



Together: Helping animals & their people

Dear Friends,

Merriam-Webster tells us that compassion is "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress

together with a desire to alleviate it."

Here at Dakin, compassion is one of our core values – and for our staff,



Meg Talbert
Executive Director

volunteers, and donors, it means serving all people and animals with open hearts and open minds by listening carefully to the challenges of others, placing ourselves in the shoes (and paws) of those connected to us, and believing in the inherent good of people.

In this issue of *Inside Dakin*, you'll read incredible stories of compassion that benefitted animals and the people that care about them in so many different ways over the past several months. As a supporter of Dakin, your commitment and positive energy are present in our daily work. They serve as constant reminders of the role that kindness and compassion play in keeping pets and people together and helping the most vulnerable.

Our doors, hearts, and minds have been open to pets and

see **TOGETHER** on back



Coming Together TO BATTLE PARVOVIRUS

Parvovirus is an unforgiving viral disease that attacks the gastrointestinal systems of puppies and unvaccinated adult dogs. It's highly contagious and is transmitted through dog-to-dog contact, contact with contaminated stool, or contaminated surfaces. Parvo has a mortality rate of over 90% when left untreated, and any veterinarian or shelter that handles a dog with parvo is – by law – supposed to report that case to the state.

Midway through the summer, a number of dogs with parvo started being brought to Dakin for treatment. The first few were treated as inpatients, but as the numbers grew, we realized the only way to care for this many infected dogs – and probably more – would be through an outpatient protocol, which the staff quickly implemented.

Director of Operations Karina King reached out to state officials to learn how many cases of parvo had been reported. To her surprise, there were none. She then realized why.

"We'd been talking to people with sick dogs

Making a Difference

- 472** dogs vaccinated against parvo and rabies
- 4** free community parvo/rabies vaccine clinics were held at Dakin; **1** at AIC
- 1** additional parvo booster clinic was held at Dakin
- 4** inpatient dogs treated for parvo at Dakin
- 24** outpatient dogs treated for parvo at Dakin

that couldn't get in to see a veterinarian because the vet wasn't taking new patients," she explained. "Or they found out that many emergency animal hospitals couldn't treat parvo cases, or, if they did, the estimate for treatment was about \$7,000 - \$8,000, which they didn't have. So, vets and hospitals weren't seeing sick dogs, and their illnesses weren't being reported."

see **PARVO** inside

Moms Fixed Free – Lilo's Story

Lilo, a cream-colored Shih Tzu was in the middle of delivering a litter of puppies when a crisis struck. Two puppies had already emerged safely, but a third was stuck in the birth canal during delivery. Her foster caregiver, Emily, rushed her to an emergency veterinary hospital.

Fortunately, by the time they arrived, the third puppy was born, but Lilo's work was far from done. Radiographs revealed six additional puppies in Lilo's uterus. Emily stayed at the hospital until all nine puppies were born and declared healthy, along with Lilo.

Emily had volunteered to care for Lilo in the last couple of weeks of her pregnancy when Lilo's family enrolled her in Dakin's Moms Fixed Free program. Her person was overwhelmed by Lilo's surprise pregnancy, and needed help.

Dakin's Moms Fixed Free program provides free spay surgery and vaccines for rabies and distemper for pregnant dogs and cats after they have weaned

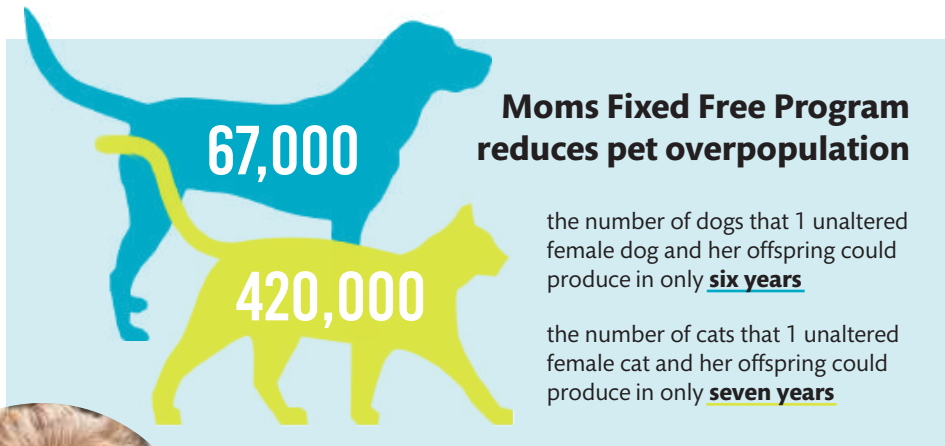


Nova, the last of Lilo's nine snuggly puppies to find a home.

their litter. Moms are returned to their families and Dakin finds new homes for the litter after they too have been vaccinated and fixed.

