

League Links 2.0

A quarterly newsletter from the
League for Animal Welfare

Moo Moo came to the PAW clinic after eating something he shouldn't! An obstruction surgery at a private vet clinic would start at \$2,000; Moo Moo's bill at the League was \$236.



All in the Family

*The Paw Clinic celebrates 6 months of making
veterinary care affordable to all families*

The problem was obvious: more and more families were getting priced out of veterinary care.

Daily calls flooded into the League for Animal Welfare - families begging for help with pets in crisis situations, whose vet care would be in the thousands. Dogs with obstructions in their digestive tracts. Cats with FIP. Lost pets found after being hit by cars. Families would take any help they could get, even if it meant surrendering their pet to get them care.

Veterinary care inflation has outpaced all other inflation, sitting at nearly double the regular inflation rate. The veterinary care pets received in 2000 costs close to 300% more in 2025. Even middle-class families struggle to afford the increasing costs.

Meanwhile, veterinary professionals (veterinarians and veterinary technicians) are in short supply - 25% of open positions for veterinary professionals cannot be filled due to the shortage.

The solution felt out of reach - how could animal shelters overcome these staggering obstacles? Our costs are also skyrocketing. Our kennels are fuller than they've ever been.

The need felt overwhelming. The solution felt unreachable. But *that* is when our little shelter shines!

In January, thanks to the lucky addition of Veterinarian Erin Luker to our staff, the League started the Public Animal Wellness (PAW) Clinic - a full-service veterinary clinic aimed at treating ill and injured pets whose families couldn't afford veterinary costs elsewhere. Our goal: treat the pets who have serious, sometimes life-threatening conditions, who would suffer or die without care; and do it in a way that is accessible to their families.

The first patient? A sweet senior dog with a soccer-ball-sized mass on her spleen that required a blood transfusion and immediate surgery. Her mom had recently lost her other dog to cancer, and couldn't bear losing Wrigley, too. We were off!

In 6 months, the PAW Clinic, which operates on Mondays and Wednesdays, has served 330 pets.

All Dogs Are Therapy Dogs

HOW A FERAL, 3-LEGGED DOG FOUND HER DAD - AND GAVE THEM BOTH A PURPOSE

“It’s not their fault. As a society, we let [dogs] down. They can’t save themselves, but they still forgive us.”

Jeffrey Lambert, a regular and beloved League volunteer, is well known among the shelter’s staff and other volunteers. He’s recognized for his amazing work of course, but also for what led him to the shelter.

About two years ago, Jeff walked through the shelter doors like many people do on a daily basis. He came in search of a hiking buddy to help fill the void of the loss of his 13-year-old dog. As he walked along the kennels, he stumbled upon one dog in particular: Nadia. What Jeff didn’t know: Nadia was very under-socialized with humans (basically feral); and only had three legs. She felt nearly “unadoptable,” a dog that staff knew would be hard to find a family to love her.

Little did they both know, they would change each others’ lives forever.

A Harrowing Past

Nadia came from a large hoarding situation. Twenty dogs were living in an abandoned house; their owner arriving daily just to feed them what she had: bread and cheese. The owner refused to surrender the dogs, but both owner and the dogs desperately needed help. Finally, her family stepped in, and with some convincing, Nadia and the others were brought to their first stop: the Brown County Animal Shelter.



All in the family: Jeff’s granddaughter inherited his compassion for the underdog! She volunteers at the League with him, and works with overlooked dogs like senior boy Johnson.



Jeff poses with his girl, whom he calls “Tripawd Nod,” after adopting her in 2023.

But Nadia was feral. She had an injured leg that required amputation. She refused to be touched, to eat in her kennel, to make eye contact. It was 9 months before she wagged her tail. Of all the dogs from that home, she was clearly in the worst condition. She didn’t know how to act like a dog, and she didn’t let on that she had any interest in trying.

Nadia, a “Brown County special,” as BCHS Director Renee Bates calls her, seemed like an impossible adoption. The only humane option, it felt like, was euthanasia. But a BCHS staffer brought her home instead - only to lose her own home two years later, leaving Nadia at the League. “The animals’ safety net,” Bates calls us at the League, one of her partner shelters that helps transfer dogs when her open-admission shelter gets beyond capacity.

