



Fall 2015

P.O. Box 9056, Brewery Street Station,  
New Haven, CT 06532

For more information: (203) 846-9110

[www.findafriendforlife.org](http://www.findafriendforlife.org) OR

[www.petfinder.org/shelters/CT74.html](http://www.petfinder.org/shelters/CT74.html)

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### SAVE THESE DATES!

Adoption Events | North Shore Animal League  
1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month. "Mini" events on  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of each month. Please check  
our website to confirm locations.

October 3, 2015 | Adoption Event  
Raymour & Flanigan Orange. 11am - 3pm

October 11, 2015 | Mini Adoption Event  
Hamden Petco. 11am - 2pm

November 7, 2015 | Adoption Event  
Bishop's Orchard, Guilford. 11am - 3pm

November 15, 2015 | Mini Adoption Event  
North Haven Petco. 11am - 2pm

### SAVE THESE DATES!

November 28 - December 31, 2015 | Tree of  
Hope Petco Fundraiser  
Hamden & North Haven locations.

December 5, 2015 | Adoption Event  
Hamden Petco. 11am - 3pm

December 12, 2015 | Santa Pictures  
North Haven Petco.

January 2, 2016 | Adoption Event  
North Haven Petco. 11am - 3pm

This issue of  
AmongFriends is  
dedicated to  
Buddy, Prudence,  
Tashi, and Bunny  
the Bulldog.



Shop at AmazonSmile  
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a donation to:  
Friends of the New  
Haven Animal Shelter

Get started



AmongFRIENDS Contributors: Patricia Grandjean, Karen Marchione, Nicole Navarro,  
Elaine Spinato, Jim Spinato, Melanie Stengel, Deb Wan.



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If you've found a friend for life at The Robin I. Kroogman New Haven Animal Shelter, let us know. Perhaps you'll be featured in a future issue of **AmongFRIENDS**.

# AMONG FRIENDS

The newsletter of The Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter, Inc.

Volume 17 | Issue 2 Fall 2015

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## A Good Life: Laurena Hillson (1925-2015)



Right now, hundreds of cats all over the Connecticut are lying on windowsills, basking in the sun, and living the good life because of the dedication, passion, and gumption of Laurena (Lori) Hillson, a longtime volunteer with the

Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter. Lori died on May 24, 2015, at Connecticut Hospice, in Branford, with her daughter, Lisa (Hillson) Salese, and her dear friend Beverly Johnson by her side.

For almost two decades, Lori was at the frontlines for New Haven's cats, speaking out on their behalf whether it meant fighting city hall or showing up week after week at Petco in Hamden, where she brought her

feline adoptables — and a couple of batches of her amazingly popular cookies — to find homes for the kittens and raise funds for the shelter's needs.

In a 2011 interview Lori, who quickly earned fame as "the cookie lady," talked about her attachment to cats, which was so powerful that ferals in her New Haven neighborhood often brought her their babies and dropped them into her hands, as if they realized that Lori would care for them. "I don't know why," Lori said in that interview, "but I just love the cats. Some of them have been so tiny. I was like their mother. I could help them."

But make no mistake: Lori was a fierce and protective "mother" to her felines, and she could be stubborn, too. Her commitment to justice for the city's often-slighted feline population sometimes overrode what other people might think of as common sense. But for Lori, the only tactic that made any kind of sense was the kind that could save and protect lives. And invariably, Lori's passion

proved to be not only effective but also respected.

Lori loved all of the cats and kittens she fostered, but none more so than MommaCat and PoppaCat, two strays she brought into her home several years ago. They were truly a couple, and Lori appreciated them not only as individuals but also as two individuals who showed a depth of feeling many people don't attribute to felines. "I saw them show such love for each other," Lori recalled. "It was wonderful. All the cats I've taken care of have left paw prints on my heart."

And you, too, Lori, have left an indelible mark on the hearts of your many friends among the Friends, on the lives of countless cats and the lucky people who adopted them, and on the spirit and values of your family — daughter Lisa, granddaughter Erin, and son-in-law Michael.