So, after the last of her pups found new homes, Lilo was spayed and returned to her joyous family.

Dakin began the Moms Fixed Free program 10 years ago, and in that first year we were able to help 75 families and their pets facing the stress of an unplanned litter. That number climbed in subsequent years, reaching a high of 124 last year.



Without having this program available, people would have faced numerous challenges trying to guide their beloved pet through pregnancy and delivery, then raising and rehoming a litter of puppies or kittens. Because of you, Moms Fixed Free helps families with what can be an anxious situation, and ensures that no more unwanted litters occur, while also stopping the breeding cycle for every member of that final litter she produces.

We're grateful to be able to offer the Moms Fixed Free program for pets like Lilo, and her family. Every step we can take to lessen animal overpopulation is fundamental to our community. You make that possible.

Why I'm here



Dakin staff offer an inside perspective of the impactful work your support makes possible

Name: Amanda Rock **Title:** Animal Care Coordinator

Amanda has been with Dakin for 8 years. She coordinates with volunteers and management to ensure animals are cared for, helps with the Pet Food Aid Program (PFAP), orders food for in-house animals as well as the PFAP, works with clients on rehoming their animals, and everything in-between. Her job is fulfilling, she says, because it enables her to "help people, help animals and give people the tools they need to be successful with their animals – whether they're adopting or possibly rehoming them." Having grown up on a farm, animals have always been a part of Amanda's life, and she strives to make the world better not just for them, but their people as well.

"Donors touch everything we do at Dakin," she stated. "They provide emergency medical care to save lives, like our recent parvovirus treatments. They also help keep pets in their homes, whether by supporting vaccine clinics, the food bank, or any number of our other programs and services. People who come to us looking to surrender their own pet because they can't afford food or care instead find help that lets them keep the pets they love. You can feel the donors here with us every day; they allow us to keep the doors open to help our community and their pets. That's why I'm here."



KITTEN
STREET TEAM

Gearing Up!

Dakin's Kitten Street Team (KST) is a dynamic all-volunteer group who respond to reports from members of the public who see colonies of outdoor-living feral cats throughout the Pioneer Valley. The team visits the colony site and practices humane trapping techniques to bring both the cat and kitten members into Dakin for vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery to help curb the feral cat population. Unsocialized adults are then returned to their colony site, while kittens become candidates for adoption. This process is known as TNR (trap/neuter/return).

This program plays a vital role in preventing the suffering of litters born outside in harsh conditions. About 75% of them do not survive their first year, as they face disease, the elements and the constant threat of predators on a daily basis.

There are a lot fewer feral cats "out in the cold" these days, thanks to the KST and a group of dedicated volunteers who gathered a few months ago and, in one day, produced 42 insulated outdoor cat shelters for ferals. "It's tough when we return the cats to outdoor colonies after spay/neuter surgery

KST By the Numbers

Founded in 2020, the Kitten Street Team has helped nearly 1,000 at-risk felines in the Pioneer Valley by providing humane TNR and bringing them to Dakin for vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery.

116 in 2020
329 in 2021
479 in 2022

knowing the cats have very few options or none at all to protect them from the cold temperatures," noted Anna Marie. "Just taking this one extra step beyond TNR not only keeps the feral cats warm, it warms our hearts and the people who care for them as well."

THE PATH OF A KST-ASSISTED CAT



Step 1: Kitten Street Team (KST) gets call about colony cats/kittens.



Step 2: KST visits colony site and assesses TNR capabilities.



Step 3: Thanks to donor support, KST buys bait food for traps.



Step 4: Trapping begins. Typically takes 1-3 days initially, can take months in total.



Step 5: Cats brought to Dakin for medical assessment, tests, vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery.



Step 6: Feral adult cats are ear-tipped (indicates a fixed cat) and humanely returned to colony site.



Step 7: Kittens may need foster care. Will be monitored for socialization and receive enrichment.



Step 8: Outcome: Adoption! Thanks to donor support of the Kitten Street Team Program!

Want to help kittens?



Become a foster parent to kittens brought to Dakin. Share your home and heart with little ones who need a great start to a better life. Join a dedicated team and offer your help to tiny sass masters in need of love and care. Scan code to start your foster journey!

When Forever isn't Possible

There was much joy when Bastian, a gentle 2-year-old cat with the pinkest toe beans and immaculate buff-colored coat, was finally adopted last June after a lengthy stay at Dakin. He would be greatly missed by us all, especially Molly, with whom he shared an office.

Barely six months later, Bastian returned to us. His adopter, who adored him, had developed health problems and was unable to care for him any longer. She was heartbroken, but knew that her boy deserved the best opportunity to find a new family who could do for him what she could not.

