

WINTER 2025

P.O. Box 7

Macomb, IL
61455

HSMCIL.ORG

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Humane Society of McDonough County

Waggin' Tales



Tis the Season

The holidays bring much joy and glad tidings. It's a time of gatherings and giving with family and friends (both 2-legged and 4-legged). The season also brings feelings of sorrow and loss for those no longer with us, and yet recognition of how blessed we are, and how we need to be supportive and generous to those whose lives aren't so happy and fulfilled as our may be.

Shelter staff and volunteers are joyous when dogs and cats we've gotten to know and love are adopted into loving homes. However, there are also too many sad days when we find pups and dogs left at the shelter or when caretakers arrive to give up their cherished pets because they are, or are soon to be, homeless. It's a brutal time for too many of our citizens and animals, making it even more important to open our hearts to others not so fortunate.

The "big story" in this edition of *Waggin' Tales* is that of Spanky, written by our friend, Gloria Caldwell Vankan from Virginia. She and her husband are once again offering a match of \$10,000 for the shelter building campaign in memory of their beloved Spanky and in celebration of all cats and dogs adopted from our shelter. Gloria shares how they came to adopt Spanky from the local shelter and the special happiness he brought to their lives. Each time I read this story I tear up, thinking of our own special beings that we lost too soon. We'd love to hear your stories and see pictures of your past cherished pets or the current pets with whom you share your lives.

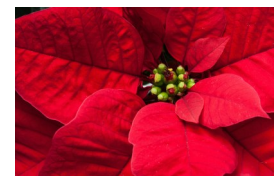
On that note, we need to think ahead about what we can do now for our pets by planning for their future care upon our demise. Ryan Krisher, a partner at Bogher Law, has agreed to provide information on will and estate planning for your pets' care during the Spring Session of Macomb LIFE classes, probably in April. We will keep you informed on details.

We have scheduled our HSMC Annual Meeting for election of board members and officers for January 13th at 6:00 at City Hall. You'll find the proposed slate for 2026 in this newsletter. We strongly encourage all HSMC members to attend and take part in this aspect of our organization. *The Year in Review of 2025* will be covered and we will discuss goals and objectives for the coming year. The HSMC Board will provide a light supper for this meeting. We do hope you will plan to join us and provide your insights and reactions to the paths we are taking. We will also give an update on the plans for the new animal shelter

Please mark your calendars now for the 2026 Casino Night, our primary fundraiser for the new animal shelter. It will be at Park Place of Macomb, March 7th. We promise a very good time.

Happy Holidays.

~ Bonnie Smith-Skripps, HSMC President





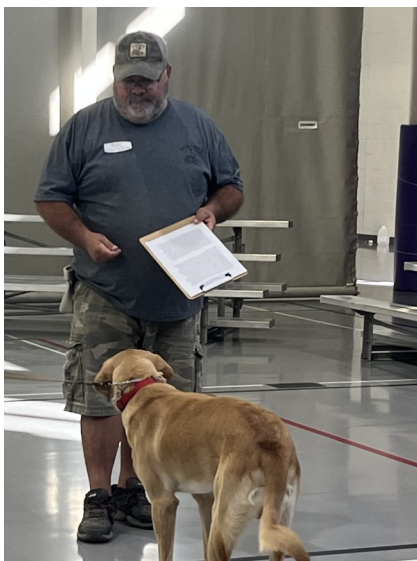
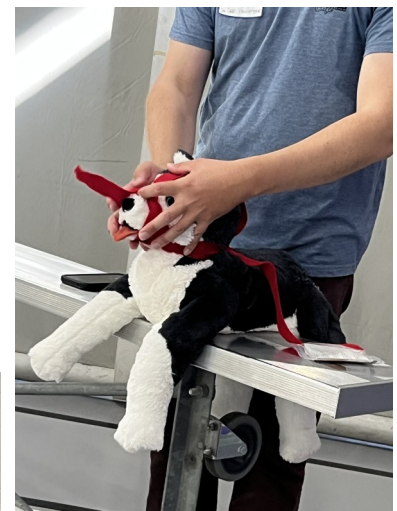
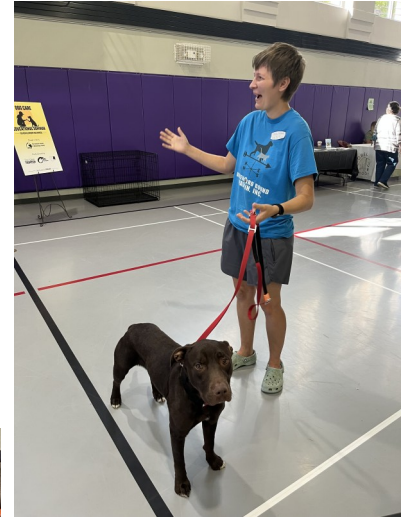
The 12th Annual Brix Challenge fundraiser raised \$38,370.76. A new record! Thanks to Chris Brix and all who donated!

