Shelters helping shelters
Fur Ball postponed
Beware of traps!
Support the shelter with your license plate!
and more....
On February the 6th I was contacted by the program director of PAWS of Jackson Hole, an animal welfare nonprofit based out of Jackson Wyo. They partner with the Teton County Animal Shelter to help place and foster pets in the care of the county facility. They approached us on behalf of a dog who had been housed at their shelter for almost 2 years named Zeta, our cover girl! We were told that Zeta was a 4-year-old hound mix who adores people and kids. She has zero body handling issues and responds to basic commands and has a strong desire to please her handlers. Ok, why has this beautiful girl lived in that shelter for so long? They told us that Zeta is very reactionary when presented with other dogs. They were worried enough of her aggressive behavior to buy her a custom-made muzzle, functional and fashionable circa Jackson. They went on to say the entire staff adores her but realizes that after so long she probably is not adoptable in their community. Stafford, of course, agreed to take Zeta and committed to getting her a forever home in Livingston. When PAWS delivered our girl we saw, in the paperwork, that there was no bite or fight history. They felt a fight risk with other dogs was based on her kennel and leash aggressive behavior. We let Zeta settle into the Stafford environment for a couple of days and didn’t really see any traits that alarmed us. We decided to try a play group introducing Zeta to the most neutral staff dogs that we knew would not engage or invade Zeta’s space. It worked beautifully and we extended the play group for several days adding other neutral dogs as we went. We saw no adverse behavior, knock on wood. We decided that in order to establish an accurate assessment we had to introduce Zeta to a dominant male in a highly supervised setting. Dutch was big, bold and strong and not intimidated by any other dog. Slowly the two leashed dogs got in closer proximity and were released in two yards separated by a fence. After a period of time Zeta and Dutch smelled each other with no apparent hostility. The next step was an intro in the same yard, leashed tight, with no incident. We dropped the leashes and were delighted when the two dogs showed little interest in each other. Our behavior assessment was thorough, and we felt comfortable putting Zeta up for adoption. We were confident that even though Zeta had been institutionalized for 2 years, or half her life, she was ready for a new chapter hopefully full of love. The next day a young Livingston man named Thomas came to the shelter specifically to meet Zeta. The connection was undeniable and the adoption inevitable. Thomas had no other animals and intended to bring Zeta to work in the large shop of his employ. Since the adoption was completed, I have checked back with Thomas and am happy to report their union is very strong and Thomas is very excited to give Zeta the freedom and security she deserves. When reporting back to PAWS of Jackson that Zeta found a home their outpouring of joy was measurable and made the whole exercise worthwhile! Shelters helping shelters is a good thing! The corona virus has thrown all of us for a loop! We have had to drastically adjust our modus operandi. There is no status quo as we, like you all, are in unknown territory. We are steadfastly focused on the animals in need and the people who are challenged to provide for their care. We will house all the displaced animals we can and provide alternatives to surrender so our community members can keep their beloved pets. That is our mission and our services are unique in the region where we operate. We take in strays and surrenders, spay and neuter, vaccinate and provide medical assistance. We counsel folks with the most current advice from our fellowship collaboration with the University of Wisconsin, who has been an incredible resource and share the best practices we learn from our membership with the Montana Association of Animal Welfare Providers. Our network is deep and we feel the community is ultimately the benefactor which legitimizes our reason for being. Thank you all for believing in and contributing to Stafford!  

