



South Central Michigan's
nonprofit **advocate, sanctuary**
and **source** for companion
animals since 1887

critter chronicles

Winter 2010

It started with a dream. The Humane Society of South Central Michigan's current facility, located at 2500 Watkins Road, was built in 1989. Over the years, the building sustained heavy use associated with housing so many animals. The Board of Directors took on a capital campaign to raise funds for building improvements. Money was raised, and some of the projects, like the installation of an air handling unit, work on the septic system and new parking lot, were completed.

Fast forward to 2009. The time was perfect to make good on the promises made to the community, and help the agency better meet its mission through providing enhanced educational space, better quarantine space for sick dogs and cats, improving the surgery suite for both shelter pets and animals in the Low Income Spay and Neuter (LISN) Program and kennel reconstruction.

Kennel Reconstruction

Kennel reconstruction on the adoptable dog side started with the tear-down of the old kennels in May. The fencing on the old kennels was in rough shape, and the dirt-floored kennels continually recontaminated the dogs with whip-worms as the soil was unable to be sanitized.

The new kennel area was leveled and set in concrete with appropriate drainage, and new fencing and kennel gates were created to ensure that the dogs remain secure. Funding for the reconstruction was provided through the Miller

Foundation, in memory of Robert Miller, Jr and through a grant provided by Eaton Corporation.

Building Reconstruction

The building renovation project is underway, with Phases I and II already completed.

After thorough analysis of current structure weaknesses, and key areas of concern, the bid was awarded to Schweitzer Construction, and demolition began in August.

Phase I allowed for the creation of an education and training space, funded in part through a grant from the Binda Foundation. This space will be able to provide the ability for the agency to offer puppy kindergarten and dog obedience training, meeting space and public education on animal welfare and behavior.

Phase II of the project involved the creation of a new quarantine center for sick shelter animals. This new space will segregate these animals from the rest of the resident population and allow them to recover, while preventing the spread of disease to other animals.

Phase III of the project centers around the agency's surgery suite, expanding the area to include a separate prep/recovery room, distinct from surgery. This expansion will allow for better care of the animals while they are undergoing surgery, as well as provide for the ability to perform a greater number

of surgeries in one day.

"The completion of these capital campaign projects is something that affects not only the Humane Society, but also the community at large," said Tina Slayton, Board Chair. "By building a more appropriate facility in which to offer education and provide care for homeless pets as they wait to find new homes, we are impacting the pet overpopulation problem in Calhoun County. Our vision is a society where every pet is a wanted pet; this work will help us to reach our goal."

We are so proud of what we've accomplished through your support. Please stop out to the shelter and ask for a personal tour. Thank you for making our dream come true.



Before



After

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- All animal photos by
Ray Closson -

This past year has been full of changes at the Humane Society. We've met new friends along the way, have started new programs and have completed outstanding obligations to the community. We simply couldn't have accomplished so much without your support.

The Humane Society of South Central Michigan receives no governmental support and is not funded through tax dollars. Approximately 87 percent of our operating funds come from our loyal supporters - individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of homeless cats and dogs. I am

personally thankful to have so many fantastic supporters, people like my friend Sally McCann. Every single animal adopted, every life saved, is because of people in our community who care.

I am confident 2010 will be the best year yet for HSSCM. We'll be offering new classes, new events and new opportunities for individuals in our community to come together with animals. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to give me a call at 269.963.1796.



Puppy Kindergarten

The Humane Society is pleased to announce Puppy Kindergarten! Classes will be taught in the agency's NEW Binda Education and Training Center.

Lois Phelps, HSSCM behaviorist, will be offering Puppy Kindergarten classes based on the program designed by Dr. Ian Dunbar. The classes are for puppies 12 to 18 weeks old, and focus on topics such as bite inhibition, socialization and crate training.

We selected this curriculum after careful analysis of the reasons owners gave us for surrendering their pets. The majority of dogs surrendered to HSSCM in the past 18 months were released because of socialization issues, including fearful reactions to new people, dogs or venues, lack of confidence, inadequate self-control and the inability of both dog and family to blend their unique needs into a functional family unit. Age 12 to 18 weeks is the optimum time to address these issues.

The six-week course will cost \$60, and families are encouraged to

attend together - puppy training is a family endeavor! Each class will hold eight puppies, and multiple sessions will be offered to fit the need.