Fifth Annual Play It Forward for the New Animal Shelter

This year's Play It Forward at The Wine Sellers on September 6th added \$5,250 to the new shelter coffers. We are so grateful to Craig and Julia Burns for continuing to host this fundraiser and to the musicians who donate their music, time, and tips to the HSMC's campaign to build a new shelter. Participants were more than generous with the tips and checks. A wonderful time was had once again.



On October 5th we held an educational seminar at the WIU Recreation Center with demonstration and exhibits related to dog care for new and current dog owners. Presenters included Allie Fekete, the Nerdy Dog Trainer, Hannibal, MO; Officer Aric Cremer and the Macomb Police K-9 Unit; Brian Wilson, Wilson's Dog Training, Cuba, IL; and Sarah Zinger, Black Dog Canine Massage, Davenport, IA.



October saw the HSMC participating in numerous events.



Ann Stites, Dana Moon, Amy Betz, Dave Monninger and Patti Douglas at Moon Over Macomb, where kids made their pets a pull toy made out of recycled t-shirts. The photo to the right shows a “tiger” who made a matching pull toy.



Amy Betz, Dave Monninger, and Patti Douglas at Pet Supplies Plus during Moon Over Macomb.

We were pleased to receive a check this summer as a result of the Annual Brendon and Sawyer Memorial Golf Outing. Pictured are Kevin and Lisa Bloomfield; Bonnie Smith-Skripps, HSMC; Emilie Payne Renner; and Brittany Mowen and Katie Hopping, event organizers. The \$2,150 donation, in memory of Brendon Payne and Sawyer Bloomfield, will make a great difference in the lives of the shelter animals.



WIU PRE-VET TRICK OR TREAT DOG DAY

FUNDRAISER
IN
COLLABORATION
WITH THE HUMANE
SOCIETY OF
MCDONOUGH
COUNTY



WIU Pre-Vet Trick or Treat Dog Day

On October 26th shelter dogs got to participate in a Trick or Treat Dog Day at Spring Lake, planned by the WIU Pre-Veterinarian Club. They had great fun and received lots of attention. Diesel met his new family there!





Maurices "PAWS FOR A CAUSE" is collecting food and supply items for the McDonough County Animal Shelter during the entire month of December. The tree features photo ornaments of cats and dogs ready for adoption and their forever home.

Pictured on left is Amanda Coulter from Maurices (left) and HSMC board member Patti Douglas.



Did you know?



Food insecurity affects pets, too. The HSMC serves about 30 families per month who need pet food. Thank you to HSMC coordinators Amy Betz and Dave Monninger for making deliveries. They also stock the WIRC Food Pantry and Bushnell Help and Hope Food Pantry with dog and cat food. This community service continues to grow in demand.

