

League Links 2.0

A quarterly newsletter from the
League for Animal Welfare



On a blustery morning in early November, budding young book-lovers filed into the League, shook off their jackets, and picked out books.

As part of the Purrfect Tales program, the kids were there to spend the morning reading—to cats.

Purrfect Tales is a partnership between the League and the Clermont County Public Library, designed to give young readers a place to read aloud to a non-judgmental, playful and purring audience.

“The program is a win-win for all,” says Library Director Christine Wick. “Reading is so important—it is an absolutely vital skill. We want to help children be proficient in reading, and we want to make it fun.”

Wick was inspired to initiate the program by—what else?—a picture book, *Negative Cat*, by Sophie Blackall. In it, Max the cat isn’t happy in his adoptive home; but his boy wins him over by doing the thing he dreads the most: practicing reading.

Wick reached out to League Volunteer Coordinator Carrie Leary in the spring with her idea, and got an enthusiastic response.

PURRFECT TALES

Inspiring Love Between Kids, Cats, & Books

NAUGHTY TO NICE

A unique foster program for dogs on Santa's questionable list

LFAW volunteer and dog lover Sheri Boone spends enough time at the League to know two things: 1) really good dogs are in shelters, through no fault of their own; 2) really good dogs don't always *look* like really good dogs when immersed in the stressful environment of shelter life (and can be, and often are, very different animals when in a home!).

That poses a challenge that Boone is not one to shrink from. So Boone, a local realtor with Comey & Shepherd, and colleague Steve Maloney with First Community Mortgage, put their heads together: how could they help get more dogs into homes, to help people see what these dogs are really like?

"We know how brilliant dogs can be - they just need a chance. They are victims of not having the best circumstances; not having anyone dedicated or committed to working with them. We thought, if these dogs are given the chance to learn, given the right attention - we will see a happy, well-balanced, outstanding dog," Boone said of the program.

And so, Naughty to Nice was born - a program to encourage people to foster dogs - especially who aren't thriving in the shelter.



It's not Birdie's fashion sense or holiday spirit that landed her on the naughty list!



Eggroll made Santa's naughty list, but would like to contest those results.

Naughty or Nice?

Boone and Maloney have pledged to donate to the League for any Naughty to Nice dog who spends 10 or more days in a foster home in November and December - \$100 for 10 days; up to \$300 for a month-long foster stint. The program is tailored to dogs who may have shown some unsavory behaviors at the League - behaviors caused or exacerbated by being in the unnatural environment of a shelter. The hope: these "naughty" behaviors melt away with the love and attention in a home, and "nice" dogs are born!

The eligible "naughty" dogs were chosen by Dog Care Coordinator, Dawn Oberschlake. "Some dogs were chosen based on how long they've spent in a shelter; others because of rowdy behavior in their kennels that's much-improved in an office or offsite environment," Dawn explained of who made Santa's naughty list.

A "Nice" Program at a Critical Time

Boone's inspired idea couldn't have come at a better time - 2023 has been one of the hardest years on record for dogs in shelters.

"Shelters have more dogs than ever," Oberschlake shared. "Adoptions, volunteering, and fostering are down, and length-of-stay is up all over the country. Dogs are mentally deteriorating," she continued. "A dog that normally wouldn't be a 'behavior' case becomes one, because of the stress. Euthanasia is up in shelters we partner with - great dogs are dying, every day."

It's a problem Boone and the League want to tackle head-on. With individualized training and enrichment plans for each Naughty to Nice dog, the League team gives fosters the tools they need to bring out the "nice" in their dog. The goal is a second chance for these dogs, in a moment in animal sheltering where second chances are few and far between. "Euthanasia without any training - without any chances - is a heartbreaking reality in many shelters right now," shared Executive Director, Devon Smith.



Pony, showing his very nice side with volunteer Cathy.

"Euthanasia without any second chances is a heartbreaking reality in shelters right now. For these dogs, it can be different."

2nd (and 7th!) Chances

It's just what "Naughty" dog Pony needed. Pony was running as a stray for months before he was brought to a county shelter - and he had been starving. He was adopted into a home - but was returned for severe resource-guarding of his food. The shelter was going to euthanize him - what choice did they have, with so many dogs and so few options for dogs with behaviors like his?

