

House with a Heart

2023 END-OF-YEAR NEWSLETTER



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Greetings from Sher

Attempting to capture the essence of a day at House with a Heart (HWAH) in mere words feels like an impossible task. Condensing the love, dedication, and joy that fills each moment is difficult! Nonetheless, I'll do my best to provide you with a glimpse into what being the Director of this extraordinary Sanctuary entails.

As the sun rises, so does my day, beginning at 6 a.m. In those early hours, I am greeted by up to 24 to 26 dogs. Among them are our 16 resident dogs, who have found their forever home here, and an additional 8 to 10 short-term visitors, as well as our 3-legged kitty, and any foster cats or kittens who are in residence.

There's always a long list of tasks to attend to: meals to prepare, medications to administer, diapers and belly bands that need changing, constant potty breaks, bookkeeping and paperwork. AND...beyond these daily tasks lies something truly magical – the moments we spend connecting with these incredible souls. Each dog or cat has their own story etched on their hearts, often filled with hardship or neglect. Yet here at HWAH, they find solace and love.

Our commitment extends beyond basic care. We strive for each pet's comfort and well-being. We provide more than just physical care; we offer emotional support as well. We spend time nurturing their spirits through gentle interactions and personalized attention.

Inevitably, challenges arise throughout the day: Health concerns, behavioral issues, and the occasional surprise. But with every obstacle, we face it head-on, driven by our unwavering determination to give these wonderful creatures the extraordinary lives they deserve.

As the day draws to a close, my heart is always filled with gratitude. Gratitude for the opportunity to make a difference in their lives. Gratitude for the incredible team of volunteers who dedicate themselves to this mission, thankfulness for everyone who supports HWAH and makes it possible for us to live our motto – LOVE LIVES HERE!

So, my dear friends, while it may be impossible to capture the entirety of a day at HWAH in mere words, I hope this glimpse into our world conveys just how profound and meaningful it truly is. Together, we are creating a Sanctuary where love knows no boundaries.

Hugs and HOPE – always.

Sher Polvinale



Meet the Newbies



Bella

Bella arrived at HWAH with her two sons, Hudson and Ciroc, in February, 2023. They had recently lost their owner and through no fault of their own, were scheduled to get euthanized as their owner's sister felt she had no other option for the trio. Thankfully, she was told about HWAH, reached out for our help, and we couldn't accept them faster. At 15 years old, Bella has some heart



issues, and a bad back that requires daily medication and physical therapy as needed. Bella is still a spry little Chihuahua, and dances for all her meal times. She is also often the first one out the pet door for playtime in the big grassy yard. We couldn't be happier with our gang of Chihuahua's and are delighted to have them spend the rest of their years with us here at HWAH.



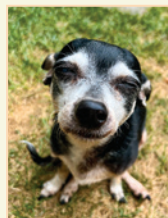
Ciroc



This 13-year-old Chihuahua is loveable, sweet and adventurous! Ciroc enjoys going in and out the pet doors, going under furniture, and exploring around the sanctuary; but he is never away from his mom Bella and brother Hudson for long. She likes to say that "Ciroc tries to go wherever he isn't!" We've had to make many changes around the Sanctuary due to his curiosity. Ciroc came to HWAH in relatively good health, but once we learned he was suffering from separation anxiety, we worked with our vet to find medication that would calm him and make him happier. Ciroc loves to be carried and petted, and is the best cuddle buddy. If I sit down next to him, he'll climb into my lap and begin licking my arms. I think this is his way of showing affection because he does the same to his mom, Bella, and his brother, Hudson. Ciroc and his adorable snaggletooth put smiles on everyone at the Sanctuary!