If you would like to donate food, please email us at Humanesociety.mcil@gmail.com

Email: mcas@macomb.com

Shelter Staff:

Zack Welch, Head ACO
Angel Wilson, Assistant ACO
Annetta Ogle, PT Office Manager
Open, PT position

McDonough County Animal Shelter
101 Tower Road
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone: 309-837-2989

Open to the Public:

Mon - Fri: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sat: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Sunday: CLOSED to the Public
Holidays: CLOSED to the Public

The McDonough County Animal Shelter is a county-run facility staffed by county employees. The HSMC does not have independent access to the shelter, nor the authority to arrange adoptions. The HSMC works diligently to promote adoption of the animals available at the McDonough County Animal Shelter.

HSMC Annual Board Election

City Hall, Community Room

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Time: 6 pm

Per **Article IV, Section 7**, this is notification of the slate of positions along with current nominees.

Nominees will be voted on at the Annual Board Election pursuant to **Article V, Section 3**. Pursuant to **Article V, Section 4**: The Members of the Board of Directors can consist of up to 15 members. *HSMC members are encouraged to participate in the operation of this organization. Please consider attending board meetings and donating your time and talents to the running of this organization.*

Director: Open to HSMC members interested in helping the animals of McDonough County by donating their time and talents to shaping the future of this organization. The purpose of this Society is the prevention of cruelty to animals, the relief of suffering among animals, and the extension of humane education.

Slate of Nominees for 2026

Article V, Section 2: Only HSMC Members are eligible for election as Directors. No individual shall derive monetary benefit of any kind from being a director. Currently there are 15 nominees.

Board Positions

Officer/President
Officer/Vice President
Officer/Treasurer
Officer/Secretary
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director

Nominees to Date

Bonnie Smith-Skripps
Dana Moon
Terri Hare
Amy Betz
Dave Monninger
Patti Douglas
Jen Tibbitts
Ann Stites
Candice Biswell
Sharon Lindahl
Brian Waller
Savannah Ballard
Loren Dimmitt
Margaret Hanzel
Open

Humane Society of McDonough County
P.O. Box 7
Macomb, IL 61455



The WIU Football team enjoyed a day in the sun, walking the shelter dogs.

Thanks for volunteering!