Thank you, Lori. Godspeed.

## A True Mitzvah

*Most of the adoptable animals at the Robin I. Kroogman New Haven Animal Shelter are easy to love. Some, however, offer special socialization challenges, which require a special adoptive parent who can provide the extra love needed to resolve them. One such adopter is Arlene Bruskin, who adopted a feisty calico named Donna on Sept. 2, 2014. This is her story.*

"It had been 17 years since I nursed my last cat through three years of kidney failure. I hadn't wanted another after all the emotional trauma of that experience. But last August I felt I needed one because I was tired of trapping mice in my basement. I wanted one that looked different from my previous cats, so I decided on a calico. I didn't want a kitten or an older cat. I did a search on Petfinder.com, and up popped a photo of Donna, about 1 year old. She seemed perfect.

"When I went to the shelter to meet her, the first thing I noticed was the sign on her cage, warning people to not open it without staff supervision. I soon learned that that was because she scratched anyone who came near. Moreover, she alone was not allowed to walk around in the room while her cage was being cleaned because she attacked the other cats in their cages. As a result, she spent her entire life confined in a cage or carrier for the eight months she stayed at the shelter.

"I went to visit her twice, and received three scratches on my hands for my efforts. Then, on my third visit, I came armed with a big plastic spoon I used to interact with her instead of my hands. She seemed to like that. Why didn't I pass up such a difficult cat, like everyone else? I thought, if I had to be in a cage 24-7 for eight months, I wouldn't be in a very good mood either. I thought she deserved a chance and decided to adopt her.

"She killed three mice in the basement the first three days I had her at home, and none has been seen since. For the first week or two our interactions were mediated by the plastic spoon, until one day she started to rub against me to make me her own. She succeeded; I am totally hers. I am her lap to curl up in and the arms to worm herself under. She is my sweet, loving baby girl.

"I renamed Donna 'Mitzi,' short for *mitzvah*. In Hebrew, mitzvah means a good deed. I did a mitzvah by rescuing her from captivity, and she does her mitzvah by keeping the mice at bay. Mitzi is also quite the acrobat. She specializes in jumping on high places like the tops of doors, then walking along them. She opens cabinets, climbs in and turns on the stereo within. She loves to stand upright.

"It breaks my heart to remember my little acrobat confined to a cage. Please think of my Mitzi when you are afraid to adopt a 'difficult' animal. Maybe it just needs someone to give it a happy life."



# Tonka: A Special Dog Remembered



Many of our adopters have a story to tell about an animal that changed their lives and many others. This is one of those stories.

Tonka was adopted from the New Haven Animal Shelter in 2001 by Sarah Lewsky, then a student at Yale Law School, who first spotted him on Petfinder.com. Still just a puppy, his large muscular chest and majestic, angular head made her choice an easy one. He had been injured in a car accident, resulting in the amputation of his right back leg. Having three legs never prevented him from leading an active, meaningful life. But Sarah envisioned something more which brought Tonka from New Haven to Walnut Creek, Calif. and many points in between: something she calls his "his purpose."

"He was such a high-energy dog, running circles around everyone," she says, "but always task-oriented and focused."

She brought Tonka to obedience classes, which he quickly aced before progressing to agility training. Given his history, Sarah feared that the activities associated with agility—jumping, twisting, navigating obstacles—could possibly cause him unnecessary injury. So, she chose another path for Tonka: pet therapy. It was a perfect fit. By then, they were living in the New York City area, where Tonka attended reading classes with school children twice a week. Later, after moving to Washington, D.C., he provided supportive companionship to many amputees, psychiatric patients, and stroke victims at the George Washington Hospital. His gentle demeanor coaxed one patient, who had not uttered a word in weeks, to finally speak again. He accompanied others on slow, deliberate walks, staying focused and steady. "He understood what it meant to assist," said Sarah.

