

League Links 2.0

A quarterly newsletter from the
League for Animal Welfare

Time to Come Out & Play!

*Hiking event brings Sunday Fundays
to shelter dogs and volunteers*



On a frosty Sunday morning in February, more than 30 volunteers lined up in the parking lot of Milford's Shor Park. It was 9 a.m., and they had come from all around to spend the morning walking shelter dogs during League's "First Sunday Hike with a Shelter Dog" event.

One by one, the dogs were unloaded —black-and-white mixed breed Bridget, butterscotch hound mix Bo Peep, scruffy senior Roscoe, lanky Lab mix Milo, three-legged Golden Retriever Brady - 34 pups ready to enjoy the outdoors with a new friend.

The Sunday hikes are part of an initiative to spread the word about the League in the community; get the dogs out for fresh air, exercise and socialization; and give area residents an easy, fun, and accessible way to help shelter dogs. The events are held in the parks around greater Cincinnati.

"Getting the dogs out of their kennels is second only to adoptions in level of importance," says Volunteer Coordinator Carrie Leary. "We love connecting with the community so they get to know our dogs."

HELPING COMMUNITY PETS

184 cats & dogs fixed at innovative community spay/neuter event

For four decades, the League has been assisting local families with spay/neuter services - providing vouchers to help hundreds of pet owners each year defray the cost of this critical surgery. But in a climate where veterinary costs have skyrocketed, and pet owners face unprecedented economic hardship, the League knew it had to do even more.

In December, the League partnered with six other local veterinary hospitals to provide free spay/neuter surgeries to Clermont County residents who were struggling financially. The League, along with Bethel Community Pet Hospital; Burroughs Veterinary Services; Clermont Animal Hospital; Owensville Animal Hospital; Pet Wow; and Rolling Hills Veterinary Services fixed 184 dogs and cats in just five days!



Living in a rural area with a barn, kitties often make their way to Milissa's property - where, thanks to our program, they now get spayed!

The cost of unfixed pets

The need for this service - not just subsidized spay/neuter, but *free* spay/neuter - has never been greater. In 2022, intake into area animal shelters (including the League for Animal Welfare) was at an all-time high. With inflation affecting so many local residents, the cost of pet care is one factor driving this unprecedented relinquishment of pets.

Sterilizing pets is the first line of defense for shelter overpopulation, and keeping pets with their families. Spayed and neutered pets avoid costly health conditions, like uterine infections and mammary and testicular cancers. It helps with behavioral issues, like spraying and dominance. And it prevents the birth of scores of puppies and kittens, for which overwhelmed shelters and struggling families simply don't have the resources.

And while our voucher program has been an early adopter of spay/neuter assistance as vital to animal sheltering, only 60% of the families who apply for a voucher fix their pets. Families and their pets needed us to do more.



Archie's mom was able to get him neutered and still make sure her kids had a Christmas.

The impact of a helping hand

The families who participated in the Community Spay/Neuter Event confirmed it - the assistance was *desperately* needed for them to access the service, and to keep their pets in their families and out of shelters.

"I could not have done it on my own," Veronica, whose cat Smokie was fixed through the program, said. "I have recently been diagnosed with MS, and on one income - it's hard. It meant the world to me and my family what you do."

Shelly, who had five dogs fixed during the event, had placed 22 puppies from accidental litters just the year prior.



Smokie's mom was recently diagnosed with MS, and her family could not afford to have their precious girl spayed.

She worried about those 22 puppies, and making sure she found good homes who would love and care for them forever - she had no idea how she could keep doing it. Overcrowded shelters couldn't absorb those accidental litters. But now, all her pets are spayed/neutered.

"With costs and inflation and everything else going up, this program saved me and my cats." - Ashley

Heather's dog had been displaying dominance issues - in large part because he was unneutered. She wasn't having much success with training - he needed to be neutered. Ashley lives in an apartment complex that requires pets to be fixed - she worried she would have to rehome her two beloved cats.

Stray cats who wandered into new homes and barns; new dogs unexpectedly left with friends or family members; families facing sudden financial turmoil - over and over again, families told us: we couldn't have afforded to spay/neuter our pets without this program; and, in many cases, couldn't have kept our beloved pets if they weren't fixed.