When Bastian came back to Dakin, we were saddened that his person experienced such a heartbreaking loss. She did the most selfless thing she could for Bastian - she put his needs above her own. We knew this was not easy for her nor is it for anyone who finds themselves facing an impossible decision or circumstances outside of their control. At Dakin, we wholeheartedly believe that in order to offer a service such as admission it is just as important to meet each individual as well as their pet with empathy and compassion, and be a source of support in their time of need.

There are lots of shelters and animal rescue organizations that put an emphasis on the concept of animals being adopted into

"forever homes." There is a stigma attached to returning a pet to a shelter, and people who do so are often judged harshly. It's an awful situation to be in...someone brings home a pet that they think will become a beloved family member, only to find that it's not going to work out. Maybe a job was lost, and now there's an economic crisis. Or there's a resident pet who reacts aggressively every time the new arrival enters the room, and lunges after them. Many people are afraid that they will face judgment, from shelter staff, neighbors or coworkers, even their friends, if they return a pet to a shelter.

At Dakin, we've seen examples of when forever isn't possible, and we understand that life is complicated. We understand how people feel, and it's frightening to think that there are no options for them or their pet when help is needed.

But sometimes there are options. And at Dakin, we can have that conversation with people. That's why we have services like the Pet Food Aid Program, which provides free cat and dog food when folks find themselves facing food insecurity for their animals. It's why we worked so hard to open our Pet Health Center last year, where people in our community can bring their cats and dogs for non-emergency treatment,

Frangipane, enjoying a comfy, quiet nap.



and gain access to veterinary care.

We want animals to have every opportunity to be - and remain - family members. Pets lift our spirits, offer love unconditionally, and give us a sense of belonging.

Every time you extend a hand of support to Dakin, you're strengthening the bond between a loving person, and a loving pet.

And Bastian? He's been renamed Frangipane, and is now living large in a loving home in Northampton. His person saw his photo online and fell for him instantly. She wanted "a big, beefy boy" to join her pet family, and she found one. He has a sister kitty, Martina, who is still unsure how she feels about him, but is warming to his charms. His other friend is Hudson, an 11-year-old dog who is always up for playtime.

Taming a Fireball 🔥 *As told by Anna Marie, member of Dakin's Kitten Street Team*

Fireball, his sister, and his mom, were found living under a back porch, and hunting wildlife for food. Mom and sister were trapped first, but Fireball was stubborn. After 3 hours of waiting in the cold, I decided to come back for him the next morning. At 8 am I set up the trap and boom, within 15 minutes Fireball literally took the bait and was trapped.

I brought him to Dakin, they got him on the table and he bolted, ping-ponging around the room. This little dude was

FERAL, and his name suited him well. When I got home, I got a call from Dakin asking if I would take Fireball into foster (I already had his sister).

The first week with him was a battle. However, with lots of "forced love," holding him, carrying him around, hugging him, and lots of playtime, Fireball adjusted and his transformation was magical.

Two months later, Fireball had an adopter! I met his new person, and he told me that he



Barkley keeping tabs on his person

and his wife had recently said goodbye to their cat, and the husband wanted to surprise his wife with a kitten for Christmas, one that would be very attached to his wife. He sent

me an email that all went well; Fireball was hiding, but his wife instantly fell in love with him.

Two weeks later I got another email. Fireball, now Barkley, was following his wife all around the house and had to be wherever she was. He said Barkley was the "most affectionate cat we have had over the years. He is exactly the kitten I was looking for."

For both Barkley and his adopter, it was all worth the wait.



Mary Jane McGuire, veterinary services manager, is reunited with Chocolate, shown in the arms of Lorie Benware, veterinary technician



Responding to an Outbreak

"We saw 472 dogs at our free clinics and what that means to us - in addition to protecting dogs from a horrible disease - is that hundreds of families know more about Dakin and that we have programs available like the Pet Health Center (PHC). Several free clinic attendees and parvo-recovered dogs have already had follow-up wellness appointments at the PHC and I couldn't be happier." – **Mary Jane McGuire**, *veterinary services manager*

A Miracle Save

Mary Jane fondly remembers Chocolate. "He was really sick, and I didn't think he would make it," she recalled. The poodle mix with the adorable underbite and black, curly coat had other plans, though. "We saw him recently at Dakin for his rabies vaccines," smiled Mary Jane. "When he was sick, his people took time off from work to give him round-the-clock-care. Animals are remarkable in what they can do. It was amazing to see this dog's spirit come out of such a grave situation, but his people believed he'd be OK, and so he was!"



PARVO *cont. from front*

But Dakin was seeing them, mapping the cases, and the number was growing. One day a man arrived with one of his dogs who had just passed away, and with another who was very ill. Both had contracted parvo. At his apartment building in Springfield, he told staff members, six dogs had died the previous week. Residents were watching YouTube videos together, hoping to learn to treat parvo at home since they could not get their dogs to veterinarians.