But Pony is showing a behavior that makes sense, given his history - in his mind, he's still in "survival" mode and *has* to protect his food at all costs. The League wanted to give Pony a chance - to teach him, and people working with him, how to handle resource-guarding safely and effectively. For Pony at least, maybe things could be different.

And then there's everyone's favorite "naughty" dog virtuoso, Birdie - who is working on her seventh chance! Birdie is a funny, loving, boxy girl who everyone falls instantly in love with. But her disdain for small dogs has landed her in Santa's crosshairs (and gotten her returned to the shelter SIX times!).

Birdie's training plan is focused on how to redirect her when she encounters a smaller animal. Birdie won't be able to *live* with a small dog or cat - but managing her "predilections is doable, and that's what she'll be working on if she's lucky enough to land a Naughty to Nice foster family.

Because at the League, we know that sometimes we *all* need seven chances.



Do you have space in your home and in your heart for a dog that needs another chance?

Contact us at dawn@lfaw.org to find out how to be a "Naughty to Nice" foster!



Purrfect Tales (Continued)



“Everyone is always excited, sometimes the parents more than the kids!” Carrie said. “I love that Chris came to us to help the four-legged members of the Clermont County community.”

On Purrfect Tales days, the library staff sets up their selection of books at the League, and kids choose their favorites. The young readers and their parents spend the morning in any of the League’s 17 cat rooms. Some kids get attached to one cat for the session, and others visit a range of rooms. For children who may be reluctant readers, the program creates a fun environment to learn to enjoy, rather than dread, reading.

“Reading to dogs or cats in a setting like the League is beneficial because the animals aren’t judgmental,” Wick explains. “It can decrease the stress a child may feel when reading aloud”

“It encourages the love of reading, and care and compassion for animals.”
Christine Wick, Library Director

For its part, the library benefits from the community outreach, connecting parents and children with its services. At the events, people can get library cards and check out books.

“Providing programming with community partners is an invaluable way to educate our partners and their clients about our services,” Wick says.

“Our mission is to foster lifelong learning by informing, engaging and inspiring members of our community. Purrfect Tales hits the mark on all of those...and I love the fact that it encourages the love of reading, and care and compassion for animals.”

Socializing the cats is an important part of the program for the League, because as they interact with new people, they become more adoptable.

“The cats know good things are coming when people come into the room,” shares Leary. “The cats understand a cozy thing is going to happen.”

Volunteer Teri Powers agrees. “The cats seemed content having people come in, and enjoyed being read to. They climbed up on laps, or sat at their feet. Kids seem to get a lot out of it. I think it’s important to instill in young kids the importance not only of reading, but to appreciate animals for all they’re worth.”



If your kids are interested in joining a Purrfect Tales morning at the League, visit <https://clermontlibrary.libnet.info/events> to register.

Children ages 5-14 are eligible to participate with a guardian.



Meowy & Bright

LOCAL BUSINESSES COME TOGETHER TO GIVE SHELTER KITTIES A BRIGHT HOLIDAY



The Clermont Public Library used book pages to make snowflakes!

The League introduced a new tradition this year: Meowy & Bright, a friendly (but fierce) competition among local businesses and organizations to deliver the most joyously decorated cat room at the League! A room that inspires “oohs,” “ahhhs,” holiday cheer, purrs (but please, no tinsel-related-bowel-obstructions!).

Ten local groups participated, all of whom have volunteered and supported the League already this year: People’s Bank; Total Quality Logistics (TQL); Petco; Oasis Turf & Tree; Eastgate Dental Excellence; Tractor Supply; First Lutheran Church; Clermont County Public Library; Madeira Middle School Community Service Club; and Girl Scout Troop 42960. Volunteers from each group designed and decorated their assigned cat room with decor they provided for the event. “People’s Bank is always looking for opportunities to participate in events that give back to the communities and organizations we serve - events we call “Positively Pebo!” explained Tressa Young of their participation.

Aleasha Halsey, Customer Experience Specialist at Oasis, shared the company encourages volunteerism, and even gives them “VTO” - volunteer time off. “It’s been such an honor to volunteer with League for Animal Welfare,” Halsey said.

And THIS was a volunteer project unlike any other! Decorating a room while 7 kitties watched, and plotted their decor’s demise. Libra perched on the wrapped boxes at the base of Madeira Middle School’s inflatable tree as they toiled away. Woodchase monitored his Public Library decorators from the comfort of his brand new reading nook - next to a cardboard bookshelf with titles like “The Meowtsiders” and “The Odhissey.” Shirley ate the edges of the Bank’s carefully wrapped boxes. The kitties in room 10 claimed Eastgate Dental Excellence’s supply totes as soon as they were laid down - leading the team to revise their strategy, and bring in wrapped boxes for the kitties to sleep in!