- Steve Leach

Our newsletter cover girl Zeta was warmly welcomed to Stafford after her journey from Jackson, WY. She soon found her long hoped for person in Livingston, when Thomas came to meet her and they connected instantly!
In Memoriam

People honored with memorial donations:

- Gary Adams
- Audrey Albrecht
- Timothy Birkeland
- Kathleen “Kathy” Carrick
- Jerry Churchwell
- Ellen "Midge" Gingersmith Collins
- Mary Jane Cutler
- Wanda Hargis
- Marlon Harrelson
- Mary Henry
- Charles Interrante
- Jack Jacobson
- Marge LaValley
- Sister Dominique Long
- Claire “Deede” Phillips
- Jo Sykes
- George Pilgrim
- Betty Jo Smith (DePuy)
- Judy Thurlow
- Paul “Tack” Van Cleve
- David Van Dyke
- William Lee “Bill” Vink
- Paul “Vee” Vucetich
- Pinkie Warner
- Jackie Washington
- Linda Wertz
- Deborah Nichols Weidner

Pets honored with memorial donations:

- Barb’s Penny
- Bonnell & Hampson’s Suzie
- Chamberlain & Jessop’s Izzy
- Cloghessy’s Lady
- Corneer’s Mac
- Davis’ Black Jack Daniels
- Flatt’s Lilly
- Foster’s Quinn
- Graham’s Bud
- Graham’s Tana Rae
- Green’s Monster
- Gruber’s Dante
- Grunig’s Sunny
- Hartmann’s Duke
- Jacobson’s Jack
- Kappes’ Roger
- Kappes’ Odie
- Kim’s Greta
- Koenig’s Dancer
- Kurtz’s Hank
- Lalani’s Louis
- Lentz’s Lilly
- Lindstrand’s Lenny
- Loftice & Deutsch’s Ginger
- Lorwick’s Kopi
- Mabile & Blume’s Muti
- Mabile’s Niko
- Martin’s Taco
- McGaffigan’s Finley
- Regula’s Butters
- Reinholz’s Ruby
- Roberton’s Norman
- Rote’s Hazel & Rupert
- Schoenen’s Ruby
- Schoenen’s Smokey
- Shanefelt’s Molly
- Shier’s Jack
- Stebbins & Grudler’s Cal
- Tierney’s Giuseppe
- Tjelvèt’s Cassie
- Wallingford’s Lolo
- West’s Tara
- White’s Jasper
- Wiltse’s Ruby

The shelter extends our sympathies and condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of the people and pets honored here. Our hearts and thoughts are with you.

You can honor the memory of a beloved person or pet with a donation to animals who will thrive because of your gift. Honorees will be listed on our memorial boards, newsletter, and a personal letter announcing your generosity will be sent to those you’d like notified.

Please consider a minimum donation of $25 to cover costs for engraving the name of your honoree on the shelter’s memorial plaques, as a lasting tribute.

Sarah, George’s widow remembers when they first met Teddy: “We lost our kitty Butch, also from Stafford, in 2015. After awhile, we were ready to adopt a new kitten. We went to Stafford “just to look”. The first one we went to was Gnocchi. We petted him and talked to him, then went on to other cats. But Gnocchi was having none of that. He locked his eyes on George and we fully understood that he had chosen us. He had clearly been in a home before, but we think he had spent some time on the streets because he was adventurous to say the least. George renamed him Teddy after Teddy Roosevelt because of his sense of adventure. He misses George but he is happy & thriving.”

Betty Jo Smith was a long-time, well known and beloved resident of Paradise Valley. As a true Montana ranch woman, Betty’s life always had the presence of animals, including several cats she adopted from Stafford Animal Shelter over the years. She’s pictured here with her most recent Stafford cat, Winter, known at the shelter as Mama Squirrel. Betty will be greatly missed by her family, friends and all who had the pleasure of meeting her.

Vicki & Joe Regula’s Butters
Tara was found with her leg caught in a snare trap. Thankfully she was rescued in time and taken to one of our reservation rescue partners, Wolf Point Pound Puppies, and their veterinarian was able to save her life & amputate her leg. We agreed to take her in at Stafford to help her recover and find her a home. Despite all she had been through, she is absolutely sweet & trusting with humans but understandably a little apprehensive of other dogs at first. Imagine what she had been through surviving out there all alone? Due to the extensive tissue damage it was estimated she had been trapped for over 10 days before she was found. Clearly the person who set the trap line had not come to check it.