Lois Phelps has earned 123 of the required 160 credit hours for her Level I, Professional, Certified Professional Dog Trainer (C.P.D.T.) certification, issued through the national Association of Professional Dog Trainers. Focusing on dog aggression and behavior modification, she has taken seminars from Dr. Patricia McConnell and Dr. Karen London (U of Wisconsin), Patricia Bollen (Cornell University), Suzanne Clothier (national German Shepherd and Search and Rescue trainer), Trisha King (Director of Animal Behavior, Marin County, CA.), Brenda Aloff (author of *Aggression in Dogs; Practical Management, Prevention & Behavior Modification*), Sue Sternberg (Roundout Kennels, NY), and Dr. Emily Weiss (A.S.P.C.A.).

To sign up, or for more information, please call the Humane Society at 269.963.1796.

2010 Calendars

Enjoy the shelter pets the whole year through! Humane Society photographer Ray Closson has photographed our homeless shelter pets all year for use in the *Critter Chronicles*, on petfinder.com and in the *Battle Creek Shopper*. The photos are so good, we had to share them!

Some of our favorite shelter dogs and cats are featured in the agency's 2010 calendar, on sale now at the Humane Society for only \$14.99. It's the perfect gift for your loved ones - not only do they get to enjoy a great calendar with fantastic animal photos, the proceeds from each calendar go directly to helping the shelter pets! Stop by the Humane Society today to pick up your copy.

On Sale Now!

April Horning

April Horning, HSSCM veterinary assistant/kennel technician, is a graduate of Jackson High School and Jackson Community College. She recently completed her certificate program as a veterinary assistant and works with the agency's veterinarians and LVT during surgeries for the shelter pets and the Low Income Spay and Neuter Program. April has been at the Humane Society for 2.5 years and enjoys her job. She said, "the best part of my job is loving on the animals!"



Employee Spotlight

Did You Know?

The Humane Society offers a dog park and walking trail, open from dawn to dusk. The dog park features a large fenced-in area where dogs can run and play off-leash and a bone-shaped pool where they can cool off. Dogs can walk the trails (on leashes) with their owners and get some exercise while meeting new friends. Please stop by the front desk during normal business hours to fill out an application to become a member! **Current members must re-certify in January to participate.**

Friends of Antiques for the Animals

This year's Antiques for the Animals was so successful due to the incredible support from the individuals and corporations who sponsored the event. Through their generosity, more animals will receive the care they need:

Mary Ammon
Jennifer Aschenbrener
Doug Boshears
Jean Bremer
Betsy Briere
Mike and Kim Brubaker
Janet Callahan
Matt and Cyndi Carstens
Jay and Heather Chick
David and Jane Church
Comcast Urethane
Community Inclusive Recreation
Keith Easterday
Carol Essenmacher
Tom and Dolores Feldpausch
King Jewelers
John Charles Studio
John Godfrey
Rob Grosteffon
Brenda Hunt
Bryan Kirkham
William Lamothe
Al Lassen
Laura's Gourmet Catering

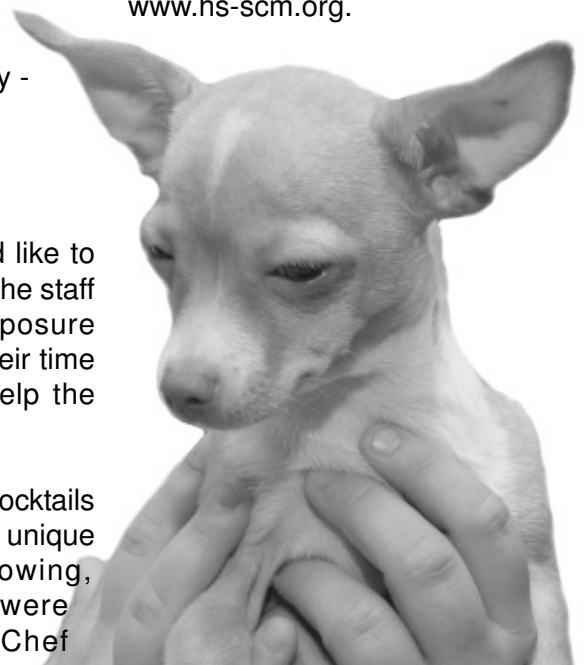
Diane Lincoln
John and Nancy Macfarlane
Chuck and Sally McCann
Joe and Vicky Messenger
Ann Neeld
Schweitzer Construction
Earl and Marilyn Soules
Mary Soules
Michael Soules
Tina and Phil Slayton
Southern Exposure Herb Farm
StageRight Home Staging
Annie Steller
Rhonda Stratton
Wells Fargo Advisors
Western Michigan University -
College of Aviation
Margaret Winchill
Jim Winright

The Humane Society would like to offer a special thank you to the staff members of Southern Exposure Herb Farm, who donated their time that evening in order to help the homeless shelter pets.