When she landed on our doorstep, Nadia hadn’t made any discernable progress – she was still feral. With only three legs, she looked as broken as she felt - no one saw their future beloved family member when they passed her in her kennel.

Until Jeff came along.

A Hopeful Future

After hearing the tragic life Nadia had lived, Jeff made his decision. “This is not the dog I’m looking for, but she’s not staying here,” Jeff said. While he knew the challenges he faced - both with her temperament and her physical limitations - he was willing to take a chance on her. These were problems he knew could be solved.

Jeff officially adopted Nadia that day, but Nadia wasn’t quite as ambitious about this new plan - she refused to get into the car. She was petrified. She had no reason to trust people - and the trauma showed. But Jeff’s first act to gain that trust was to promise her he’d come back the next day, and try again. The name of the game was patience and understanding, and Jeff was happy to give that to his new girl.



At the shelter, Nadia scrunched herself in a corner, as far away from the kennel door (and humans) as she could get.

"This is not the dog I'm looking for, but she's not staying here."

Nadia did finally make it into the car, and to her new home, where Jeff took “microbaby steps” to make her feel safe. He gave her all the space she needed and used bathroom breaks to strengthen their bond. He earned her trust little by little, never pushing her beyond her limits.

“[Most] people want a dog that they don’t have to do anything with,” Jeff explained of the expectations many families have when bringing home their new dog. That wasn’t Nadia – she needed so much from Jeff just to settle into being a dog. It was a challenge he willingly accepted.

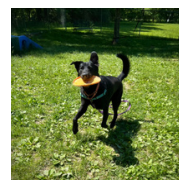
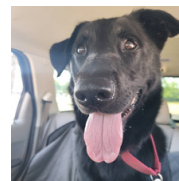
Gradually, Nadia began hitting milestones. One of the most memorable, Jeff recalls, was when she approached Jeff’s granddaughter, Riley, in the backyard – a show of trust she had not yet given even to Jeff. This was proof that she was healing. Jeff was doing what many believed to be impossible, but it was just the start. Since being adopted by Jeff, Nadia has blossomed. Jeff showed her: she was safe now.

All Dogs Are Therapy Dogs

And Nadia returned the favor – she gave Jeff so many gifts in return. Because of Nadia, Jeff began volunteering at the League – an experience he refers to as his Prozac, because it gives him the opportunity and motivation to take a break from the stressors of his normal life. His love for his girl, whom he calls “Tripawd Nod,” fueled him to work with the dogs at the shelter that are just like Nadia - the underdogs, the overlooked, the “problem” dogs. Nadia was a gateway to an important purpose: making forgotten animals feel loved.

Jeff recommends: SHADOW!

Think you have what it takes to be a hero to a dog in need?



Jeff wasn’t celebrating when Shadow’s 1-year anniversary at the League came, in August. Shadow has spent his whole life in shelters, so he hasn’t learned how to be a dog. But with Jeff? Shadow goes to the park, swimming in creeks, to McDonald’s, to Home Depot. Have the patience of Jeff? Shadow needs a patient home that is able to work through anxiety and guarding tendencies.

But Jeff has never been in it for the reward, or the attention. “It was always for her,” he says. Everything he does at the shelter—and at home with his own dogs—is for them. “Dogs are better than humans. They love you more than they love themselves,” Jeff says, “no matter what they’ve been through.”

Jeff was our hero for saving Nadia. Nadia’s our hero for bringing Jeff back to the shelter, to save them all, one at a time. 🐾🐾

“All in the Family” (Continued)

The small and mighty PAW team - Dr. Luker; Veterinary Technician Ashley Houston; and Clinic Coordinator Sarah Smith - have seen everything from bowel obstructions to ruptured eyes; broken legs to cancerous spleens; kidney disease to mange. They have treated newborn kittens and 20-year old senior dogs. And they have done it all at a third of the average vet cost.

“It was important to us to provide a service that every pet owner could afford,” explains Clinic Coordinator Sarah Smith. “We never want to tell someone ‘well, this is a treatable condition, but we can’t treat it if you can’t pay!’ We don’t want to send any pet out of our doors suffering, if we could have helped them.”