We knew we were going to need to find a patient adopter to help her heal mentally and physically. We could see she wanted to play with dogs, but was still traumatized. Enter Kami, a friend of the shelter and former Vet Tech. She had a Black Lab, Grady, who was looking for a buddy too and Kami was capable of helping Tara through the amputation recovery. She was willing to go slow with the dog intro and give them the space Tara (who was renamed Hattie) needed to feel safe and secure. Now they are the best of friends. She has recovered wonderfully, and 3 legs hasn’t slowed her down at all! According to her new mom: “Hattie loves to go on car rides and hikes. She loves her doggie brother and looks up to him. She doesn’t even seem to notice she’s missing a leg, but we can carry her in a backpack when she needs a little rest on our adventures. She’s been a great addition to our family. I’m so grateful she was given a second chance at life and we adopted!”

Tara’s story is a good reminder that traps are legal on public lands in Montana and are allowed very close to trails, fields & waterways frequented by dog owners and outdoor enthusiasts. Please research the laws, know the signs of traps, different types of traps, attend one of the free trap release workshops offered throughout our state. The Idaho Fish & Game Commission has an instructional YouTube video called “Releasing Your Dog from a Trap” that is very informative. Stafford’s retail store sells a wire cutter for $20 that is helpful to carry with you while walking your dogs. Having the correct tools and knowledge of release mechanisms may give you a chance to save your pet’s limbs, or life, one day.

In light of current developments with the COVID-19 outbreak, we wanted to assure you that we will remain available as the only non-profit animal care facility to serve the people & pets of Park County, Sweet Grass, Meagher, Mammoth YNP and many surrounding communities. We are capable of responding to crises by providing emergency boarding, a free pet food bank, a veterinary assistance program and an isolation wing. We will still take in stray & lost animals, rescues who are at risk for euthanasia from overcrowded shelters & under-resourced communities. As always we are here for surrendered pets which are already seeing increase due to the economic crisis. We try to help pet owners avoid surrenders any way we can, but in cases where there is no alternative, we are glad we can be there to help in their most desperate time. They know their animals will have a safe shelter and we will find them a new family.

We are challenged however since we receive no funding from federal or state government and we are experiencing donor pull back. Our critical fundraising events are also in jeopardy as we had to cancel small fundraisers already. We have made the difficult decision to postpone our biggest annual fundraiser, Fur Ball at Chico Hot Springs in May. This money raised at this critical fundraiser is 20% of our operating income and gives the shelter it’s necessary 2nd quarter boost. We are very concerned with the timing of the postponement and are looking to smaller online fundraisers & soliciting donations to pull us through. At this time we are unable to pick a future date for Fur Ball, but we are hoping for September or October. We realize auction items may be difficult for some businesses to contribute this year so our silent and live auctions may be organized differently. Only time will tell. If you’d like to get on the ticket list for Fur Ball, please email Alicia Davis at adavis@staffordanimalshelter.org.

In the meantime, our second biggest need is adopters. Our goal is to clear the shelter (#cleartheshelter) to find homes for our adoptable animals quickly so we can keep the shelter population low, help maintain the safety of our essential staff and ration our limited resources (financial and supplies). It’s a great opportunity to adopt a new family member with lots of time to bond and get to know each other, cuddle on the couch, take long “socially distant” walks etc... plus you’ll be helping a homeless pet and a local shelter who really need your help! Adoptions are currently by appointment only. Stay safe and stay tuned for updates on our Facebook page and website www.staffordanimalshelter.org.
Typically people think the function of an animal shelter is to help animals and they don’t give much thought about how much help we give their humans, too. From people looking for their lost pets, behavior advice, adoption counseling, pet food bank, financial assistance and so much more, we spend at least half our day helping the people who love their pets. One of the ways we help pet owners is through our “Guardian Angel Assistance”. Support for this program allows us to care for community members’ animals when they are in need of emergency boarding due to domestic violence, emergency evacuations, fires, car accidents or any urgent situation when their animals need care. When people are facing a stressful or traumatic situation, the last thing they need to worry about is the safety of their animal. Knowing their pet is safe with us is sometimes the only motivation for an elderly person to seek medical care or for an abuse victim to leave a dangerous situation. We work closely with local law enforcement and first responders and many animals are brought to the shelter for safety until a family member can come pick them up.