The evening kicked off with cocktails and a silent auction. Over 30 unique items were offered. Following, gourmet hors d'oeuvres were served, compliments of Chef

Elsie. Next, Tim Bos began the live auction. Items auctioned included weekend getaways, one-of-a-kind jewelry in custom settings and elegant dinner parties.

This next year, the Humane Society will again host a signature event in February, a wine tasting in May and the annual fall auction event at Southern Exposure. To keep informed on upcoming events, please visit the agency's website, www.hs-scm.org.



Ask the Behaviorist

A TIRED MAMMAL IS A WELL BEHAVED MAMMAL

Ever notice how calm the house is, and how pleasant the dinner conversation, when all the family members come home from work or school mentally and physically exhausted?

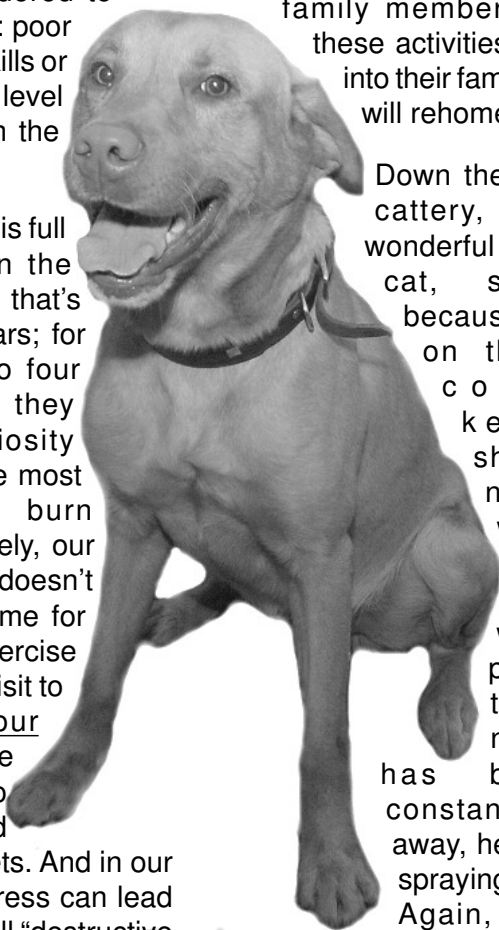
This imaginary family illustrates an axiom of mammalian behavior (that's right, humans are mammals, as are our cats and dogs!): **A TIRED MAMMAL IS A WELL BEHAVED MAMMAL.**

If you remember last issue's column, I said there are two main reasons why pets are surrendered to your Humane Society: poor (or no) socialization skills or a young adult energy level which doesn't 'fit' with the family.

Your Humane Society is full of cats and dogs, in the prime of life: for dogs, that's one year to three years; for cats, it's one year to four years. This is when they have the most curiosity mentally and have the most excess energy to burn physically. Unfortunately, our 21st Century lifestyle doesn't even leave enough time for US to get enough exercise (remember your last visit to the doctor?). So, our lifestyle is one of the biggest contributors to bored, overweight and physically stressed pets. And in our pets, boredom and stress can lead to what we humans call "destructive behaviors."

Recently we had a lovely yellow lab female, 11 months old, surrendered by her family. Her behavior problems

started with constant pestering of family members when they returned home from school or work, then escalated into destructive chewing when left alone. The pup will sit on command, is house-broken, and is sweet with everyone. But her normal energy-driven behaviors have caused the family to relinquish their pet. Before they signed the release papers, we suggested obedience classes as a great FAMILY activity, doggie day care a couple of days a week for socialization and energy release and a couple of walks or play sessions every day with "assigned" family members. None of these activities could be fit into their family life. So we will rehome her.



Down the hall, in our cattery, we have a wonderful young male cat, surrendered because he jumps on the 'in-use' computer keyboard, shreds the newspaper while it's being read, trips people when they're playing with their Wii. And now, since he has been constantly shooed away, he has started spraying their shoes! Again, we talked exercise and game playing (and there are some cool new cat toys and games on the market!!). Again, the family's life is jam-packed. So we will rehome him.