Sarah ultimately settled in California, becoming a professor of law at the University of California, Irvine. Happy with his West Coast surroundings, Tonka made this transition with ease and grace. He particularly enjoyed walks in the park with Sarah and her six-year-old daughter Mattea. On one occasion, Mattea suddenly bolted out of reach; Sarah needed only to nod to Tonka who gently corralled Mattea until Sarah could catch up.

Upon turning 8 years old, Tonka began to slow down a bit; Sarah noticed that he was not as social as before. Still, he mastered one more crucial task: caring for Sarah's 90-year-old grandmother. "It was a perfect match," she says. Tonka would stay by her grandmother's side, ever vigilant, until a few minutes before bedtime, when he would check each room of the house to make sure she was safe.

Tonka lived until the ripe old age of 15, passing away just a few months ago. He was healthy until then, Sarah says, and died peacefully. "He was so important to so many people," she adds. "A completely wonderful dog."



## Yappy Hour 2015

Rubbing noses with our friends and sponsors Claire Criscuolo, Muttley Crue, and lots of our canine buddies. Food, drink, camaraderie, silent raffles, weather - the best. Hope to see our old and new friends next year. Our pictures say it all!



# Your Donations at Work

Here's a special message for all our donors: We are thrilled by and eternally grateful for your kindness and generosity. We thought we'd share some stories of how your support has led to the kind of medical care that has transformed the lives of our shelter animals:

A few of our dogs have been afflicted with what's called a "cherry eye" (a prolapsed eye gland) or entropion (an eyelid growing into the eye). They each received successful surgical repairs before going to their new homes. Many others required dental work due to infected teeth and gums, a problem that needs to be addressed immediately in order to prevent the infection from traveling to other organs. Happily, they were all adopted! In particular, Isabel, a tiny black poodle, and Grannie, a full-figured chihuahua, celebrated by smiling and chewing yummy treats.

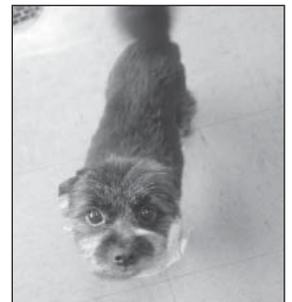


Dusty, a lovable pit-bull mix, received an unusual diagnosis involving a bone marrow disorder. He received a comprehensive evaluation and six months of medication in addition to lots of love from his new adopters, Jon and Shelly.

A number of elderly dogs arrived at the shelter during the past 6 months. They were sad, confused and sometimes sick, and received a check-up and blood work to identify any medical problems. Treatment was provided if necessary, and then each of them was ready to leave the shelter. It was such a pleasure to be able to see each of them move on to a new home.

Of course, we didn't forget the felines. In addition to providing testing and treatment to a few of our adult cats, one kitten was examined and required an ultrasound and blood work to assess the severity of her heart murmur. Fortunately, the news was good—and the only sounds that mattered were her purrs of relief and the cheers of her adoptive family.

Not all stories end happily-ever-after, even for all our best efforts. McDuff, a small dog with a huge personality, was diagnosed with kidney disease. Initial treatment improved his condition; however, he was given a poor prognosis and was not adopted as planned. In some other shelters, he may not have had a future at all. In this case, however, a true team effort gave this wonderful little dog good quality of life for his remaining healthy days. It all began with your contributions, which provided assessment and treatment; then shelter kennel worker Dalila Ortiz took him home for a series of visits to keep his spirits up. Maryellyn Maresca, vice president of the volunteer organization the Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter (FNHAS), initiated a search for a foster or a sanctuary. Finally, Off. Joseph Manganiello, municipal animal control officer for the City of New Haven, supported an amazing woman, New Haven Police Sgt. Rose Turney, when she reached out to give McDuff her care and love.



A similar case was a sweet, adorable 2-year-old female, Tashi, who never seemed to feel good for more than a few days at a time. Once again, your contributions made it possible to obtain a diagnosis. Unfortunately, she, too, had a very poor prognosis. The FNHAS volunteers searched out a sanctuary for her, successfully locating a foster home which provided Tashi with love, canine companions and belly rubs for the three remaining months of her life.

