

League Links 2.0

A quarterly newsletter from the
League for Animal Welfare



The beginnings were inauspicious for Purrfect Day Cafe, a local cafe and cat adoption center in Covington, KY. Slated to open in 2020, COVID-19 did its best to introduce every possible hurdle to the hopeful cafe's lofty goals. "The challenges were fast and furious," said Founder Chuck Patton. "Covid's largest impact was on the supply of kitties to the Cafe - we had to close [in 2020], simply because we did not have enough cats."

Fortunately, Patton had seen the success that his vision *could* have in the restaurant and the pet-adoption market. After opening the original Purrfect Day Cafe in Louisville in August 2018 - one of only 50 cat cafes in the country - Patton knew he could build a space that was both a great experience for the community, as well as an vital outlet for animal shelters overflowing with homeless cats. The Louisville Cafe was finding homes for thousands of cats each year.

Covid would not stop this "Purrprietor" from having the same success in greater Cincinnati. And now, 2,700 cats have this Cafe to thank for finding them a family.

A PURRFECTION DAY FOR CINCINNATI CATS

Local Cat Cafe Finds Homes for Thousands of Cats

A DECADE OF LOVE

Staffer Silke Thomasson celebrates 10 years at the League

When Silke Thomasson started her job at the League in the spring of 2013, Manager Sue Schellhouse asked her if she thought she would be able to handle the stress of animal welfare work. "Sure," Silke replied, "I have two kids at home."

10 years later, those kids are all grown up (now 26 and 20!); and Silke better understands why Sue asked her that question! "It's a totally different kind of stress," Silke explains of working with animals. "There are days you just want to walk away. But when you commit to it - you commit with your whole heart."

Thomasson has done just that, dedicating a decade's worth of her time, grit, and hard work to helping the homeless animals that come through the League's doors.

Lots of Changes - But One Constant

During Silke's tenure, the League has changed a lot. An expanded wing in the cat area; new flooring; expanded office space; a brand new clinic - the physical space is nearly unrecognizable from the shelter where she began. Fellow staffers have also come and gone. "The League has changed SO much since I started," Silke said.



Silke with her dog Zeus in 2016.



Staff honored Silke's anniversary in May, 2023 by dedicating a kennel to her - the kennel Mica had until he passed.

But through it all, Silke is the constant. "She is one of the most dedicated people I've ever met," said Dawn Oberschlake, Dog Care Coordinator who has worked with Silke since 2020. "We are so lucky to have her on the team."

Thomasson emigrated to the United States from Erlangen, Germany after meeting her husband, who was stationed there. The rest of her family still lives in Germany. In the US, Silke worked in retail and in early childhood development- she first came to the League not to work, but to volunteer with her young children, Kayla and Evan. But when a part-time position opened up in cat care, Silke applied. [Yes, you read that right - though Silke is well-known for being the queen of dogs around the League, she actually started in the cat care department!].

"I don't remember much [about those first days]," said Silke, "but I remember how overwhelming it was! I had never worked with animals before - I only had my own pets at home. Totally different ballgame."

Gone to the Dogs

When a full-time position opened up in the dog care department, Silke took it and never looked back. She is now well-known for being the go-to person for "Side B Dogs" (the dog wing that she cares for daily - feeding, medicating, cleaning, and making sure her dogs get plenty of love and enrichment).

Thousands of dogs have come and gone during Silke's tenure - including long-timer Mica, who spent seven years as one of Silke's Side B Dogs. "Mica was discerning about his people," explained Executive Director Devon Smith. "But he adored Silke. On days Silke wasn't working, he pouted! Silke was definitely his mom. She just has a way with dogs - a calm energy that pretty much every dog just instantly takes to. It's magic - you can't learn it!"

And while Silke loves them all, there are some she likes just a little less on some mornings. "Puppies! When I first started, I loved the cute puppies," Silke said, "but after 10 years of cleaning up after those 'cute' puppies, now I just tolerate them!" Silke laughed. Unexpectedly, though, it was a puppy that finally stole Silke's heart in January, 2022. Thomasson adopted puppy Whopper - surprisingly the *only* League animal she has brought home as her own in her 10 years of falling in love with League animals!