What does exercise do for mammals, including our pets? Exercise stimulates muscle mass, burning energy (calories); physiologically, exercise also stimulates the body to release those "feel good" hormones, endorphins. This is why we hate getting up in the morning to go to the gym, but after our workout we feel soooo good physically and sooo sharp mentally (and some of us feel sooo very virtuous!). We are ready to take on the world, solve all those "in-basket" problems, and even make sense of solid geometry! For our dogs and cats, exercise also offers mental stimulation: new toys or games to figure out, different bushes to sniff, decisions to make (or follow) at corners, possibly even a little "loose leash" training thrown in, even some dog to dog or dog to people socialization work. Exercise connects our pets to us, so our "latch key" dog or cat gets companion reinforcement, mental stimulation and energy burning (as do we, because we're participants too).

Our pets are NOT like our washing machines, sitting quietly in the corner until we need them. They need daily maintenance, not just good food, water and a place to pee and poo (with an occasional visit to the vet). They need both physical and mental exercise. Otherwise, just like our four year old humans, they'll find a way to get it...and the results may not be pretty. As always, your Humane Society stands ready to help you, along with the several doggie daycare facilities and trainers in our county.

Lois Phelps is the behaviorist at HSSCM; her Puppy Kindergarten class starts in January.

Focus On: *Volunteering!*



Dearest Volunteers,

Looking back over this past year, I can't help but smile and think of all the great memories and wonderful contributions with which you have blessed our shelter! The culmination of everyone's time, ideas, love, nurturing, and energy has been part of our shelters' great success this year. Volunteers have fostered dozens of kittens, cats, puppies and special needs dogs. Each week, one of our three pet therapy volunteers, Elaine Kovach, Avril Philo and Sandi Hartnell, take a shelter dog to a local nursing home where the dog can socialize and brighten the lives of the residents. Volunteer Thelma Nay sewed over one dozen coats for the shelter dogs as well as cat nip toys for the cats! We have had our volunteers help at our annual garage sale, mobile microchip/rabies clinics, and many other various events. We have been blessed with a wonderful pet photographer, Ray Closson, who contributes his talents each week keeping our sweethearts' photos up to date, as well as providing us the irresistible photos for our 2010 calendar which is currently available in our gift shop! If you have had the opportunity to catch our pet segment on AccessVision, that segment is made possible by the efforts of two kind hearted gentlemen, Jack Sokolowski and Doug Lovitt, with the assistance of Jenny Ganka. Earlier this year, we had a fantastic volunteer turnout for HandsOn Battle Creek's Community Barnraising event. The efforts of this can be seen and enjoyed by the public anytime during our dog park hours of dawn to dusk! We shall never forget or underestimate the great importance of those volunteers who come in on a regular basis to show the shelter pets love and attention! The following individuals have kept the shelter pets part of their lives by coming in nearly every week: Jean

Bremer, Elaine Kovach, Alice Johnson, Leslie Hartom, Andy Rowles, Kazumi Suzuki, Mary-Anne Bently, Betsy Briere, Aimee and Nicole Peterson and Riley and Stephanie Marszalek. You are all so wonderful and we love having you a part of the Humane Society family! Thank you so very much to all our volunteers, from the bottom of our hearts! We enjoyed having you join us in the holiday parade and we hope to have you with us in this new year. A personal message from your volunteer coordinator: "you all brighten my heart!"

Prospective volunteers!

The new year is nearly here and the Humane Society will be accepting new volunteers starting in January! We are very excited to have new members of the community join us for our first orientation in our newly completed building, which is scheduled for Saturday, January 9th! Orientations will be conducted once per month on the second Saturday; there are limited volunteer openings each month. Those interested should submit an application as soon as possible to be put on the January orientation list. We also encourage all of our existing volunteers to attend the orientation as a refresher on all policies and updates. Prospective volunteers must be able to commit to a minimum of once a week for a period of six months. You must be at least 16 years old to volunteer without parental supervision. If you have any questions about volunteering, contact the Humane Society or stop in any time during our normal business hours!

Alexis Fidelman
Volunteer Coordinator

afidelman@hs-scm.org
Phone: 269.963.1796
Fax: 269.963.3365

Oh No! Litterbox Woes

At least fifty percent of the calls we receive from owners wishing to relinquish their cats are due to litterbox avoidance issues. No one wants a house that is constantly soiled or smells of urine. However, a litterbox issue is not the end of your relationship with your cat! There are many different techniques to try to get kitty back to the box before you call it quits.