Providing that accessible care means getting creative. In addition to keeping costs at the lowest possible rates, the League also offers payment and credit plans to families; and a Veterinary Assistance Program (VAP) that uses donated funds to help subsidize care for under-resourced patients. “The PAW Clinic is not going to make us millions,” laughed Executive Director Devon Smith. “But that’s not the point. The point is to provide quality veterinary care to all, regardless of the size of their wallet. Every family deserves the love of a pet, and the dignity of providing that pet with great and humane care.”

“We don’t want to send any pet out of our doors suffering, if we could have helped them.”

And so the Clinic team has gotten to know and love Nalo, the pittie puppy who has an appetite for socks. Her family initially brought her to an emergency clinic, certain she had a bowel obstruction and was quoted \$5,000 for her care. She was treated at the PAW Clinic for \$265.

We met Wrigley, a dog with a tumor on her spleen. Her severe anemia meant she needed a blood transfusion before Dr. Luker could remove her spleen. The PAW team had the transfusion and surgery done within 36 hours of meeting her, and she walked out the door wiggling her happy tail. We treated Lou the cat, whose intestinal mass couldn’t be treated, but who purred throughout his complimentary grooming session to help with his matted fur. Ava the Shih Tzu, who had developed a painful eye cyst and had to have her eye removed. Aria the corgi, a repeat customer who first injured her ACL, and later came back with some lumps and bumps to biopsy; Chase, the 12-year old Bichon who was attacked by a bigger dog; Maui the fluffy cat, whose stubborn eye infection wouldn’t go away on its own; Bug the Chihuahua with Cushings Disease; Sassy who had bladder stones and Oreo who had Epilepsy.

Every day, new patients arrive with scared families who didn’t know where to turn. “What a privilege it is to be able to provide these families with compassion, to give them peace of mind,” said Clinic Director Smith.

“Almost no one turns down the recommended care,” said Dr. Luker. “In private practice, it happened all the time, if the client couldn’t afford the recommended treatment or diagnostics. I almost never see it here - the cost means they can afford what their pet really needs.”

And it has made something else abundantly clear: love cannot be measured by our bank accounts. “We say it all the time, but it’s so clear at the PAW Clinic,” said Executive Director Smith; “these pet parents may not have a ton of money, but they would do *anything* for their pets. If you can work with them even just a little, they do not hesitate to do right by their pets.”



From top: Maui the cat was suffering from an eye infection; Nalo the pittie ate a sock; and Aria the corgi partially tore her ACL.

Vaccinated & Loved

PETCO LOVE DONATES MORE THAN 7,500 VACCINES TO CLERMONT COUNTY PETS



Petco Love, formerly the Petco Foundation, has been working with animal shelters around the United States since 1999 to promote and fund life-saving initiatives for homeless animals. From housing adoptable animals in Petco stores, to offering millions in grants, Petco Love is invested in shelter animals.

In 2021, they embarked on a new campaign: vaccinate millions of pets across the US against the most deadly diseases cats and dogs face. To do it, Petco Love offered free DaPP and HCP vaccines to all their non-profit partners; and those partners gave those vaccines, for free, to owned pets in their communities.

Within a year, one million pets had been vaccinated, thanks to Petco Love. And in 2022, the League for Animal Welfare joined the campaign. Since then, the League has vaccinated 7,575 of Clermont County's beloved pets. The vaccines are offered to any and all clients using our spay/neuter, vaccine, and urgent care clinics.

The impact is critical. The vaccines protect against viruses that are often fatal, but incredibly preventable. The DaPP vaccine for dogs helps keep Distemper, Adenovirus, Parvo Virus, and Parainfluenza at bay. Distemper and Parvo can both be fatal in dogs, even when treatments are administered.

For cats, the HCP vaccine protects against the Herpes, Calici, and Panleukopenia viruses - all incredibly contagious and common. If left untreated, Calici and Panleukopenia can be fatal.

Cats and dogs should start these vaccines when they are 6-8 weeks old, and get a series of 2-3 as puppies/kittens. Adults can be vaccinated annually for optimal protection. Animals at high risk - young kittens and puppies; cats and dogs in high-population households; indoor/outdoor cats; dogs who go to boarding facilities or dog parks - should stay up-to-date on these core vaccines.

