



A RESCUE IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

Corey* was in trouble and needed big help. An elderly person, they were living on a fixed income in a small home in a rural section of Franklin County. Corey loves cats, and for the past 12 years had six adult felines that they could care for, and considered their own.

Just over a year ago, a pair of homeless women Corey knew asked that they take in their two adult cats – one unneutered male, and one unspayed female – because the women could no longer care for them. The cats soon began a year-long spiral of active breeding. Meanwhile, area residents, having heard that Corey cared about felines, began leaving unwanted cats in carriers on their property. Corey's modest home was now overrun with cats, mostly kittens, even the youngest of which were having their own litters.

Corey was overwhelmed and didn't know where to turn. Their car had broken down, and the cost of repairing it was beyond their means. By now,



more than half their limited income was spent on cat food and litter for an escalating population of felines. Corey felt trapped, literally, without transportation, which they felt would be essential for them to transport the cats and kittens to a willing shelter.

Soon Corey heard about Dakin and reached out. Our organization worked in conjunction with a Franklin County Animal Control Officer in coordinating a rescue at Corey's home. Corey was embarrassed about their situation, and was afraid they

Thanks to your support, Dakin was able to rescue more than 70 kittens.

would be judged, even though they tried to stay on top of keeping the felines (which numbered more than 75 at that point) clean by providing soapy baths.

In helping Corey, we could see that this was an extreme case of someone with good intentions quickly becoming overwhelmed. They knew their situation was out of control, but didn't know who could help.

see **RESCUE** on back



Dakin's PHC: The Importance of Offering Vet Care

Dakin's Pet Health Center, headed by Jack Muth, DVM, PhD, public medical and education director for the PHC, has been serving a range of clients, most importantly those whose dogs and cats have never been seen by a veterinarian. The condition of the animals varies; some are receiving wellness care, and some arrive sick and in need of treatment.

The PHC's focus is to reach pets before a crisis presents itself, or before treatment becomes too expensive. When people face unexpected medical costs, they often feel they have no other option than to surrender or euthanize a pet for whom they feel unable to care.

"We recently had a cat brought to us for a lump on her chest," recalled PHC Assistant Manager Jennifer Toole. "During the exam, the doctor suspected she had pyometra, a serious and life-threatening uterine infection that requires fast treatment. The PHC gave her a workup and discussed options for the lump with her person. Then the cat was scheduled for an emergency spay surgery the next day for the pyometra. The client was so grateful that we caught the pyometra and treated her kitty quickly before she became really sick. We also did it affordably, and the client



was able to bring home a healthy cat after an unrelated, but serious finding.

"The PHC is an absolute lifesaver in our community," stated Jennifer. "Clients who don't have regular access to vet care have been able to get their pets in for treatment of their illnesses, and the accessibility that we provide, both with appointments and payment options, has been invaluable. When clients find out that there are no 'established patients' prioritized here, that everyone is welcome, it takes away so much worry for them when they need to reach out for services."

Jennifer also recalled a client who arrived with a young dog that they had taken in from another family. He needed a wellness exam, as well as vaccines and diagnostic tests, and he was in desperate need of grooming.

"We were able to get him caught up on vaccines and lab work, and even got him seen by Dakin's groomer Carol for a much-needed haircut. The pup is now feeling so much better after the grooming, he's up-to-date on his vaccines and wellness care, and that client now has a healthy, comfortable family member."

The PHC team is pleased that the community has embraced what it offers now, and what lays ahead, including the establishment of a PHC Fund that will help clients who are facing the greatest challenges in affording the care so essential to their pet's health.

Dakin's Pet Health Center plays an important part in our efforts to keep pets healthy, happy and in the arms of the ones who love them.



According to Open Door Veterinary Collective:

59 MILLION

pets live in household making \$20k

60 PERCENT

of people live paycheck to paycheck

29 MILLION

pets live in homes receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

THE LARGEST #

of pet owners are millennials (people born between 1981-1996), and the majority of them live paycheck to paycheck



Sir Reginald's New Career



Sir Reginald du Limburger is a strikingly handsome Angora rabbit who left Dakin to find not just a home, but a career. The one-year-old bunny was adopted by a large and loving family; the staff and participants at Sunshine Village in Chicopee, which supports a variety of people with all types of disabilities.