Hudson



Hudson, a 13-year-old Chihuahua, is quiet, sweet tempered and a bit timid. He loves keeping to himself and enjoys being outside or can be found buried in a bed near mom Bella or brother Ciroc. Even though Hudson is shy, he is quick to defend the sanctuary! Anytime there's a visitor, he barks with all his "Chihuahua might" to scare them off! One of Hudson's fascinating qualities is that he is immune to the sun. He is one of the few dogs in the sanctuary who loves to sunbathe, and will literally lay out there and bake, so we must always be on the lookout. Hudson is also a great sleeping buddy. If I'm sitting on the couch, he will quietly sit next to me, curl up into a ball, and fall asleep. Hudson's medical care includes treatment for gall stones, an enlarged heart and dental disease – and we're providing the excellent vet care he needs to have many more happy years.

Daisy



Daisy came to HWAH when her owners moved to a retirement village in Florida, and were unable to take her. They left Daisy with a friend of theirs so she could re-home her. During a visit from a potential adopter, something scared Daisy and she bolted. A good Samaritan found Daisy and called HWAH knowing that we handled seniors and special needs, but hoped we would consider helping this terrified young pup. Even though Daisy is a youngster, we felt compelled to help. Then, the Good Samaritan drove Daisy 3 hours to us. Our intention was to find a rescue to help re-home her. But we noticed that she was very fearful of everything.

Message from Lori Whitehurst, HWAH's Assistant Director: I had lost my heart dog 3 months prior and didn't think I was ready for another dog, but Daisy spoke to me. I decided that my husband and I would be her new family and make her feel safe. Daisy is now happy and thriving. My husband takes her for walks everyday and she loves her new home and will never be discarded again.



Jules



Sher, Hershey & Jules



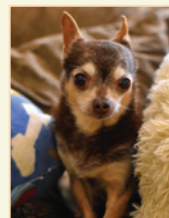
Ciroc & Hershey

Jules



Jules, a small scruffy pup arrived at HWAH in April, 2023. Our thanks to two kind women for finding her and saving her from certain death out in the elements, and for reaching out to HWAH! Jules was terrified when she first arrived, and we learned to leave her alone and give her attention on HER terms. Over the months, Jules began to get used to the volunteers, and would come up to us without fear. Her tail goes full speed when she sees her favorite volunteers! Jules has grown so much since coming here, but there is one thing she needs to improve on – her desire to eat rocks! We've had to make changes around the sanctuary so that she does not have access to rocks. And one more thing to mention about this sweet girl is that she absolutely LOVES feeding time. She will jump up and down and sprint around the room while barking enthusiastically for her food. Jules has suffered so much, but has learned to love and be loved, and realizes that she is now safe!

Hershey



Hershey arrived at HWAH in April, 2023. His owner was no longer able to care for him so we decided to add him to our roster of Chihuahua's. He had severely malformed knees so we had an orthopedic surgeon reconstruct his left knee. At 13 years old and a whopping 4 pounds, we consider him a young pup. He also had a much-needed dental, neuter and just had surgery to reconstruct his right knee. Hershey is a fighter, tiny but mighty, and will soon feel like a new man with both of his knees in tip top shape! He loves to squeeze into a cozy bed with any willing participant and absolutely loves cuddles and snuggles from his many human fans. We adore this boy and can't wait for the years of memories we will make with Hershey.

You Spent What?