This was the case with the Clouatre family who had a devastating house fire last month and lost all their possessions. Thankfully their whole family survived, pets included. While trying to process this tragedy and find a new home, they could not find pet friendly housing in Livingston. Their dogs stayed with some friends and we were able to offer some comfort to their cats until they could settle in again. Jamie Clouatre says: “We are so grateful for the free pet boarding at Stafford Animal Shelter. After the fire, our cats were found in the arm of a basement sofa, very scared and traumatized. At the time we didn’t have a set place to live, our temporary rental was “no pets allowed”, as many places are. It was such a relief during a very stressful time, to have somewhere safe for our kitties to go while we got back on our feet. The staff at Stafford were kind and accommodating. The kittens were in a clean room, with plenty of light and we were able to visit. As a testament to how great Stafford is, our kittens returned home totally themselves, they weren’t scared or stressed in anyway, which I almost thought would be impossible. This is a wonderful service for our community, a little light in an otherwise dark tunnel. Not having to give up our animals was a big part of our healing, and helped us all get back a little normalcy.”

Since 2003, the shelter has benefitted from Montana’s specialty license plate program. Many in our local community and throughout the state will recognize our “Adopt a Friend for Life” plate. This program has become an essential piece of the shelter’s fundraising income, thanks to all who have our license plate. The income raised through our plate program is equivalent to the shelter’s annual food budget, allowing us to provide nutritious food for our shelter’s animals. A new law passed requires a specialty plate to have 400 active registrations to keep a plate in the program. At the start of 2020, following unclear communications sent to organizations in the program, Stafford's plate had been revoked, missing the 400 plate requirement by just 4 registrations. This was devastating news as well as unexpected news, as we were led to believe the deadline was end of 2020, not the beginning. Many worthy organizations across Montana, including other animal shelters were also impacted by plate revocation. Lawmakers received an overflow of complaints and issued an extension to July 31, 2020 to reach the 400 plate requirement. Please help us meet this goal to keep our fundraising plate! We can’t do this without you! We’ll be required to meet this 400 plate minimum each year going forward, so we need as many plate registrations as possible to ensure our plate will not be revoked. Stafford's plates are available at any local vehicle registration office in Montana, and if they are out of stock, plates can be ordered upon request. And, you don’t have to wait until your registration is due, plates can be changed at any time of the year (for a small change fee if you have already completed registration). Another way to show your support is with a shelter license plate frame, available at the shelter for $15 (we can ship, too!). Thank you for helping us keep our plates on the road and keep this critical fundraising program for our shelter!
The shelter’s Zoo has been busy again this year, with 138 pets in need of a new home coming through our Zoo doors in 2019. Stafford remains the only shelter in our region to take in these pets and find new homes for all of them. We’ve seen rabbits, guinea pigs, geckos, birds, turtles, and other exotic pets this year. We continue to work closely with PetSmart in Bozeman to help us get homes for some of these pets, especially those being overlooked for long periods. But we continue to have dozens of happy zoo adoptions right here at the shelter.

Some of our readers may recognize Cody Boyer, a news reporter from local channel KBZK, who is also an animal lover with a special place in his heart for exotic pets, like reptiles and especially hedgehogs. Cody recalls, “When I saw the post about ‘Tubby,’ I couldn’t let him get away. I had lost a hedgehog years ago after having one throughout my college days. That hedgehog was a companion for this journalist and I never thought I would find another hedgehog coming into my life.” Its now been a few weeks since Cody adopted Tubby, and he reports “Tubby has been doing great! Collectively, for whatever reason, my news team has started to call him ‘Gus.’ I guess he just seems like a ‘Gus’ kind of fella, and he has really started to warm up to people. And boy, does he like his wheel. Every night, on the hour, it’s hedgehog exercise time...no wonder Sonic is a hedgehog.”