"Silke is the ultimate dog-mom to 16 dogs, day in and day out - she loves them unconditionally."



Silke with League dog Mica in 2020. Mica passed in 2022 - and Silke was by his side to the end.



Silke and her new puppy, Whopper, in 2022

An Indomitable Spirit

Silke's coworkers, past and present, are all grateful to know and work with this indomitable woman. "She has one of the biggest hearts - when things are hard, you can always count on a smile from Silke," shared Dog Enrichment Coordinator Ronni Valle.

After 10 years at the League, Silke's knowledge and understanding of dogs and shelter life are unparalleled - and she has used that to foster a love for animal shelter work in many other new staff members. Silke has been foundational in training many new staff entering the field. "Silke is an amazing and welcoming person," said Sarah Smith, Cat Care Coordinator, who trained with Silke in 2020. "She's always willing to help everyone. And the knowledge she has gained over her 10 years - it's helped me, and so many other people, countless times."

In a stressful and emotional industry with notoriously high turnover, Silke's energy, spirit, compassion, and dedication stand out. What motivates her to return to this work each day, no matter the challenging circumstances? "My hope is that I can make just a tiny little difference in each one of those animals that comes through," said Silke. "Even if they're dealt a crappy hand in life, for those few days/weeks/months that they're with us, they will know what love is. And they will have a voice."

We know Mica, and the thousands of other dogs who have been blessed to have Silke as a temporary mom when they needed it the most, could certainly confirm Silke gave them that gift. 🐾🐾

A Purrfect Day (Continued)



A Cafe With A Purpose

Patton's unstoppable vision is now a reality - between the Louisville and Covington locations, more than 10,000 cats and kittens have found their families through Purrfect Day since 2018. The model: turn a space in a well-trafficked business district into a bright, cozy cafe; add adoptable cats and kittens from local shelters; mix in cleverly-named cocktails; and voila! The adoption experience becomes indistinguishable from a fun day out with family and friends, and reaches a whole new demographic.

And that is how Patton defines success. "The goals were ... to have an impact on the shelters [cat populations]; and create a space where animal lovers knew their support of the cafe would make a difference." They are lofty goals, to improve the way pet adoptions are done - but the team at Purrfect Day clearly enjoys accomplishing them.

*"We want shelters to know that we are a solution to getting cats adopted." -
Chuck Patton, "Purrpriator"*

With creative events, like Yoga with Cats and Meowgarita Night; an adorable social media presence highlighting every adoption; and purrfect puns for every scenario (would you like some paw-pcorn with your Smelly Cat frappe?), the purrpose is clear: cat adoptions are meant to be fun.

The staff does an incredible job of melding fun with lifesaving. "All cats (and dogs) deserve to be safe and loved in a forever home," said Purrfect Day employee Eliza Kohl, "and I love being the one to help them with that last step!" "it's very rewarding to know that we have found so many kitties their furrever homes," agreed staff member Monique Fields.

And what an impact they have had - after partnering with Purrfect Day for the last year, 254 League cats have found their homes through Purrfect Day (a quarter of the League's total annual cat adoptions). "They are an incredible resource," shared League Executive Director Devon Smith. "Purrfect Day is a big part of why the League has been able to triple the number of cats we save each year. Without this additional outlet for adoptions, helping our cats meet a different demographic of adopters, the League would have had to say "no" to a lot of cat intakes that we said "yes" to, thanks to this incredible Purrfect Day team."

With 2,700 adoptions and climbing, there's no doubt it's all purrs and head boops from here.



Purrfect Day employees Monique Fields, Alek Estrada, and Kaylin Mercer showcasing Purrfect Day's impurresive adoption record

*To reserve a spot at the Cafe
and to see a list of their events,
visit their website at
<https://purrfectdaycafecovington.com>*

Whiskey & Whiskers

8TH ANNUAL GALA SELLS OUT - HELPS 4,000 PETS LEAD BETTER LIVES



Charlie Harper 48 x 48 Giclee Print

The long-awaited return of the League's gala, Whiskey & Whiskers, is here - bigger and better than ever! Interrupted by Covid, this year's event will be the first since 2019.