Our latest "star" patient has been Sidney, a Norwich terrier mix who was hit by a car and left with nerve damage in her right front leg, a broken pelvis and an injured knee. In a shelter that lacked the support that you provide, she might not be here—but, we're delighted to report, Sidney still is. She's charmed everyone she's met and after many days in the hospital and foster care, she is doing very well and has one more "step" to go to be ready for adoption. She does not use her right front paw very much; however, she is thrilled with life—playing, walking, running and looking forward to finding a forever home.



Once again, thank you for helping us to save lives—and to make the quality of those that can't be saved so much better.

# LOOK AT US NOW! FNHAS ALUMNI



A big "Shout Out" to Girls On The Run Cheshire Team A who donated their community impact project proceeds. Way to go girls - four paws way up!



## Our Special Thanks

A Dog's Life and Amy Campagna, Laura Andrews, Blue State Coffee, Brenner, Saltzman & Wallman, LLP, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Claire's Corner Copia, The Curran Foundation, Disney 'Ears To You Foundation', Egidio Assante Wealth Management, Barbara Ellis, Frisco's Pizza - our buddy John Frisco and his doggies (fabulous pizza!), Girls On The Run of Greater New Haven Cheshire Team A, giveGreater.org, Helping Hands Community Thrift Store, Henry Kops - Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday!!, Clare & Sean Link - thanks kids!, Olivia Macaluso - for her bake sale proceeds - great job!, McDonald's Corporation, Muttley Crue, PETCO Foundation, Pitney Bowes Foundation, REAP Foundation, The Joseph Slifka Center at Yale, Thompson Reuters My Community Program, Travelers Employee Giving Campaign, United Illuminating Employee Giving Campaign, Wally and his family, Kim and Betsy - Woof!

**CAR DONATIONS:** Julia DeCola, Kevin O'Brien, Richard Modeen, Sue Torres, Christine Versnyder.

To donate your car, visit [www.findafriendforlife.org](http://www.findafriendforlife.org). Click "How to Help" and scroll down to "Donate a Car"!

**AMAZON "WISH LIST" DONORS:** Toni Douglass, Pamela Gorden, Margaret and Cafe 9, Holly, Chris and shelter graduate Nico, Marsha Rabe, Cynthia Crooker, Bob Sheehy and Ivana Cruz, Linda Kessler, Natasha Bramley, Michelle Hanley, Kasey Burr, Alyse Greer, and many anonymous donors!

Please visit [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter or go directly to our link at: <http://amazon.com/w/3SP1YVPL4L75X>

# We Thank You - In Memoriam

We are grateful to everyone who made generous donations to the FNHAS during the past six months. We list here donations made in memory of and in honor of our beloved animals and people. All of your donations help us provide a second chance for the wonderful animals who come to our shelter. We....and they....thank you.