"He's a very loved bunny and we are so blessed to have found him."

"He's our animal care ambassador at the Casey Program, where he spends his days teaching participants about responsibility while showing them how to be gentle and kind," explained Kelly Chmura, program director at Sunshine Village.

with him, and that rabbits are sensitive. When Reggie retreats inside his cage it's hands off because he needs a break. "They learn boundaries and respect by reading his body language," noted Kelly.

The Casey Program teaches social amenities and life skills. Enrollees can take part in immersive opportunities in fields including culinary, property maintenance, art, and animal care, which is Reggie's department.

Reggie's custody is shared by Kelly and a coworker, he's got a sweet setup at each home, and both families have fallen in love with him. Nights and weekends are spent zooming around, snuggling, and playing with his toys.

The animal care participants know that they need to be gentle and quiet

We're thrilled to see Sunshine Village embrace the concept of having a pet onsite to give the participants the unconditional love and confidence they need to learn and progress, alongside their ambassador, Sir Reginald. As Kelly concluded, "He's a very loved bunny and we are so blessed to have found him."

Keeping Pets Fed When Hardship Hits

We want to share this heartfelt note from Beth*, who never needed help before, but through your kindness, she was able to keep her pets fed and by her side.

1,200 PEOPLE
received pet food in 2021 thanks to you!



Hello.

I see there is a Pet Food Aid Program and I don't know if I need to call beforehand or just show up. I lost my job and we're having a tough month with unexpected bills. We can definitely use the help with our cats, but I've never participated in programs like this, and I don't want to do the wrong thing.

One is a 19-year-old senior with Stage 3 kidney disease who eats low phosphorous wet food only. I don't expect help with her because her diet is so strict, and I will make sure she gets what she needs. But wet and/or dry food for our younger cat with no medical issues would be a huge help.

Thank you,
Beth*

*Name changed to honor privacy

Joining Forces to Save the Beagles

It was a riveting story that broke last summer. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) had 60 days to remove more than 4,000 beagles from an Envigo RMS LLC breeding facility in Virginia that was riddled with animal welfare concerns, and the HSUS was reaching out to partner shelters around the country to help.

Dakin was among the first to offer assistance to the HSUS's efforts and take in some of the beagles that were bred by Envigo to be sold to laboratories for animal experimentation. At first we heard we would receive 10 adult dogs, then we were told we'd be receiving 20 puppies.

Because of your love for animals, we were able to send our team to eastern MA to collect the pups, who were just weeks old.

In advance of their arrival, staff members quickly prepared for the tiny beagles.

Volunteer shifts were structured for the many days their help was essential. Pens were cleaned, sanitized and filled with beds, blankets, toys and everything they would need. Volunteers quickly filled



Thanks to YOU, these beagle puppies were rescued and given a second chance at life!

shifts to walk the puppies, clean up after them, and countless other tasks.

One of the puppies, Gidget, arrived from Virginia with a blind and very swollen, painful eye due to either an injury or glaucoma. Another pup had a heart murmur. Soon most were suffering from severe diarrhea, the result of an outbreak of giardia, a highly-contagious but treatable parasite. Despite these setbacks, the puppies were cheerful, energetic and affectionate with the medical staff and volunteers who treated and handled them as they recovered and began going home.

Dogs raised in research labs spend their lives in cages and never know the feeling of sunshine on their faces, a warm breeze, or the sweet softness of the grass beneath their feet. Twenty adorable and sassy little pups were spared that fate.

Karina King, Dakin's director of operations, was part of the team that collected the



puppies. "Summer is our busiest season when our in-house population spikes," she said, "but it's imperative for us to be able to assist our partner shelters when so many animals need help."

We are only able to provide that help because of people like you. Just as we were there for the HSUS in their effort, you are here for us. There's a strong bond among those who care about animals in need, and a shared dedication to make the biggest challenges manageable. You helped deliver these puppies to our door, and then into the hearts of those who now love them dearly.



