fantastic self-paced course that is affordable and effective: <https://malenademartini.com/for-owners/separation-anxiety-in-dogs-mission-possible-online-course/>

For more information about separation anxiety and training, please feel free to reach out at [goodwolff.com/separation-anxiety](http://goodwolff.com/separation-anxiety)

## Register today today for our March webinar

What: "Spay/Neuter Myths ... BUSTED!"

When: March 15, 2022, 6 - 7 p.m. Eastern

Why: Join us for a frank discussion about pet sterilization with Dr. Jeff Adams and Jodie Ellison

Who: Everyone is welcome

Member Fee: \$0 (when registered with MPA account email)

Non-Member Fee: \$25

No refunds. Exchanges allowed.

Where: Live on Zoom. Can't attend? Register anyway and we will send you a link to the recording.

[Register](#)

### About our Experts



Dr. Jeff Adams has been involved with non-profit spay/neuter clinics and affordable access to care for the past 16 years. He is currently the medical director for Community Spay Neuter Initiative Partnership in Grand Rapids and All About Animals Rescue in Warren and Flint. Prior to joining these organizations, Dr. Adams was in mixed animal veterinary practice for 28 years and is a Michigan State University graduate. Over the past six years, he earned a Master of Science in Administration and a Master of Arts in Organizational Change. He lives in Wayland, Michigan, and has a small farm that he and his wife share with horses, goats, four dogs and five cats.



Jodie Ellison grew up on a fourth-generation, working, family dairy farm in northwestern Pennsylvania. She was a founding partner and general manager at Play and Stay Pet Care Center in Troy and founder of PASPort Home animal rescue. Jodie is a certified animal control officer in Michigan and shelter manager of the Royal Oak Animal Shelter.

## Events



The third annual Paws for Life Draws for Life virtual fundraising event will run February 28 through March 14 this year. This laugh-a-minute event asks participants to donate \$10 and submit a photo of their pet. A team of volunteer artists will recreate your pet's portrait and post it back to you. Will you get a professional who makes a living from their creativity and skills or will you get an amateur who is perhaps still learning how to correctly hold their colored pencil? No matter what, it's a lot of fun. Email [volunteer@pawsforliferescue.org](mailto:volunteer@pawsforliferescue.org) or participate through [@pawsforlifeanimalrescue](https://www.facebook.com/pawsforlifeanimalrescue) on [Facebook](#).

MPA is here to help promote your activities and events. Shelter, non-profit and rescue members can have their events featured in future editions of Makin' Pawsitive Change by emailing event details to [info@michiganpet.org](mailto:info@michiganpet.org).

## 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:  
313-731-2244  
[info@michiganpet.org](mailto:info@michiganpet.org)  
[michiganpet.org](http://michiganpet.org)

Michigan Pet Alliance is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization as defined by the IRS (EIN 20-0399162) and is a Guidestar Exchange Platinum Participant.



Contributions are tax deductible.

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