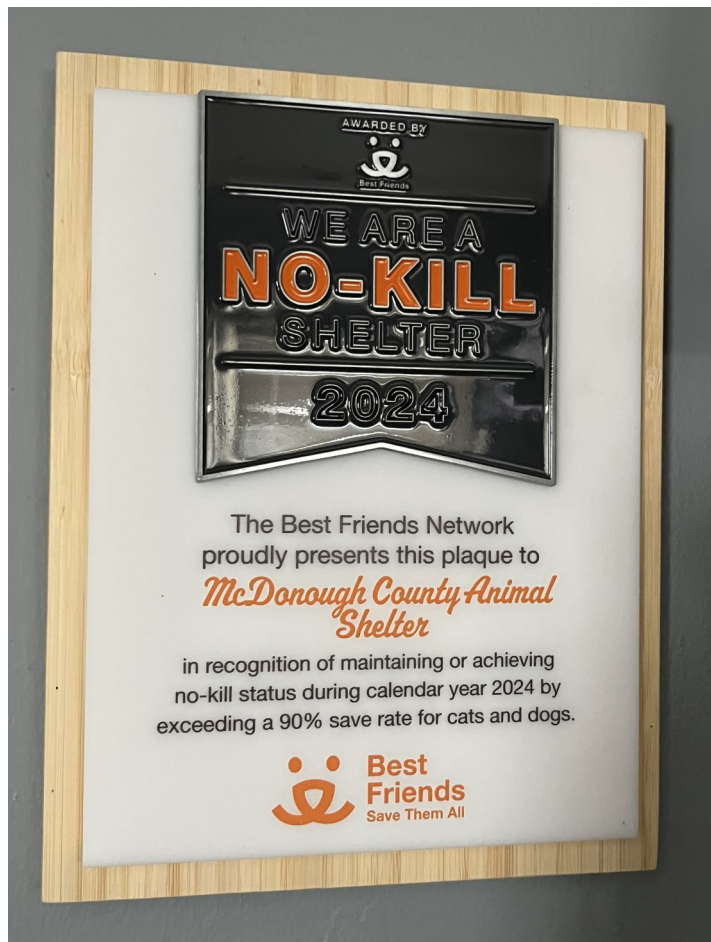


We Are So Proud

In late summer the McDonough County Animal Shelter received a letter and a plaque from the Best Friends Animal Society – the national leader in the “no kill” movement.

“You have joined an elite group of organizations across the country who are leading the way to make us a no kill nation. This accomplishment represents so much more than a number. It represents a culture of caring and compassion. It represents a dedicated staff, committed volunteers, and motivated supporters.”

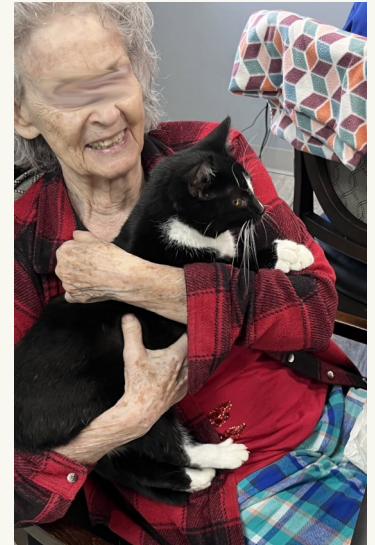
Our community should be incredibly proud of this recognition and be grateful for our shelter staff who are so dedicated to helping the animals that find their way to the shelter. They actively partner with HSMC to ensure good health and socialization for each animal who comes to the shelter. We are proud to work with them with the mutual goal that each and every adoptable dog and cat finds a home where they will be loved and well cared for.



Business Members

ABCDecluttering/Elisa Rasmussen
 All Pets Veterinary Clinic
 American Legion Post 6
 Clugston Tibbitts Funeral Home
 Community News Brief
 Dawg Haus
 First Mid Insurance Group, Beau
 Ingledue
 Gossel's Dog House
 Green Shingle Graphics
 Haymakers
 Hickory Kennels
 Krista Skien Photography
 Matthew S McClure, DMD
 Owl Storage
 Pet Supplies Plus
 Royal Printing
 Square Music Macomb
 Sweet Briar Corner Market
 RWE Renewables Americas LLC
 Wine Sellers

On November 13th Jazz, a sweet tuxedo cat, and Bodhi, a big lab mix, visited with residents of the Lamoine Memory Care Unit and brought smiles to several faces. Jazz quietly sat on laps and snuggled, while Bodhi went from room to room, spreading good cheer. The Lamoine Assisted Living Activities Director had issued the invitation to bring shelter animals and they were glad to oblige.



HSMC Board Members

President	Bonnie Smith-Skripps	Director	Ann Stites
Vice President	Dana Moon	Director	Sharon Lindahl
Secretary	Amy Betz	Director	Brian Waller
Treasurer	Terri Hare	Director	Brandi Baker
Membership	Candice Biswell	Director	Savannah Ballard
Director	Dave Monninger	Director	Loren Dimmitt
Director	Patti Douglas	Director	Margaret Hanzel
Director	Jen Tibbitts		



Christmas 2023 - Spanky on the Rockfish Valley River Trail



August 2024, Saying Goodbye

Vankan Matching Funds \$10,000 Fundraiser in Memory of Sparky and to Celebrate all Adopted Shelter Animals

How the Covid Pandemic Changed Three Lives in a Magnificent Way (by Gloria Caldwell Vankan)

Spanky was a small, young Pitbull mix when animal control seized him from a brutal situation where his sister froze to death beside him in their outdoor kennel in the winter of 2014. Our Humane Society of Nelson County, Virginia took him, and he lived there 2,031 days—years longer than any dog ever had. He was smart, cuddly, and proudly learned all commands shelter staff taught him.