"We get so many panicked calls from pet owners, whose pets are suffering from parvo or panleukopenia," lamented League Executive Director Devon Smith. "It's frustrating - those pets may not survive, and certainly won't without expensive veterinary intervention. And the vaccine would have prevented it all. We're just incredibly grateful to Petco Love for making this a priority, and making it so easy for pet owners to keep their pets safe."

Check to see if your pets are up-to-date on these and other vaccines - if not, visit the League on Fridays from 11am-1pm for our Vaccine Clinic, which is open to pets from all counties. 🐾🐾



Puppies and kittens are the most vulnerable population for viruses like Parvo and Panleukopenia, and should start getting vaccines at 6-8 weeks old.



From itty bitty kitties, to giant Danes like Tank and giant Maine Coons like Whiska, our vaccine clinic serves cats and dogs of all shapes and sizes!



Parvovirus in Dogs



A deadly disease that commonly affects puppies. It can cause vomiting, diarrhea and often death.

It's highly contagious and easily preventable with the DAPPv booster vaccine.

 Protect your pets: freepetvaccines.org



Feline Panleukopenia



A deadly viral infection that affects cats.

It's highly contagious and easily preventable with the FVRCP or HCP booster vaccine.

 Protect your pets: freepetvaccines.org

Shop to Save Lives

Whiskey & Whiskers offers primo goods at the gala's auctions

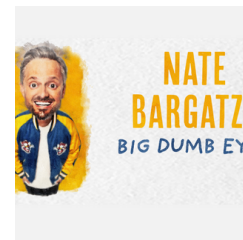
Fans of comedians Josh Johnson or Nate Bargatz? Like to jam out to Alice Cooper and Judas Priest? Into Valentino purses? Like to party at Top Golf? Want to try new vegan restaurants, or hang out at old standards at the Banks? Want to wow your partner with a custom-made cake for their birthday?

Lamenting the fact that your birdhouse doesn't have a camera on it? Need a hard-to-find bourbon to serve in your man-cave to impress friends? Time to spoil yourself with a trip to far-flung exotic locales? Need a pet-sitter to spoil your furballs while you take that vacation? Into Escape Rooms?

The League's biggest fundraiser is coming, and our silent auction has something for *everyone*!

Whiskey & Whiskers will be held on September 27 at the Manor House; but fans of GREAT auctions can start shopping the silent auction when it opens on September 20. Items are available to bid and win even if you're not attending the event.

CERTIFICATE FOR 2 DAYS OF PET-SITTING



But if you are attending the event (and we hope you are!), save some of that dough for our live auction! Trips, bourbons, custom-made dinner and wine pairings, local date nights - we'll get that auction paddle up for one of our favorite experiences!

Tickets are still available for the gala - reserve a table of 8 for you and friends at a discount! Registration for the silent auction will be available on our website on September 20.

Tickets available now; silent auction opens 9/20!
<https://www.lfaw.org/events/whiskey-and-whiskers/>

ADOPT ME



Blondie - 11 years old, male

Blondie's person died - but nobody remembered to do anything with Blondie. He was left alone in his person's house, with only a mindful neighbor keeping him alive with weekly feedings. Thankfully, after a month of this isolation, the neighbor reached out for help, and this handsome senior boy with the cleft palate came to the League. Blondie hates cat carriers; makes tight bonds with his cat roommates; and meows insistently at dinner time - he'll make sure nobody forgets him twice! This senior does get monthly injections for arthritis - but in spite of that, we know this spunky guy has years of love left to give.



Droopy - 5.5 years old, male

No more adorable face has existed than our boy Droopy's! This meathead dog is known for hogging shotgun on car rides; snoring loudly at naptime; eating his toys; and making a mess of pup cups. In other words: he's *perfect*. Droopy isn't really in love with other dogs, and he definitely wants to eat cats - so he'd like to be your one-and-only. An older boy, Droopy isn't into long walks on the beach - short walks punctuated by ice cream and summing at a couch are more his vibe. While you may miss out on daily runs or a pack of dogs if you become Droopy's, you won't ever miss out on love and lots of laughs.

View all the cats and dogs available for adoption at [LFAW.org/adoption-center](https://www.lfaw.org/adoption-center)