Dakin staff quickly converted spaces in the shelter to treat dogs with parvo on an outpatient basis. Our garage was converted to a drive-up treatment site to keep sick dogs separate from the rest of our in-house animal population.

The staff treated the patients with injectable medications, subcutaneous fluids, antibiotics and more. They would then train that dog's family how to care for them at home by providing information about, among other things:

- Nutritional supplements
- Syringe feedings
- Karo syrup to keep their blood sugar up
- Tips for keeping them warm

Mary Jane McGuire, Veterinary Services Manager, noted: "It's better for these dogs to be treated at home, with someone to tend to them overnight. The ideal is to keep them home with people who love them

and can provide that nursing care, as long as we show them what to do. Then they can return to us for the injectable treatments."

In addition to treating dogs already showing symptoms, Dakin staff members were simultaneously planning a series of five free parvo vaccination clinics onsite curbside at Dakin, and offsite. By month's end, a total of 472 community dogs were given parvo and rabies vaccinations free of charge to combat the deadly virus, and stop the spread to other dogs.

Both the clinics and parvo treatments became all-hands-on-deck scenarios, with Dakin staff and volunteers pitching in to help during the busiest time of the year when in-house animal population was spiking.

The clinics were made possible in part by the Massachusetts Animal Fund, a program of the MA Department of Agriculture; our community partners, including Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control and Adoption Center and AIC; and caring supporters like you.

There were many challenges faced – and met – to make this effort successful. "One was that we never knew when people would come to us with a sick dog," noted Karina. "Once in a while we'd get a call, but mostly they'd just arrive. This was the worst outbreak we've ever seen. The prognosis is better the earlier that we see the dog, but if they've had it a while, they're in worse condition and it's hard to see that happening."

#dakinhumanesociety

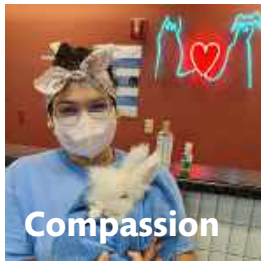


DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY
WILL RUN FOR COOKIES 5K



Sunday, May 7 Stanley Park, Westfield

Join us at Dakin's 2nd annual Will Run for Cookies 5k run/2k walk to spend time with friends and family (dogs welcome!), run or walk, enjoy a delicious cookie, and most importantly, support Dakin Humane Society and our critical programs to keep people and pets together. **Scan code to register!**



Compassion



Integrity



Innovation



Follow us on Instagram for breaking news, sweet faces and stories!



Tax Time is Right Around the Corner

You can help animals by supporting the MA Animal Fund by donating on your state income taxes...it's easy! Just look for Line 33f on your MA Resident Income Tax Return Form 1 and follow the instructions.

TOGETHER *continued from front*

their human-caretakers who have experienced illness and emergencies and who have needed comfort, resources, and kindness during difficult times.

Together, we helped people access life-saving vaccinations and veterinary treatment for their pets during an outbreak of parvovirus in our community, provided spay-neuter services for pet owners who have been overwhelmed by news of an unexpected litter, and gave reassurance and assistance to people who have asked us to find homes for their beloved pets when they've become ill, lost their jobs, or are struggling with

housing insecurity.

In addition, our all-volunteer Kitten Street Team has continued their wonderful work to provide shelter, vaccinations, and spay/neuter services to feral cats and find loving homes for the kittens where they will grow and thrive.

This is compassion in action and your dedication and support make this work possible every day.

Thank you for being an essential part of our Dakin Team!

With gratitude,

Meg Talbert

Ensuring a Future for Animals

"As a volunteer, I often hear Dakin's dedicated staff talking with clients on the phone or in person ensuring the perfect match for animal and adopter, or providing behavioral advice, or, sadly, discussing euthanasia. I see the bustle around our new Pet Health Center. During Covid, Jim helped with the Pet Food Aid Program enabling people to keep their animal companions during that difficult time. We see the inspiring stories of the Kitten Street Team, and marvel at the staff's care and compassion in dealing with difficult hoarding situations. This is why we are Legacy members—to be sure Dakin is able to continue all this remarkable work into the future."

— Marianne & Jim Gambaro,
Legacy Society Members



Join Marianne and Jim as a Legacy Society member and ensure your lifelong passion and commitment to animal welfare by including the animals of Dakin in your will, trust, or estate plans. Your planned gift to Dakin Humane Society makes a powerful impact on our ability to maintain and expand the critically-needed programs and services for animals and the people who love them.

If you would like more information about how planned giving can secure your legacy to benefit animals, please contact development@dakinhumane.org.



Dakin Humane Society
171 Union Street
Springfield, MA 01105

(413) 781-4000
dakinhumane.org

CONNECT WITH US



DakinHumaneSociety



DakinHumaneSociety



Dakin Humane Society



Dakin Humane Society