Angela & Robert Arpino in memory of Zuzu, "who we adopted in 2013."  
Bethway Kennels & Stables, Inc. in memory of "A Dog Named Gucci."  
Brian Blakeley in memory of Oscar, Percy, Kate, and Nell.  
Kathleen Boudreau & Debra Halverson in memory of Bunny, "beloved bulldog of Elaine & Jim Spinato."  
Marc Bromley in memory of Piper, "gone too soon."  
Diane Caffrey in memory of "my beloved animals, Maggie & Cat."  
Michelle Calini in memory of Jack & Jean Barker.  
Marylou & Frank Conley in memory of Noggin, "sweet companion of Barbara Kagan & Mike Jones."  
Robin Covino in memory of Desmond - "never forget."  
Edward & Linda Danaher in memory of Seamus.  
Evelyn Dermer in memory of Ellen Lee.  
James & Amanda Duffy in memory of Sweet Pea.  
Elizabeth Emens in memory of Tonka, "beloved companion of Sarah Lewsky"  
Vanessa Galligan in memory of "wonderful, unforgettable Fritz."  
Patricia Garland in memory of Bart & Mo.  
Ilona & Kenneth Grant in memory of Betty Nappi.  
Kenneth & Nancy Hanson in memory of Olivia, "beloved cat of Karen Hanson."  
Shirley Heery in memory of Ellen Lee.  
Jean Koepke in memory of "my loving shelter dog Pugsly."  
Carla Korrick in memory of Arthur and Eleanor Korrick.  
Connie Laeminia & Joe Tartaglia in memory of Buddy Buddington, "15+ years of love. Breathe and run free - adopted from FNHAS."  
Sarah Lewsky in memory of Tonka, "thank you for giving me the best dog that could ever be."  
Mary Malick in memory of Junior, Ollie, Molly and Rusty.  
Nancy Manoni in memory of Abbott.  
Jeanne Mauriello in memory of "my cat, poor little Ziggy Piggy who's now with his sisters Peachie and Pepper and his big brother Brucie."  
Deena & Brian McCarthy in memory of Jessie.  
Patty Merola in memory of Cody & Spanky.  
Marie Morgan in memory of Carrie, Victoria, and Brumby.  
Christina O'Connor in memory of Charlie and Pearl, "two of my best friends in the world."  
Marsha Rabe & Thom Brown in memory of Noggin, "beloved companion of Barbara Kagan and Mike Jones."  
Marsha Rabe and Thom Brown in memory of Bunny, "beloved bulldog of Elaine and Jim Spinato."  
Russ Reynolds in memory of Kasper, White Socks, and Oscar.  
Jean Rubin in memory of Rusty, Baby Theodore, and Smokey.  
Edward Saccu in memory of Freddy, Leo, and Whitey, "all great cats."  
Cheryl Scillia in memory of Sonny, beloved cat of Leo Scillia, "who will be missed but will always be remembered and loved."

Elaine & Jim Spinato in memory of Bunny, "the laziest, most lovable bulldog ever."  
Veronica Stankowski in memory of Neville.  
Kathy & Ken Stone in memory of Daisy, "beloved companion of Dan and Mary Hoffman."  
Kathy & Ken Stone in memory of Dolly, "beloved companion of Anne Dobey."  
Judy Strom in memory of Dorothy Smith.  
Linda Turski in memory of Humphrey.  
Dinny and John Wakerley in memory of Marley, "beloved dog of Mr. & Mrs. David Field who will be greatly missed."  
Cynthia Walker & Patrick Edwards "Missing all our dogs who have crossed over the rainbow bridge."  
In memory of Lori Hillson - "Always compassionate, always present, forever in our hearts."  
Nancy Angelopoulos                      Frank Cochran                      Carol Feiden  
Diane & Richard Fidler                      Stephanie Fitzgerald                      Debbie Lovely  
Davidy & Cathy Monckton                      Sandi & Bill Sack                      Janice Smolenski  
Marsha Rabe & Thom Brown                      Elaine & Jim Spinato                      Pam Stanton  
Herbert & Jeannette Thomas                      Beverly Johnson & Richard Fitol  
The Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter                      Deb Wan

In memory of Henry Griskin  
Susan E. and Dr. Stuart Jacobson  
Charles Butler and Family

## In Honor of

Catherine Benedetti in honor of Casey and Beau.  
Edith Bornholz in honor of Willy, "my buddy since 2003."  
John & Eileen Brannigan in honor of Chazz (AKA Gizmo)  
April Feathers & Fred Jungeglut in honor of Stuart, "a cat who needs a village, love him always."  
Edith Fisher in honor of Abbie, "#173, adopted in September 2014."  
Patricia Garland in honor of Dolly & Ellwood.  
Patricia Kaiser in honor of Chippy.  
Carolyn Kone & Allan Rubenstein in celebration of the marriage of Judi Sheiffele and Rich DePodesta.  
Timothy McNamara in honor of Nyles - "Doing great!"  
Ellen Stanley in honor of Elaine Spinato (FNHAS volunteer), Happy Birthday!  
Mildred Steinfeldt in honor of Anura "who has a good home now."  
Susan & Tim Yolen in honor of Gary Richetelli's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.