



The New Normal: Michigan Pet Alliance Launches 2022 Grants and Awards Program



Michigan Pet Alliance announces the 2022 grants and awards program for animal shelters, nonprofit rescues and animal welfare organizations in Michigan. This year's theme is The New Normal.

“The COVID-19 pandemic forced our state's animal shelters to reexamine how they operate,” said Joe Dobesh, MPA CEO. “For such a long time, animal shelters and rescues have not had the time to pause and evaluate tasks and processes to decide if they could be done differently, better, more efficiently or, perhaps, not at all.

“The changes caused by the pandemic resulted in new perspectives that are leading the animal welfare industry closer to its ultimate mission of lifesaving.”

MPA invites Michigan licensed shelters, as well as nonprofit rescue and animal welfare organizations, to apply for any or all grant awards.

This year's categories and awards:

- The New Normal in Community Outreach: \$3,000
- The New Normal in Creative Programs: \$2,000
- The New Normal in Fundraising: \$2,000
- Standard Operating Procedures / Documents (two awards): \$500 each
- On-site Cat Care Training Grant: \$1,000 value
- Karen Brocklehurst Volunteer of the Year Award: \$100 gift card (nominee must be an MPA member)

“Michigan Pet Alliance values the continuous efforts and hard work of our state's shelters and animal welfare advocates,” said Deborah Schutt, MPA chairperson. “Education and advocacy are pillars of our mission to speak with one voice to improve lifesaving and standards of care for our state's pets. Through our annual awards program, we honor and reward those who adapted to change to save more lives.”

Grant awards are made possible thanks to the generosity of the Humane Society of Macomb Foundation.

There is no cost to apply for any of the grant awards. The deadline for applications is Thursday, June 30, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern, at this [link](#). Winners will be notified in August.

MPA member spotlight: H.O.P.E.

By Jeanne Towar

In Gogebic County in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, H.O.P.E. stands for Help

Orphaned Pets Everywhere. That's been the mission of the H.O.P.E. Animal Shelter since its inception in 1992.

No Kill was the philosophy of the original H.O.P.E. founders, who wrote it into the organization's charter. The shelter has maintained a save rate of between 95 and 99% since then, making it one of the first No Kill shelters in Michigan. In 2011, the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance recognized the people of Gogebic County as one of 10 Michigan No Kill communities saving homeless cats and dogs through life-affirming programs.



H.O.P.E. Shelter Director Randy Kirchhoff with mural painted by local youth group

"I started out volunteering at the shelter in 2000," said Shelter Director Randy Kirchhoff. "The shelter was in the same industrial park where I worked as a production supervisor for Ironwood Plastics, so when I got off work, I would see people walking dogs. I thought it was something I could do to get some exercise before I went home to dinner. That was my introduction to H.O.P.E."

Growing up, Kirchhoff's family always had at least one dog and a couple of cats, so it was only natural that he would adopt a dog when he graduated from college.

"I had a shepherd/husky mix named Radar who was my constant companion," Kirchhoff said. "We hiked and fished and even went cross-country skiing together. Having Radar taught me more about pet ownership when he developed cancer at age 6 and I spent a lot of money trying to save him."

In addition to his wife Debbie, Kirchhoff's family now includes a 15-year-old long-hair grey cat named Belle. The family also fosters dogs and cats from the shelter as needed.

Kirchhoff's steady climb up the shelter ladder came when he noticed some open positions while volunteering. He came on board as a shelter attendant and over a 20-year period was promoted to assistant shelter manager, to manager, then finally to shelter director.

"Everyone at H.O.P.E. works hard and takes pride in what we do," said Kirchhoff, who oversees a dedicated staff of six, plus dozens of volunteers who offer their time, commitment and skills to further the efforts of H.O.P.E. "Whether the volunteers are working directly with the animals or on fundraising, building and grounds projects, or just being an animal advocate, we couldn't do what we do without them."

H.O.P.E. received the Outstanding Performance Award in the Open Admission Small Shelter category at the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance (MPFA) 2012 conference. MPFA was the precursor of Michigan Pet Alliance.

"I found the MPFA conferences invaluable for meeting people in animal welfare and especially other U.P. personnel and look forward to attending an MPA conference in 2023," said Kirchhoff.

"You need to take a look at a map to understand where H.O.P.E. is – the shelter is literally in a different time zone than most of us in Michigan," said MPA Chair Debbie Schutt. "So when Randy showed up at our conference, I was delighted and surprised. It was a good nine-hour drive one way. His dedication to the well-being of the animals in his care is evident as he strives to learn and stay on top of best practices."

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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.

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