Fostering Dedication

When Dakin received 28 guinea pigs in one day last May, the word went out fast; We needed fosters! Medical exams of the piggies confirmed that most of the females were pregnant, and the majority of the pets had ringworm, a fungal infection. Treatment involved oral medications and twice-weekly sulfur dips.

Among the many volunteers who led with their hearts and said yes to this task were first-time fosters Shannon, her husband Wai-Je, and four of their children; Livian (17), Emi (9), Leona (6) and Xander (4). The Hampshire County family accepted two females with ringworm; Wonka and Milka.

The timing, thought Shannon, was ideal. "My kids would be out of school because it was summer, and before long Emi was taking classes online to learn about guinea pig care. We felt like we could do this."

Wonka and Milka arrived in early June, and schedules were drawn up for cleaning and to ensure they got their medications and dips on a timely basis. "Giving oral meds was a learning curve for us," admitted Shannon. "The kids were able to handle it after a while, and I did the sulfur dips.

"Then came the question from my daughter, 'Are they going to get adopted? Will we care for them, and then they'll disappear?' I answered that we were fostering them to get them healthy and that's our goal."

Four weeks later that changed. "Of course, you bond with the guinea pigs, and we knew early on that we were going to keep them. However, my daughter was more positive, earlier, than I was," laughed Shannon.



Emi, gowned up and taking care of her pets

cages that we had to do before we could leave the house. Some days they needed an extra nudge, but most times they were great about it."

When Dakin was finalizing details with fosters, all were told that any female guinea pigs may be pregnant (which is difficult to determine). Before long, Shannon noticed that Wonka suddenly became "very pear-shaped." Barely three months old, Wonka soon delivered two healthy males, and a female who sadly didn't survive.

The kids were now extra busy with the male babies and rose to the challenge. "They learned about responsibility and caring about someone else," noted Shannon. "There were tasks like cleaning

Milka, Wonka, and her little boys found a safe foster home that led to a permanent arrangement with a loving family, thanks to your devotion to animals.

Your investment in our work ensured that all the guinea pigs we received in May got the medications, multiple sulfur dips, medical supplies and attention that they needed from both their caring fosters, and Dakin's medical team. Thank you for leading the way!



2023 PET PHOTO Calendar

Place your order for the 2023 Dakin Pet Photo Calendar featuring some of the cutest faces in the Pioneer Valley! Your purchase helps animals and the people who love them. **Visit dakinhumane.org**

RESCUE *from front*

Eventually they thought they would at least try a shelter for advice. Corey wanted the best possible care for the kittens and cats, knew it had to come from elsewhere, and was very sweet and appreciative of our efforts.

Dakin staff and volunteers made the trek to Corey's home and removed the felines over a series of visits. There were several newborn kittens, and while most of them had fleas and upper respiratory illness, they were very friendly. Some arrived in need of corrective surgeries, and some were severely underweight, like Low Tide and Urchin. The pair, both a month old, had body weights that were equivalent to 1-2 week-old kittens. Before long they were all treated, recovered and on the road to adoption.

In helping Corey, we saw once again the difference between living in urban poverty versus living in rural poverty. With urban poverty, a person can sometimes find helpful organizations within a densely-populated area. Public transportation is typically available if it's beyond walking distance. Rural poverty, however, presents different challenges. People live further apart, which can lead to isolation when there are no means of transportation, as was Corey's case.

Your support of Dakin's programs allows us to be a lifeline to someone who believes they're without options. In this case, Corey's inability to turn away animals in need left them without resources to live a life that was under their control. Thank you for being the bridge between Corey and us.

**Name changed to honor privacy*

DAKIN GUARDIAN SOCIETY

"I want to help animals any way I can! They give back so much more."

— Guardian since 2009

Our Guardian Society members, through ongoing support, play a crucial role in helping us meet the needs of animals in our community and enable us to weather any animal emergency. By joining the Dakin Guardian Society, you join a compassionate group of supporters who share the same love of animals and want to make a difference in their lives year-round.

To become a Guardian, visit dakinhumane.org and click on "Donate" or scan to sign up.



Dakin Humane Society
171 Union Street
Springfield, MA 01105

(413) 781-4000
www.dakinhumane.org

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