Since 2008, my husband Ed and I had been full time volunteers there and upon Spanky's arrival we concentrated on him. As the years ticked by, we knew his chances of ever getting adopted were slim. He had Pitbull in his blood, was afraid of other dogs and strangers, and needed a calm home where he could feel safe and his fears could be lovingly managed. Shelter employees had active homes with other animals and kids, so they couldn't adopt him.

After our dog Bessie died in early 2019, we began taking Spanky home for day trips and weekends. He loved being out of the shelter, running in our fenced yard, sunbathing, and cuddling with us. His house manners were excellent, and he delighted our souls, but our social lives were too active for us to adopt him.

Having just become senior citizens when Covid happened, we put our social lives on hold and stopped going to the shelter in order to social distance, when it dawned on us. We no longer had other animals or children visiting, and we excelled at managing Spanky's fears, so we committed to fostering him until the pandemic ended.

Continued on next page

Once he moved in, our home was full of joy and dog kisses enough to ease our worries about what the pandemic might do to the world. We decided to live, laugh, and love in the moments we still had on Earth. We spoiled Spanky with belly rubs, snacks and sunbaths, but his main joy in life became hiking and exploring with Ed twice each day. Spanky was a self-proclaimed "crusader" on the trail, though his safety zone required that Ed always pick him up and hold him close until any perceived threat subsided when they met other people or dogs. Spanky knew his fate was always safest in Ed's arms and together they logged over 5,000 miles of trail.

Spanky was twelve when a mass started rapidly growing between the toes of his right hind foot. Our vet suspected cancer, said a biopsy would be painful and debilitating, and suggested a more humane solution may be to remove his foot. We knew Spanky would not understand that. While we pondered what to do, Spanky broke his left forepaw, causing him to cry when it touched the ground. Our hearts broke as he looked up at us with a confused and scared look on his face. Our little crusader had lost his ability to walk.

Reality hit us hard and fast. We could not hamper Spanky's biggest joy in life by crippling him with the removal of a paw or two, so out of a deep love and respect for him, we made the humane decision, best described as a horrific decision, to help him leave his broken body the next day.

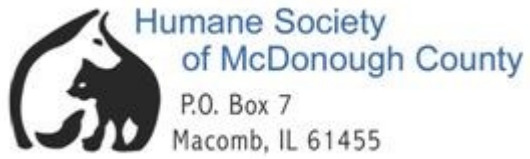
The next morning Ed held him up as Spanky devoured a hamburger breakfast, then carried him on their favorite hiking trail, and then carried him to Spanky's outdoor sunbed. We sat on our porch holding each other and sobbing as our eyes drank in the beautiful vision of our precious Spanky still in his dog form, enjoying his last Earthly sunbath.

Doing what Spanky needed from us most on August 29, 2024, as our vet lovingly worked her magic, Ed held him closely one last time, as I cradled his face in my hands and promised him we would see him again when it became time for us to step into the light. Spanky and I held eye contact until his exquisite soul took flight, and his newly empty body became unusually heavy in Ed's arms.

Something about Spanky's appreciativeness in finally having a home stretched our hearts to the max. He lived with us for four and a half years and of course we foster failed. Spanky left for the Rainbow Bridge with our last name tattooed on his soul, as we pretty much knew he would the moment we began fostering him.

The Vankan match opportunity extends through Valentine's Day in memory of Spanky and in celebration of adopted shelter pets. In remembrance of a pet who has passed but still holds a place in your heart and/or in recognition of a current 4-legged friend you can donate by mailing a check to: HSMC, PO Box 7, Macomb, IL 61455, or use the QR code below.





2026 ANNUAL ELECTION/MEETING

A light meal will be served

Tuesday, January 13, 2026
City Hall, Community Room
6:00 p.m.