Don't wait another day! Don't let soiling outside the litterbox become a habit. Once is one time too many, and time to figure out why the issue is happening. The first step is determining the possible reason for the actions, then taking steps to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Did you recently pick up a new brand of cat litter because it was on sale? Or move the litterbox to a new location? Cats are creatures of habit, and a change in the litterbox itself could create problems. This is easy to fix - simply switch back to the previous litter, or move the box back to its original location. Also, make sure your box is scooped frequently and the entire contents changed out regularly. You would hate to use an unclean bathroom, and kitty feels the same way!

No one knows your kitty better than you. You'll be the first person to notice if your cat is acting strangely. Litterbox avoidance issues require a trip to your veterinarian right away to ensure that there is nothing wrong health-wise, including urinary tract infections or blockages, which could become life-threatening.

If you haven't changed the litterbox material or location, and your vet

gives you the all-clear for health, the litterbox avoidance is likely behavioral. Perhaps you just brought home a new baby, and the noises and change in activity are frightening. Maybe you took a new job, and you're not spending as much time with kitty. Just because your kitty's problems are behavioral doesn't mean it's time to despair!

Make the Litterbox the Best

You want to make the litterbox the best place for your kitty to eliminate! Some cats grow larger as they age, and a too-small box for a too-large cat is a recipe for disaster. Similarly,

litter has a natural herb additive which draws your cat to the box.

Clean, Clean, Clean

A clean litterbox is essential. A deep cleaning on areas where kitty has had accidents is also important. Find a good enzymatic cleaner, found in pet stores, and thoroughly saturate the soiled area. Cats have incredible noses, and will return to a spot to urinate again and again. If you can't find all the places where inappropriate elimination has taken place, a black light can illuminate suspect areas.

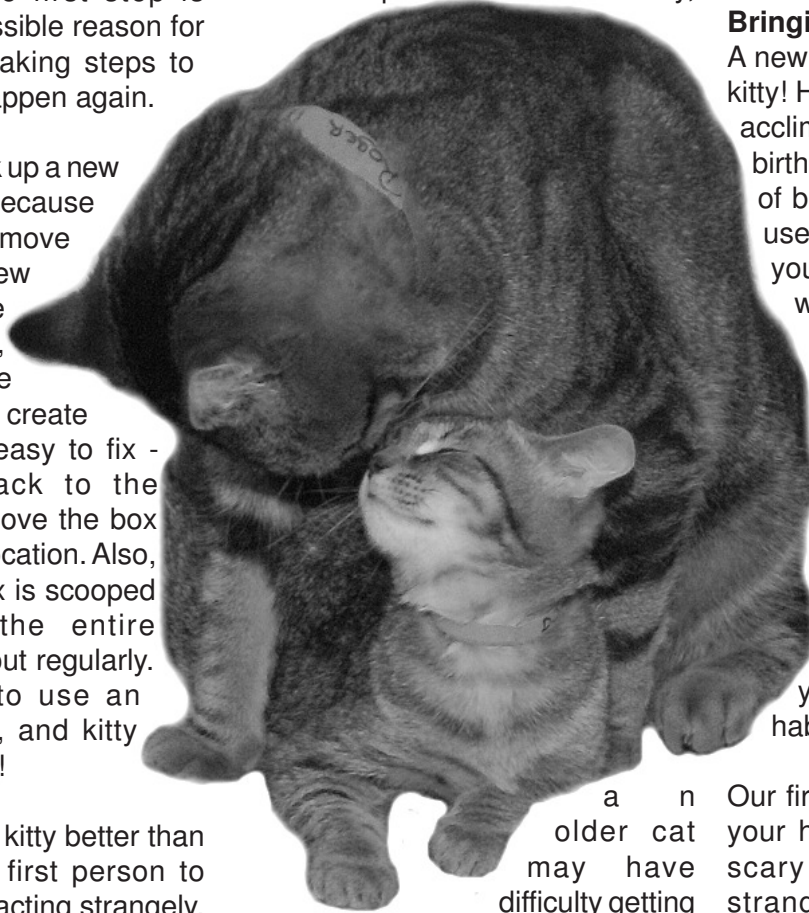
Bringing Home Baby

A new baby can be a scary thing for kitty! Hopefully, you took the time to acclimate your cat to an upcoming birth by playing a tape recording of babies crying and getting kitty used to more time spent alone. If you haven't, it's not too late. Visit www.cats.about.com to learn techniques on how to make your cat best friends with your new family addition.