The 8th annual dinner and auction, to be held at the Metropolitan Club in Covington on September 23, is the League's biggest fundraiser each year. Proceeds from ticket sales and the live and silent auction will benefit the more than 4,000 animals who are cared for at the League each year (approximately 2,000 homeless cats and dogs who receive shelter and find homes through the League; and another 2,000 cats and dogs who receive assistance and care through our veterinary clinic, Safe Haven program, and pet food pantry).

The event has sold out - but that doesn't mean you can't participate in the fun and support the League! The auction will be featured online, and will accept bids until the close of the event. From artwork to alcohol, from adventure travel to spa days, Whiskey & Whiskers' auction will feature exciting options for everyone.

All auction items can be viewed online at [lfaw.winningbidder.com/event/1865](https://faw.winningbidder.com/event/1865). Take a trip to the Maldives, or Bourbon Country! Commission a custom-sketched portrait of your pet! Treat yourself to some exceptional bourbon! Attend a show at the Aronoff; make your life easier with a litter robot; dine at some of Cincinnati's best restaurants. Spoil yourself, or get a gift for a friend. All proceeds benefit cats and dogs in need - no guilt about pampering yourself when it's for a great cause!



Blanton's Bourbon

Register for the auction today - you will be notified when bidding begins on September 16, and if another bidder outbids you; and notified when you (hopefully!) win at the close of the auction on September 23. Please note that shipping costs are the responsibility of the buyer (local bidders can pick up items at the League after September 23).

Happy bidding!



Register for the online auction today!



<https://faw.winningbidder.com/event/1865>

League Merchandise Available!

Get Summer Swag Before It's Gone!

"Either you love dogs ... or you're wrong."

"Well-behaved cats seldom make history."

"Must love cats."

The League has t-shirts, sweatshirts, and tank-tops available with expressions that are sure to make your friends smile (and strangers ask you to turn around so they can see the back!).

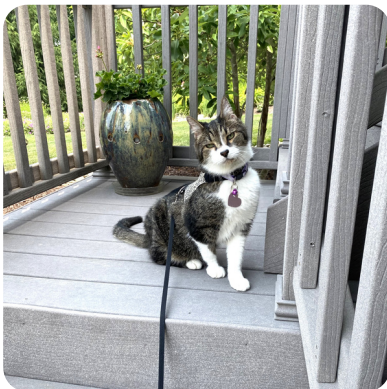


League merchandise is available at the shelter, or available for purchase online through Bonfire, an online merchant that helps non-profit organizations feature their wares (please note: colors differ between Bonfire and shirts available at the shelter).

Support the League and look good at the same time! Visit our merchandise store on Bonfire at <https://www.bonfire.com/store/league-for-animal-welfare/> or stop by the shelter during open hours!



ADOPT ME



Nikko - 14 years old, male

Nikko is the opposite of a cat's cat. Nikko hates his own kind. That means that Nikko is very unhappy at the League, where it feels like wall-to-wall cats! This handsome older guy has been spending his days in a foster home - but he was mortified to find out his foster parents **ALSO HAD CATS!** Nikko would love to spend his senior years in a home where he can forget that other cats exist, and have his family all to himself. Nikko loves Fancy Feast, being brushed, going for walks on his harness, and snuggling (most of all). Nikko dislikes, in case you've forgotten, other cats! Cat-less people who love to snuggle need apply!



Beignet - 1.5 years old, female

Beignet was adopted as a puppy - so imagine her surprise when she found herself dumped at a county pound as a stray dog. That's not how a lady like Beignet is used to being treated! We don't know what happened with her family, but they obviously didn't know a good thing when they saw it. Their loss will be her new family's gain. Beignet is very timid about other dogs and cats, but she's not timid about people at all - she **LOVES** people! This precious girl gives wonderful hugs, and craves affection. Beignet likely could learn to live with other pets - as long as she knows she'll never end up as a stray dog without a family again.

View all the cats and dogs available for adoption at LFAW.org/adoption-center