



GUNNISON VALLEY

**Animal
Welfare
League**

NEWS

Animal Rescue
Spay/Neuter Assistance
Community Outreach

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Adopted Dog Makes Lives Better

Amanda Graham attaches a leash to Shadow's collar, and takes him to meet her newest client. The staff at the Center for Mental Health, where Amanda is the Program Supervisor and a licensed professional counselor, smile at the pair. Earlier, staff members and the friendly, sociable Aussie mix had gone through their usual morning greeting ritual. Now, on the leash, Shadow knows he is on the job.

Shadow came to GVAWL in 2008, and was close to being "unadoptable." He had some behavior problems. However, when he first saw Amanda on Valentine's Day 2009 at Critter Sitters, he leaped into her lap and wiggled all over. Amanda had found the dog she'd been looking for since losing her beloved basset mix, Lucy, several months previously.

Amanda had looked for a dog that possibly could be trained to assist in psychotherapy, without forcing an adopted dog into that mold. Her goal was to bring forth Shadow's true self. Shadow was not exactly fearful, but was extremely cautious, and flinched at sudden movements. He retreated from some people, usually men, yet was alert and curious. Amanda worked with him in 15-minute stretches, day in and day out, as they went through the A.K.C. Canine Good Citizen program. Then, working with a dog behaviorist in Grand Junction, she did more intensive work in socializing Shadow, with the cooperation of her co-workers and clients. In this year and a half, Shadow learned to overcome his fears and build trust with people other than Amanda, and his self-confidence grew.

The human-animal bond is in itself therapeutic. Shadow and Amanda have taken that bond to the professional level. Shadow is a therapy dog, registered with Therapy Dog International. To become registered, an animal must pass ten tests, such as interacting with people in wheelchairs, on crutches, or experiencing seizures. Shadow calmly passed his tests.

Shadow's learning process is precisely what makes him so effective in helping her clients learn how to overcome fears and build trust. Shadow is friendly and bonds with everyone; his unique effect lies in his calm, purposeful approach to establishing relationships. He understands that building relationships is about building trust.

Too, Amanda's perceptive abilities and learning experiences have shaped this duo's manner of therapy. The bond humans and animals can share is essential to Amanda. She spent six years as Associate Director of the Orange County (North Carolina) Animal Protective Society, where part of her job was as animal-cruelty investigator. (She prosecuted the state's first case of felony dog-fighting.) Her encounters there with troubled people led her to pursue graduate work in counseling, leading to her current career.

With all animal-assisted therapy, success comes about because of the immediate, tangible nature of working with live beings, along with and the power of the human-animal bond.

As Amanda and Shadow go to meet a client, they are immediate, tangible proof of that bond. With all their being, they use the bond to make many, many lives better.



Amanda with Shadow, earning his Therapy Dog Int'l registration.



Becoming A Member – What’s In It For You

As an animal lover, you are invited to join, or renew your membership in, our organization as we continue to “make a difference” to the companion animals that need us, and to the well-being of our community.

What difference can we, together, make in 2012? The difference is **lives made better**, such as Shadow and the people he touches, featured in this newsletter.

It’s hard to “count” the effect of animals on peoples’ lives, but we can tally the numbers and do some of the math.

- **Count** 60+ companion animals placed in loving homes this year by GVAWL, including Celine and Princess, pictured here.
- **Multiply** each of these by at least one person, a community member who now enjoys an enriched life because of the human-animal bond.
- **Add** every 2nd-, 3rd-, and 4th-grader in the Valley with a *Kind News* subscription, a newsletter helping youth understand humane coexistence with animals
- **Count** the people who have neutered their pets due to our spay/neuter cost-assistance and clinics, well over 100 last year.



Then think about the numbers that we won’t have to tally... the hundreds of unwanted companion animals NOT born because of our sterilization and other efforts.

And we are **counting on you**. We expect that 2012 will be quite challenging, as have been the past four years, given the economic climate’s effect on people and their pets. We will continue to streamline our operations and contain costs, and to strive toward the best possible lives for the companion animals that come under our care. This community is overwhelmingly generous in helping those in need, including our homeless companion animals.

We need your support to keep and build our momentum. I ask you to become a member of the Gunnison Valley Animal Welfare League, and join us in rescuing, providing spay/neuter cost-assistance, and educating our community.