Rely on Your Vet

If all else fails, your veterinarian may be able to prescribe anti-anxiety medication for your cat to help her adjust to changes in your home and get back in the habit of using the litterbox.

Our first goal is to keep your cat in your home. The shelter can be a scary place for animals, full of strange noises and smells. Any litterbox issues your cat had before coming to the shelter will likely be exacerbated on the adoptable cat floor. And, as you can imagine, we don't have people lined up to adopt cats who can't use the litterbox. Litterbox issues take some patience and effort, but the love of your family pet is a great reward.



a n older cat may have difficulty getting into a tall litterbox. Ideally, you should have one box for each cat you have, plus one more box. Many cats don't like to urinate and defecate in the same box, so it's crucial to provide them the space they need. Need that extra enticement? Seek out Cat Attract™litter from Precious Cat (<http://www.preciouscat.com/>). This

Special Thanks...

to Michigan Tile and Carpet, for providing meeting space each month for the Board of Directors meetings.

to Doug Lovitt, Jack Sokoloski and Jenny Ganka, AccessVision volunteers, for putting the animals of the shelter on tv each week and to Hector at AccessVision for putting it all together.

to Geertz, for donating bottled water for staff members and guests.

to Channel 3 for the wonderful coverage they give us each week on

our friends in need of their forever homes. Humane Society dogs and cats are featured at noon on Fridays.

to Diane Sly and her family for being such a great foster family and doing an outstanding job socializing our kittens.

to Alice Johnson for her devotion to our little friends in need of a little something extra and opening her home and hearts to all those kittens.

to the Encore Theatre Group at KCC, Michael Teri Salon and Lakeview Middle School for their terrific fundraisers!

Low Income Food Bank

The Humane Society, in an effort to help animals remain in their original homes, offers a Low Income Food Bank to qualified individuals. Participants can access the program five times in a rolling calendar year. The first time, the food is free. The remaining four times, there is a small co-pay and individuals must provide documentation showing that their animal has been spayed or neutered. To learn more, call 269.963.1796.

A Perfect Box for the Perfect Companion

The Humane Society is so lucky to have the friendship and support of a very special person. Sally McCann, a long time agency advocate and friend to the animals, contributes to the organization in many different ways.

If you have adopted a dog or cat from the Humane Society in recent years, along with a lovable animal, you have received a Perfect Box for the Perfect Companion. Sally makes these incredible keepsake boxes for you and your newly adopted companion to hold important pet records and keepsakes.

Sally created the box designs and the process for decorating them while she was wheelchair bound for several months due to an accident.

These boxes are donated by the City of Battle Creek, and previously held official records. Once the city is ready to dispose of the boxes, Sally's

husband Chuck picks them up and takes them home to decorate.



Mr and Mrs Joseph Lanock received a Perfect Box when they adopted beagle Dixie.

The boxes are covered with fun, pet-themed fabric which Sally orders specially off the internet. Only two boxes of each pattern are ever created!

The process takes some time from

start to finished product. Sally applies the fabric with an all-purpose glue. Then, once dry, she applies a decoupage glaze and finishes the box with several coats of a clear hard varnish. As part of the process, she carefully sands the box in between each step.

The Humane Society adopts out over 500 animals each year, so you can imagine how busy we keep Sally! Adopting an animal from the Humane Society is more than just adopting a shelter pet. Not only are you saving two lives (adopting one animal while making space in the shelter for another to be housed), you are accepting a new family

member into your home. These new additions come tested, dewormed, up to date on their vaccinations, spayed or neutered and microchipped. They leave the building with their Perfect Box, a bag of food and an adopter kit full of training DVDs, information and coupons.

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Hours of Operation

Tuesday - Friday noon to 6:00pm
Saturday - 11:00am to 4:00pm
Closed Sunday and Monday

Phone: 269.963.1796
Fax: 269.963.3365
www.hs-scm.org

The Humane Society is always in need of dog, puppy, cat and kitten food without red dye, kitty litter, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, bleach, paper towel, collars, leashes and bedding for the animals.



Humane Society
of South Central Michigan
2500 Watkins Road
Battle Creek, MI 49015