This isn’t just a happy adoption story, but a rescue story as well. “The day I adopted Tubby was the day I brought in Moses the ferret. As a news guy that loves animals, a few amazing people in the community have come to let me know whenever they find a pet who has been abandoned or simply lost their way. Many of my reptiles are rescues for that reason. Moses was found up in Hyalite Canyon in a Petco box with a pile of dry food during a snowstorm, near an outhouse in one of the camping areas. Somehow, Moses (named later by a colleague of mine) came to live with me and, recently, I’ve learned he has found a new home. I couldn’t be more happy about that...Moses deserved that happy ending!

We are thrilled for both Tubby and Moses, who both have new homes thanks to Cody! Our community is amazing, keeping watch for animals in need and giving Zoo pets a second chance. Keep watch on our website for adoptable Zoo pets. Let us know if you’re looking to adopt a particular type of Zoo pet, and we’ll call you if one arrives at our shelter in need of a new home.

Sweet Grass Animal Coalition

Laura and Maddie Johnson of Big Timber are some of our most dedicated and busy kitten fosters since joining the Stafford volunteer crew in 2016. They have taken in over ninety fosters into their home, fed bottle baby kittens around the clock, administered fluids and medications to help ready cats and kittens for adoption at the shelter. These experiences were eye opening for them and they saw a need for more spay & neuter services in our community. They wanted to reduce the number of animals entering the shelter and help save our limited resources for animals who more urgently need our care. Out of their compassion and dedication to our most vulnerable residents, Sweet Grass Animal Coalition (SGAC) was formed!

They organized a group of volunteers, partnered with Stafford Animal Shelter on logistics and secured fiscal sponsorship from the Sweet Grass Community Foundation. They enlisted the services of a veterinarian who is capable of high volume spay & neuter surgeries with the goal to have quarterly clinics that offer surgeries, vaccinations and microchips in order to keep community animal populations healthy. As a non-profit organization, all their services are offered on a donation basis. Although future clinics will accept dogs, they started to concentrate with cats as that is the most acute overpopulation problem in Sweet Grass & Park County. The coalition will not just run clinics, they will help to further our mission to educate the public on animal welfare, especially community cat issues.

They held their first clinic March 7th at the Fairgrounds in Big Timber and altered 80 cats. It was a tremendous success and the impact on the community and future generations of cats is immeasurable. Their mission statement of “Spay, Neuter, Educate & Vaccinate” is a shared core mission of ours and we are so proud to endorse and support them! Please follow their Facebook and Instagram pages for information on upcoming clinics.

News from the Zoo

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Thank you to all of the generous local businesses who choose to support Stafford Animal Shelter! We ask all of our newsletter readers to support these businesses! We couldn’t be here for the animals without the generosity of our community’s business owners who have a place in their hearts for the 1000+ homeless, unwanted and abandoned animals coming to the shelter each year.

**Leader of the Pack** ($10,000+)
Chico Hot Springs Resort & Day Spa

**Best in Show** ($5000 - $9999)
Printing for Less, Inc.
Spectec Thunderbird International
Yellowstone National Park Lodges by Xanterra

**Friend for Life** ($3000 - $4999)
Rx Coffee
Small Dog Realty, Pam McCutcheon

**Top Dog** ($2,000 - $2999)
Joanne Berghold Photography
(Joanne & Billy Berghold)
Nevin’s Glass
Kenyon Noble
Yellowstone Country Motors

**Pick of the Litter** ($1000 - $1999)
Bridger Animal Nutrition
Hill’s Science Diet
John Mabie, CPA, P.C.
Jon Ellen Snyder - ERA Western Landmark
Mark’s In & Out
The Obsidian Collection
Raich Montana Properties
Ruggles Excavation
Shane Lalani Center for the Arts
Sibanye Stillwater