The League continues its advocacy for accessible spay/neuter - in 2023, we have opened our clinic doors to the public to help get both cats and dogs spayed/neutered. Each week, the League performs 40 public spay/neuter surgeries for our community at an affordable cost. Because someday, we hope to make the need for animal sheltering obsolete - every pet born should be a pet who is wanted and loved, forever.



Need assistance
with spay/neuter
surgeries for your
pets?

The League offers
affordable
spay/neuter for
both cats and dogs.

Call us at 513-735-
2299 to schedule
today!

Time to Come Out & Play! (continued)



It's easy to sign up for a hike - simply RSVP to Carrie by email, and then show up on the first Sunday to be paired with a furry friend. Enrichment Coordinator Ronni Valle asks each volunteer what type of dog they feel most comfortable handling—large, small, puppy, senior—and connects them with the right match.

“For almost every one of our dogs to get to be outside, experiencing a new environment and people, is invaluable,” Ronni says. “I cannot say enough about what it means to these dogs and to the League staff.”

Before long, the dogs were happily crisscrossing the open green space on their leashes, volunteers in tow. They were heading down the hiking trails, sniffing and exploring with tails wagging.

“Getting the dogs out of their kennels is second only to adoptions in level of importance.”

A trio of mom, daughter and grandson made the trek to Milford for the morning hike. They weren't looking to adopt that day, they said, but just spend some quality time together hiking with a shelter dog.

One first-time volunteer said she had seen the post on Facebook and wanted to turn out to help the League. She had adopted her last dog from the League, and “she was the best dog I ever had.”

First Sunday Hike with a Shelter Dog is a companion program to Field Trips with Furballs, which allows dog-lovers to come “check out” a shelter dog for an adventure - no experience or appointment required! They enjoy hikes, car rides, visits to pet stores or ice cream shops—wherever their adventures take them.

First Sunday Hikes take place on the first Sunday of each month, from 9-11am, at rotating parks in greater Cincinnati. Says Ronni: “I see new faces each time, and also I have seen some people at every single event. It is so much fun to match the dogs with people and see them light up together.”

Her only recommendation for people wanting to sign up? “Bring some treats, wear good shoes, and don't be surprised if one of the dogs steals your heart!”



**Join us for the next Sunday
Hike at Woodland Mound on
March 5!
RSVP to carrie@lfaw.org to
save a spot!**

Everybody Deserves a Home

LOCAL REALTOR® USES PLATFORM TO FIND HOMES FOR SHELTER DOGS



It was 1994. Sheri Boone and her husband had been looking for a new dog to adopt, but, in spite of many trips to many area shelters, hadn't yet found their special girl. Until, that is, they visited the League, and found Tippy the Wonder Dog. And that fateful visit, and that Wonder Dog, kicked off a relationship between Sheri and the League that has grown and grown over the years.

Sheri is a local - born and raised in Cincinnati, she spent much of her professional career working in her family's decorating business. But in 2004, Sheri transitioned into real estate - and with her new career came a new avenue to do what she loves most: help dogs. Sheri used her new platform in real estate to kick off a campaign, "Everybody Deserves a Home." With every client, Sheri uses it as an opportunity to showcase the shelter pets she works with at the League - if you're settling into a new home, what better time to add a shelter pet to your family!

"I really feel the League is a special place. We care for the dogs and cats, but we also go the extra mile for them."

And with every sale of a home, Sheri makes a donation to the League. "My clients love that when they work with me to buy or sell a home, the League animals benefit," Boone says of the campaign. "This program provides donations to the League so the needs for these pets can be met." Boone's program has been supporting the League since 2014, and has raised an incredible \$30,000 for homeless pets.

Sheri didn't stop there. In 2022, she decided to carve out more time for her passion: dog-agility training. Boone competes with her own dogs in agility competitions - including Weebo, a League dog she adopted in 2016 - and Sheri wanted to use that skillset to work with the League's dogs on-site. Sheri trained the League staff on agility concepts; and offers a weekly Wednesday "Yappy Hour" for staff and volunteers to introduce fun, mind-enriching agility games to the dogs. "My favorite thing about dogs is recognizing how brilliant they are," Sheri explained.