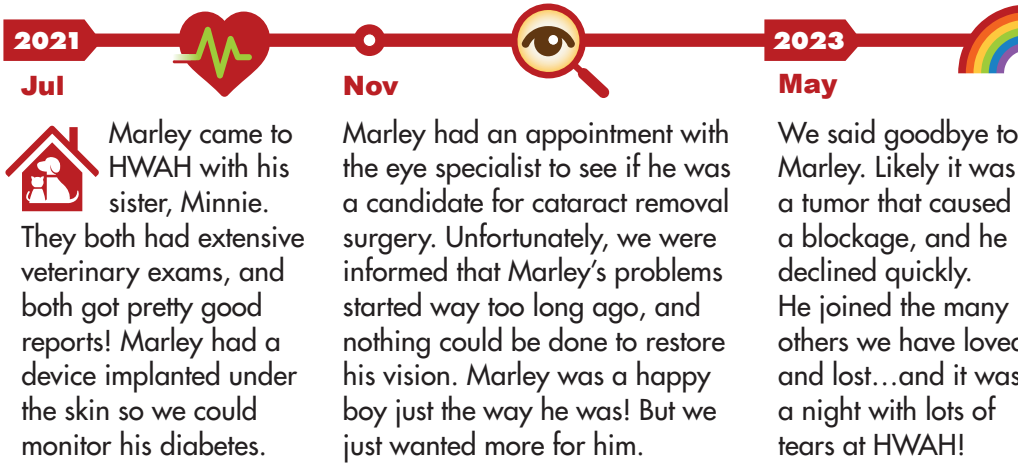
At HWAH, one of our greatest expenses is medical care for our special needs and senior residents. You might have seen various online posts, blogs and videos where we talk about how much the medical expense can be over time for any given resident.

In truth, over the life of a senior or special needs dog/cat, the totals can run from \$4,000 to \$44,000. For HWAH, where the starter age for most residents is in the 10 to 12 year-old range, we often need to provide routine medication and specialty care to keep them in good health.



Without the loyal support of our donors, supporters, and grants as well as our short-term care visitors, we might not be able to care for as many senior and special needs pets as we have been able to over the years.

Marley was an example of a slow and steady medical expense, but nothing over-the-top until the end.



Over the time Marley was at the Sanctuary, we spent about \$9,200, mostly for his insulin medication and pumps, and vet consultations.

So, when people ask us, how can you spend that much money on a special needs or senior dog/cat, it's not really an all-at-once choice. As each medical issue comes up, you ask for the best advice you can get, make an informed judgment, and always consider the pain and suffering the treatment may cause.

Over the years at HWAH, we have become more and more conscious of looking at the next steps down the road for our pet residents, and asking "is the treatment to improve their life or just prolong it?" Everyone begins to hope each treatment will be another way to give them more time with the beloved pet. But at some point, it's not about just keeping them around; it's about will they honestly improve with this or that treatment? And ultimately, are they suffering?

At HWAH, we are not afraid to ask for monetary support when we have made an informed decision about care for one of our special needs or senior residents. But we always do so with the knowledge that when the time comes to let them go, it is not about the money, it is about them. Letting go is also a part of "Love Lives Here!"

Touring HWAH with Lori Whitehurst

As Assistant Director, one of my favorite activities is the Sanctuary tour I give on Saturdays for supporters and volunteer applicants.

I share stories about each pup and kitty and how they came to HWAH and show visitors our beautiful facility. They are always amazed at how well the dogs get along and enjoy seeing our incredible yards for playtime and the beds and couches for pup naptime. The kitty suites feature lots of toys, shelves to perch on and cat towers.

Everyone leaves with a smile and these kind visitors tell us they are so grateful for Sher and the HWAH volunteers who keep these precious residents happy, healthy and thriving.

If you are interested in a Sanctuary tour, please email hwah.lori@yahoo.com to schedule an appointment.

**By appointment only:
Saturday, noon to 2 pm**



Lori touring at HWAH

Volunteer Spotlight: Chris Anderson



For the past three years, I've had the honor of ordering and managing supplies to meet the health needs of the Sanctuary's resident and visiting pups, helping to ensure we provide the best care possible. While it can be a bit of a juggling act tracking the changing needs of the animals, that's what makes it interesting, and I love the challenge!

We are so fortunate to have generous supporters who frequently send items from our Amazon and Chewy wish lists as well as local people who drop off items. These wonderful donations include blankets, bowls, towels, baby wipes for cleaning faces and rears as well as pet-safe products for cleaning.

Since some of our residents require special diets, I assist Sher in maintaining supplies of food and treats recommended by our vets (and our residents). When we need to purchase items, I try my best to balance our supplies with current needs.