**Pet Patron** ($500 - $999)
49’er Diner, Bar & Casino
Amazing Acres Pet Resort
Arrowhead Electric
Black Dog Rehab
CEM Bookkeeping & Tax Services, Cat Moody
Citizen’s Bank & Trust Co, Big Timber
City of Livingston
Cottonwood Veterinary Hospital
Double T River Ranch
East Main Liquor
The Firehouse Gym - Big Timber
First Interstate Bank, Livingston
Gardiner Market
Livingston Tree, Lawn & Snow Removal
Sky Federal Credit Union
Stacey & Darren Raney - Berkshire Hathaway Montana Properties
The Spur Line
Tech Electric

**Veterinary Business Partners**
All Creatures Veterinary Service
Animal Care Clinic
Colmey Veterinary Hospital
Cottonwood Veterinary Hospital
Double Diamond Veterinary Hospital
Hardaway Veterinary Hospital
Sleeping Giant Animal Clinic

**Cool Cat** ($250 - $499)
A.E. Noble & Associates
All Service Tire & Alignment
At Home on the Range Pet Cemetary
B Bar Ranch
Big Timber Dental
Coffee Crossing
Colmey Veterinary Hospital
Copper Moose Oil & Vinegar
Dean Hendrickson, State Farm Insurance
Edward Jones, Stephanie Cunningham
First West Insurance
Graybeal’s All Service
Homestead Bed & Breakfast
Insty Prints
Katabatic Brewing
Logan Auction Service
Montana Farrier Supply
Murdoch’s Home & Ranch Supply
Mustang Catering
Neptune’s Brewery
Outhouse Heating & Plumbing
Rick’s Refrigeration
Simkins Hallin
The Stockman
Western Glass
Company
Yellowstone Physical Therapy

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**Annabelle**

You all know that the primary concern of Stafford is to care and advocate for all the animals presented to us. It is important to note that in keeping with our community outreach focus, our breadth of services extends beyond the daily care that our animals require. An example of this is the frequent emergency requests for blood that we receive from our local veterinary partners. When an animal requires life-saving surgery, in many cases, as with humans, blood transfusions are necessary for the success of the procedure. If a clinic is low on blood, they may call on us to provide a dog for a blood draw. These requests are always bittersweet, as we hate to put our dogs through the ordeal; but we know that, without the blood, your precious animal on the table may not make it.

A couple weeks ago, we got the call for blood and scrambled to respond. We typically look for the biggest, healthiest dog we have to take to the clinic to provide blood. We chose Annabelle because of her size and robust condition, not to mention she was extremely easy to handle and always wanting to please us. With the transfusion completed, Annabelle was picked up by our shelter E.D., Steve. “We headed back to the shelter; but not before we stopped at McDonalds for two cheeseburgers—one for me and one for our big girl! It’s the least we could do. After all, Annabelle just contributed to saving a life. I remember that after giving blood in the past, we always replenished our own supply with a big, juicy steak. This may have been a wives’ “tail,” but it was a great excuse to eat a T-bone.”

We got the call the next day that the surgery was a success, and the owner wanted to pay for Annabelle’s adoption fee. Too late, she was already adopted and happy to be going to her new forever home!
Current Resident or:

Help us make 2020 another great year!

2019

1219 intakes this year!

447 animals spayed & neutered

95% lifesaving rate

We welcome all homeless pets regardless of age, breed, species or medical condition

We have no restriction on length of stay

Who doesn’t love a classic?
Thanks to longtime shelter donor & volunteer Cat Moody, we’ve started “Cat’s Classics” Club! Cat, along with generous contributions from her family and friends - CSM Bookkeeping & Tax Services, Paul Morris & Gallatin Traditions, Inc., Lynda Bain & Michele Martin and Janette Bain - have all contributed to the shelter to sponsor adoption fees on our cats 8 years+ for all of 2020!

Please consider giving these older overlooked shelter residents a home. They still have lots of love and life left to give!

Leader of the Pack:

Best in Show:

Friend for Life:

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Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!