You can see Sheri's work when the dogs sit quietly at their kennel door, after she's worked on their "gate" routine; when you watch them sit obediently on a bathmat on the floor, after she's taught them "place;" or when they literally jump through hoops for her! Being at the League "reminds me that there are wonderful, caring places that still exist in this world," said Boone. Sheri's influence is no small reason for that. 🐾🐾



**EVERYBODY
DESERVES
A HOME**

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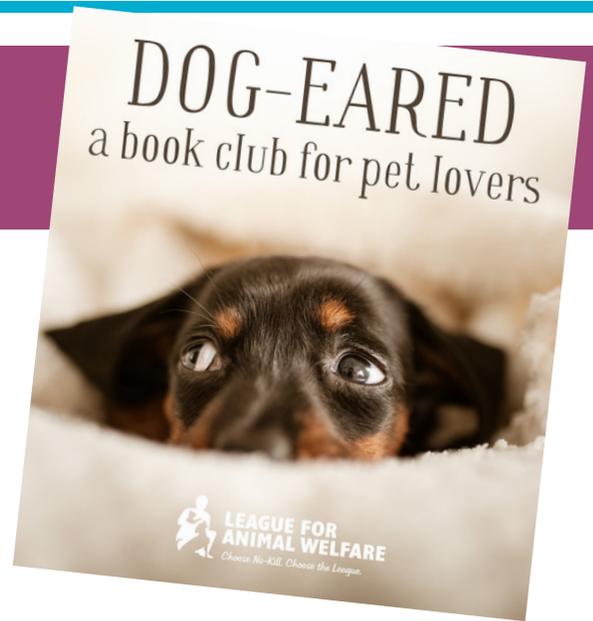
DOG-EARED!

The League Starts a Book Club for Pet Lovers

In January, the League's new book club, "Dog-Eared" met for the first time to discuss the novel "The Mountaintop School for Dogs and Other Second Chances," by Ellen Cooney. It was the first opportunity for a group of animal-loving readers to combine the two passions.

Dog-Eared is a book club that focuses on animal-related books, both fiction and non-fiction; and meets in animal-focused locations. The first meeting was at the League, featuring some adoptable puppies as part of the fun. The Club's March meeting will be held at the Purrfect Day Cat Cafe in Covington - a for-profit cafe that hosts adoptable cats from local shelters to help expand adoption visibility. The group will discuss "Making Rounds with Oscar," a nonfiction story by David Dosa.

The book club hopes to expand conversations about animals both through the books they read, as well as through the locations where they meet.

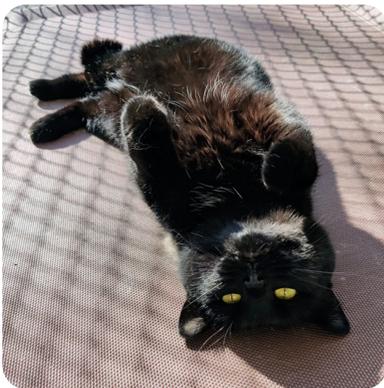


"We want to introduce animal lovers to the wonderful, local organizations helping animals," said founding member Devon Smith.

What better way to do it than with books, wine, and the occasional puppy.

For more information about the book club, you can email devon@lfaw.org. 🐾

ADOPT ME



Sushi - 3 years old, female

Sushi arrived at the League, found as a stray in New Richmond, in November of 2021 - she has spent 464 days in the shelter (way too long!). Sushi was shy with people at first - but now this beautiful girl has come out of her shell, and is quick to show affection to the staff and volunteers she knows well. Sushi loves to be brushed; she loves to sunbathe on her patio; and she loves her people. It will likely take Sushi some time to acclimate to a new family - but we know when she finds the people who recognize her beauty, she'll be a loyal and loving companion.



Zelda - 2 years old, female

Zelda came to the League from another shelter, the week she was scheduled to be euthanized there. Very pregnant and terribly sick with pneumonia, Zelda was fearful at first. But once she learned she was safe - and once those babies were out! - we got to see the real Zelda: sweet, affectionate, and full of personality. Zelda craves snuggles and attention; treats; and play time with other dogs (and when she's NOT getting that love, she complains about it in her kennel until we pay attention!). Zelda is ready to land safely in a loving home with people who will be hers forever.

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