I couldn't do my work at HWAH without input from all parties – human, canine and feline – and am grateful that I can be part of such a great group taking care of these very special souls.

Events

Sip for Senior Dogs IV

[Oct 15] Thank you to all who came and supported our fundraiser at the Olney Winery in Ashton, MD! The evening's event included wine sampling, silent auctions, raffles, live music, and our special guest Patti Kerr signed copies of her new book "Magical Dogs 3: On The Road" including a chapter about House with a Heart.



Christmas in July!

[July] Over the summer we were running low on a few essential supplies, so we asked our generous supporters if they could help by sending items from our Amazon Wish List. We were so thankful when a couple packages arrived, and then more and more and MORE boxes were delivered to the Sanctuary. It became Christmas in July!

By gifting us with these supplies, it means we can spend more on our resident's medical and daily care needs. In addition to our Amazon Wish List, we also have a Chewy Wish List with more of the items we use every day at HWAH.

We appreciate every donation and put the items to wonderful use! To learn more about our wish lists, please visit housewithaheart.com and click on "Support."

K9 & Kitty
Medical
Miracles

2023 Update



\$23,000

Amount Granted
Jan-Oct 2023



23

Pets Saved from
Jan-Oct 2023



36

Rescue Partners
Across the U.S.

HWAH launched the K9 & Kitty Medical Miracles program in 2017, embarking on a new way to help senior and special needs dogs and cats. We work with Rescue Partners who accept needy dogs and cats from owner give-ups and shelters. We offer grants to eligible rescues to provide the necessary medical care to prepare the dog or cat for their new forever home.

This program is so important to our mission to help save as many abandoned senior dogs and cats as we can. These pets are often overlooked because of their age and health issues, and would need extensive medical care to prepare them for adoption or foster care.

Currently, we have 36 Rescue Partners from AZ, CA, DC, KS, MD, NC, NJ, PA, VA, and WV.

We are continuing to increase our partnerships in order to help more dogs and cats that need medical care to find new homes. Please contact HWAH if you are interested to be one of our Rescue Partners (must be a 501(c)(3) organization).

House with a Heart Pet Sanctuary

6409 Stream Valley Way
Gaithersburg, MD 20882



Love them for their Lifetime!

www.housewithaheart.com

Email: housewithaheart@gmail.com

Phone: 240.631.1743

CFC Donation Code 69166

MCC Donation Code 20-5291492

The Many Ways to Help House With A Heart Senior Pet Sanctuary

While we were truly blessed this year, we need your continuous support to cover our costly veterinary expenses, purchase food and supplies, and make improvements that benefit our senior residents and forever fosters. You can contribute by:



- Making a one-time, occasional, or monthly donation. HWAH is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your donation is tax deductible.
- Support HWAH via Maryland Charity Campaign (MCC) during campaign dates 10/2 to 12/11/2023. Our MCC donation code is 20-5291492.
- Choose HWAH (#69166) as a designated nonprofit in the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area.
- Purchase items that appear on our Wish List in the "Shop HWAH" section on our website.
- Sponsor a HWAH pet of your choice.
- Donate to our "Feed Fido & Fluffy" Pet Pantry to help feed hungry dogs and cats. If you prefer, purchase food and supplies for needy pets from our Amazon, and Chewy Wish Lists.
- Help us promote our mission! Purchase HWAH apparel from the "Shop HWAH" section on our website.

HWAH is a non-profit and volunteer supported organization. Situated in a house on two acres of fenced property in Gaithersburg, HWAH fills a need for its dogs and cats by providing a sanctuary for them. These senior pets at HWAH are there as a result of becoming homeless or were in the process of losing their homes for a variety of reasons. Unlike most other rescues, HWAH does not seek adoption for its residents. Instead, HWAH provides a safe and loving place for its residents to live out their full lives so they will never lose their home again. HWAH relies solely on donations to cover its expenses. In addition, HWAH's volunteers are instrumental in daily operations and upkeep of the sanctuary.