“We love connecting with our community, and supporting our patients and team members with causes close to their hearts,” said Eastgate Dental Excellence’s Office Manager Michelle Broughton. “We had a great time decorating, and got to spend time with the Feline Leukemia cats in our room, which is extra special.” 🐾🐾

And when the crew from TQL rolled in with their hand-built Santa sleigh? Well, the creativity and compassion was inspiring. But really, does anything inspire cats?

Vote for your favorite room between December 4-16 by visiting the rooms at the League; or following our social media sites!



More is more in the Madeira Middle School room - complete with a tree!



TQL’s homemade Santa Sleigh inspired oohs from kitty Posey!



Petco played on nostalgia to win your vote for room 6!

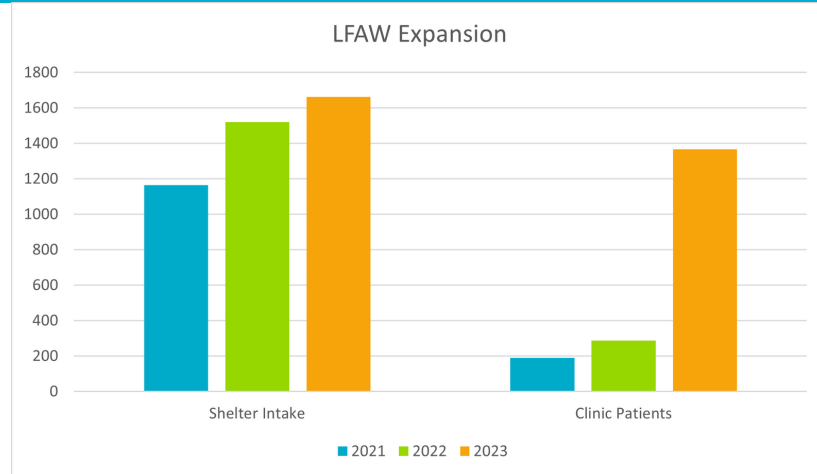
A Season for Life-Saving

CONSIDER A YEAR-END GIFT TO SAVE MORE LIVES IN 2024!

The 2020s have been tough for pets, in and out of shelters. Veterinary shortages have led to long wait times at clinics; increased costs have led to fewer pets receiving vital preventative and medical attention; an astonishing drop in dog adoptions has left more dogs in shelters than ever before. It has been a regression of tragic proportions.

In the face of it, the League has risen to the challenge. We have increased shelter intake by 43% in two years; and expanded our clinic, which is now seeing 600% more pets in need than two years ago.

These are numbers we're proud of - but there's more to be done. To meet our community's affordable spay/neuter needs, we need to expand surgical capacity by another 300%. To most effectively help our community and other crowded shelters, the League hopes to increase shelter intake by another 40%.



The League never shrinks from a challenge - and we know you don't, either! Consider a year-end gift to help us keep growing - until every cat and dog who needs help can get it at the League.

To make a life-saving gift to the League, give online at lfaw.org/donate or call us at 513-735-2299!

ADOPT ME



Jolene - 7 years old, female

If you've been to the League since Jolene joined us in August, then you've been presented with her belly with the expectation that she will receive copious rubs. This sweet girl is our hall monitor - she greets you when you enter the cat hallway, and follows you down the hall until you do the right thing: PET her already! This precious girl was found as a stray in a commercial area, where it wasn't safe to stay. We don't know how she wound up there - but we know she deserves a family to dote on her. Jolene isn't fond of other cats (angry that they deign to exist, in fact) - but she will be ALL the cat you need or ever wanted, we can promise that.



Haylie - 9 years old, female

Haylie was rushed to us for emergency medical attention from another shelter, where she was brought in as a stray. Her kidneys were failing; she was near death. This sweet girl was microchipped, and we hoped to get her people in before she passed away - but they never responded to our messages, and didn't answer their door when we visited their home. We were heartbroken for Haylie - but she wasn't! This little fighter pulled through! She's looking for a special person who will never let her down again; and someone who can continue her care for kidney disease (it's not hard - just a special diet and occasional vet visits! - and she's a great patient!).

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