What’s in it for you? **Lives made better.**

Until every companion animal has a good home,

Lora VanRenselaar
President

EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT GVAWL

City Market Cares

City Market operates this electronic fundraising program to help local non-profit organizations raise funds at no cost to the customer. Once you register your City Market Value Card in the program, indicating GVAWL as your recipient, GVAWL will receive a portion of City Market’s profits every quarter.

Complete the back of a GVAWL membership card and return it (with membership sign-up or not) to GVAWL or contact us. It is that easy.

Turn Used Items into Funds

Donate your good-quality, lightly used items to Boom-A-Rang in downtown Gunnison, naming the Animal Welfare League as your proceeds recipient. For furniture and other large items, call 970.641.3115, or email at boomarang221@yahoo.com.

Use the internet

- GVAWL is registered with these sites:
- GoodSearch and GoodShop when shopping and searching the web.
 - Gazelle.com to sell your recycleable used electronics.

CPOF

Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund

This fund assists Colorado animal-welfare entities by granting funds. GVAWL has long been a recipient of this assistance.

- CPOF is funded by citizens:
- “Checking Off” CPOF on their Colorado Tax Return Forms
 - Purchasing an “Adopt a Shelter Pet” license plate.



Much more information on donating is found on the **new** GVAWL website at www.gvawl.org.

Donations In Memoriam 2011

In memory of
Mary Jean and Edwin Randall
Steve and DeeAnn Stone

In memory of Don McLeod
Ed and Sue Bartsch Jan Carroll
Susan Christenson Michelle Zanga

UPDATE Valley-Wide Shelter/Adoption Center

Interview with Sandy Guerrieri, Chair, Shelter Committee and Vice President of the Board of Directors

Why do we need an animal shelter? The Animal Welfare League has handled and adopted out about 2,500 companion animals in the past 25 years, and the City of Gunnison impounds 300 – 400 animals each year.

There is no valley-wide shelter in Gunnison. P.A.W.S. of Crested Butte operates a small holding facility, yet the need is great to centralize rescuing and sheltering the homeless and stray companion animals in our county. A centralized shelter will give a higher degree of efficiency to the efforts of non-profit and municipal agencies in caring for and finding good homes for homeless pets, and reuniting lost animals with their owners.

What is the latest on the GVAWL Shelter?

In January, we received word that the City of Gunnison has budgeted \$125,000 for this GVAWL project. The shelter will meet the essential needs of the City and GVAWL.

Give us a brief summary on the shelter project.

Gunnison County has leased GVAWL a parcel of land in the Gold Basin Industrial Park for the purpose of building a shelter. The County lease provides GVAWL four years of waived lease payments.

We are very grateful for the \$100,000 lead donation from the MacAllister Family Foundation for the shelter project. Other donations and GVAWL fundraising have provided another \$80,000, which has been used to do initial site work and produce a building design, engineering specs, and construction plans for complete build-out of Phases I and II.

Do you need to raise additional funds for Phase I?

Yes. We have hired Black Dragon Development of Crested Butte as our general contractor. We are currently finalizing construction costs; however, our estimate is that we need to raise an additional \$300,000 for Phase I. We are very hopeful to have those funds raised in the near future, so that Phase I is complete in 2012.

What is Phase I, and why are there phases?

The immediate needs of our valley must be met soon, and Phase I meets these needs. Architect Jody Reeser has designed a two-phase shelter/adoption center, with Phase I being fully operational in terms of meeting the minimal current needs of GVAWL and the 25-year needs of the City of Gunnison, with capacity for:

- 6-8 large dogs, with greater capacity for smaller-sized dogs
- 22 cats
- isolation areas for both dogs and cats
- outdoor dog runs and indoor cat play areas

Phasing allows for us to construct a shelter that meets the immediate, minimal current needs at a lesser cost than that of full build-out. Phase I is designed for maximal efficiency in transitioning into part of the larger whole that includes Phase II.

Anything Else?

We will keep our community up to date on the shelter progress through our website, so please visit us there. And thank you for supporting our efforts.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Thank You – Businesses, Individuals and Families

Without a shelter, the Animal Welfare League depends heavily on the community to provide care and housing for our companion animals.

The following businesses contribute free or reduced-cost boarding to GVAWL.

- **Oh Be Dogful Pet Ranch**, Crested Butte
- **Critter Sitters and Outfitters**, Gunnison
- **Waggin' Tails Doggy Day Care and Pet Boarding**, Gunnison

All veterinary practices in the Gunnison area provide care at discounted rates.

P.A.W.S. of Crested Butte provides foster homes for GVAWL animals. Wonderful volunteer **foster providers** devote hundreds of hours every year to care for animals in their homes.

All of you go the extra mile to help find homes, provide kindness, care, and loving interaction to our companion animals, who greatly appreciate it, as do all of us at GVAWL.

Thank You – Grantors

Animal Assistance Foundation

Grant, Animal Care, July 2011 – June 2012

El Pomar Foundation, Freda Hambrick Fund

Grant, Animal Care, 2011

Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund, Adopt-A-Shelter-Pet License Plate Program

Grant, Animal Care, July 2011 – June 2012

Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley

Grant, Subscriptions to *KindNews* to all 2nd-, 3rd-, and 4th- Graders in the Valley, 2011–2012

City of Gunnison

Service Contract, Spay/Neuter Assistance funds, 2011

Gunnison County

Grant, Animal Care, 2011

Volunteer Spotlight – Cheryl Dandel



Cheryl Dandel is, no doubt about it, a cat person. While Cheryl is devoted to rescuing and caring for all animals, for the past two years she has focused on her current jobs as GVAWL’s Cat Intake Coordinator and acting Cat Care Coordinator, which includes fostering, veterinary care, and adopting out of stray and relinquished cats.

Cheryl has held many roles within the organization over ten years, including serving for seven years on the Board of Directors. Heading her team of devoted and hardworking volunteers, she has devoted on average ten hours a week — and often as many as twenty — to rescuing the Valley’s homeless cats. And that’s on top of a full-time (non-volunteer) job!

Cheryl is dedicated to making lives better, and she’s dedicated to ending animals’ suffering in the Gunnison Valley. Suffering is the all-too-often fate of homeless companion animals. “Cats and dogs are not equipped to survive on their own. Without human intervention, they live miserable lives. The potential for starvation, dehydration, exposure, disease, injury, and lingering death is high.”

Some stray animals are classified as “feral,” which is defined as one generation removed from socialization by humans, i.e., tame. Other stray cats are not feral, but simply terrified; Cheryl and her volunteers work hard to re-socialize them and find them homes. As for feral cat

“colonies,” Cheryl leads her crew in providing them with food and (unfrozen) water, and in carrying out GVAWL’s practice of “TNVR,” or “Trap Neuter/Spay Vaccinate Return.” So Cheryl and crew spend many hours in the cold and dark, crawling under bushes, to make these animals’ lives less miserable.

Cheryl is aware of the misconceptions about feral cats. “More birds are killed by flying into windows and tangling with other human-made contraptions than are killed by feral cats, by a large factor,” she says. “If cats are sterilized, colonies shrink over time; when cats are vaccinated, they don’t spread or die of diseases.”

“I couldn’t do this on my own,” she is quick to insert. “Several great volunteers do this work day in and day out. Jamie Case, for instance, has been doing this as long as I have.”

Cheryl and her crew need more help with Cat Care — intake, veterinary care, advertising, and adoption require lots of paperwork and some transport of kitties. “If you can help, please let us know, on the web site or at 641.1173.”

To Cheryl and the many other volunteers, our community owes much gratitude for making many lives, human and animal, so much better.

Companion Animals Need Homes



Pelli

A home for Pelli is top priority because this 13-year-old female has

been in GVAWL’s care for over a year. Pelli has had some rough years in her life and must have a loving home with no other pets.



Honey & Rudy

Honey and Rudy, 5, are smart, active red heeler siblings who have always been together and would like to remain together.

Jaxon & Lizzie

Jaxon, 5, and his younger friend Lizzie are very sweet and friendly and would like to find a home together.



Louie

Louie, a 2-year-old male, is easy-going and friendly.



HOW TO ADOPT

All GVAWL dogs and cats are spayed or neutered and current on vaccinations prior to adoption. To help defray costs, GVAWL collects an adoption fee for every companion animal placed in a home. Adoption fees: Cats \$50, Kittens \$75, Dogs \$100, Puppies \$150.

For information on adoption and to view our adoptable animals, visit gvawl.org or call **970.641.1173**. You can also find us on petfinder.org, or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).