



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

# critter chronicles

Winter 2011

As 2010 draws to a close, we look back upon all of the successes we have shared this past year. We had a very successful Low Income Spay and Neuter (LISN) Program through a grant from the Battle Creek Community Foundation. Our Canine Training Institute started up and we offered several sessions of Puppy Kindergarten, Dog Obedience Training and even a Dog Tricks class. We helped more than 30 research laboratory degus transition into lives of companion animals, and we offered our support for the dog and cat victims of the oil spill. We came together at events, including our 5K Strut for the Strays, the Whisker Mixer, Chuck-A-Puck at Wings Stadium and our annual wine

tasting. We had 60 volunteers donate more than 90 hours of time every week, working with our shelter dogs and cats. We've conducted new training and education classes for volunteers

and community members. The list of our accomplishments goes on and on, but none of it would have been possible without your amazing support throughout the year. We are very excited about our plans for the upcoming year, and hope you will be an active part of our work, ensuring that every pet is a wanted pet!

## Education

HSSCM is partnering with Community Action to take our early childhood curriculum into 40 classrooms this spring. If you would like us to visit your classroom or youth group, please call 269.963.1796, ext. 22. We will continue to offer adult education sessions each month on a variety of topics, including the Best Friend in Training curriculum. Adult education classes are open to volunteers and members of the community.

## Canine Training Institute

Our Canine Training Institute is growing! We will be offering more classes in our regular curricula, and offering special two-hour master class sessions throughout the year on a variety of topics. See article on page 5 for more information.

## Cat Solarium

Many shelters across the nation are building cat

solarium additions to their facilities to improve the lives of shelter cats. These cat solaria provide cats with fresh air and sunshine, and have been shown to reduce the occurrence of ringworm and depression in the feline population. In 2011, the Humane Society of South Central Michigan will raise funds for the construction of our very own cat solarium. This three-seasons room will improve the health of our feline residents, especially during kitten season when the adoptable cat room is already crowded.

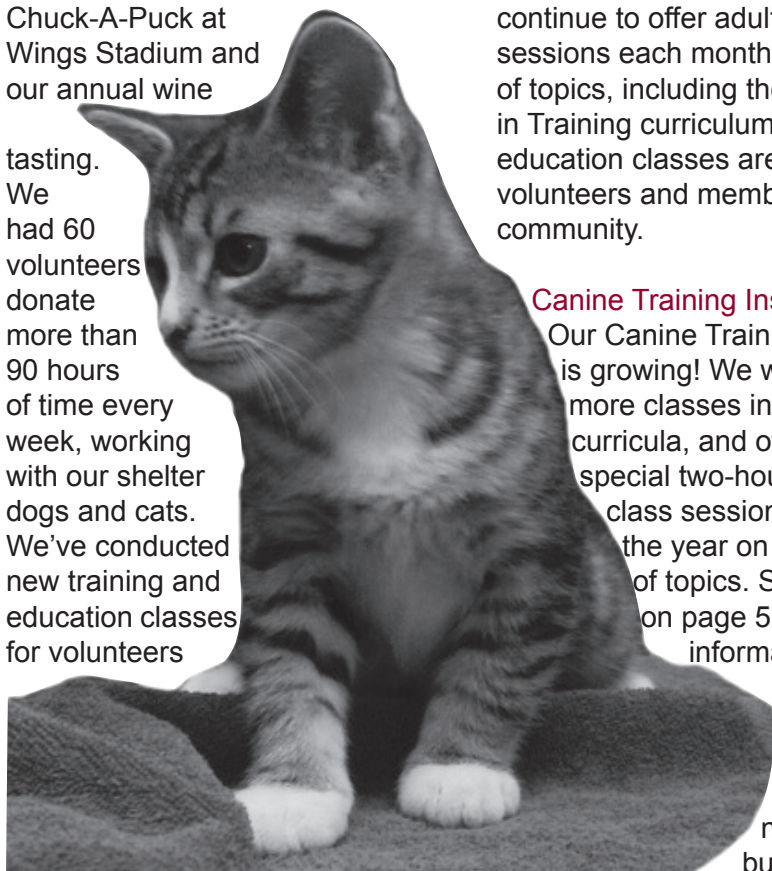
## Building Maintenance

Our facility was constructed in 1988, and receives a lot of hard use, every single day. It is critical that we keep up with ongoing maintenance to protect the value of our greatest asset. In 2011, we will be re-epoxying our floors in all of the dog areas of the facility, per Department of Agriculture recommendations. We will also examine structural areas of the building, with the assistance of architect Randy Case, to identify critical repair needs for structural integrity. Additionally, we will work with consultants to review the possibility of incorporating green technology to reduce the agency's energy bills.

## Foster Program

We are working to grow our Foster Program! We always have a need for foster parents for kittens and puppies when they are too small for spay and neuter surgery,

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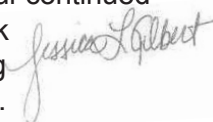
- All animal photos by  
Ray Closson -

You probably already know many of the different ways you can help the Humane Society of South Central Michigan. Many of you volunteer, donate and attend our events. You also spay and neuter your own animals, and encourage your family and friends to do the same! You advocate on the behalf of homeless pets in our community. You help make HSSCM a better organization, more fit to handle the needs of companion animals in south central Michigan.

Once again, I come to you asking for help. We need your thoughts, your

opinions, on our programming and the services we offer. Please visit our website at [www.hs-scm.org](http://www.hs-scm.org) and fill out our online survey. We will include some of the results in our next newsletter! Individuals who complete a survey will be entered to win a pet-themed basket of supplies for you and your best friend.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly at 269.963.1796, ext. 13. Thank you for your continued support! We look forward to seeing you in 2011.



## Whisker Mixer 2010 - Thank You!

HSSCM had a successful Whisker Mixer - Bid for Barks, which took place on Thursday, September 23, 2010 at beautiful Southern Exposure Herb Farm. This year's event raised an outstanding 30 percent more than last year!

We would like to thank all of those individuals and businesses who made it all possible:

### Sponsors

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# Training Makes a Difference

--Carrie Bammer, Animal Care Manager

As an employee of the Humane Society, one of the most common things we hear is "I don't know how you can work here. I couldn't do it; I would want to take them all home." On occasion that very idea has crossed my mind, but I know that I could not give them the individual time each one deserves!

As kennel staff and animal advocates, we treasure our jobs. Any opportunity that allows us to further our education as it pertains to our job is very much appreciated. We recently had the opportunity to travel to Peoria, Illinois for the annual Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference. The types of education that we can learn from these particular conferences have everything to do with our career choice. This year's customer service lecture was presented by Kit Jenkins, and we learned a lot.

As animal shelter workers, it is sometimes easy for us to come to the conclusion that everyone has an ulterior motive as to why they are surrendering their animal.

However, not everyone wants to give up their animal; sometimes

they are losing their home or they have lost their job and simply cannot keep their pets. We are not here to judge or make these individuals feel as though they are terrible people.

On average, the animal relinquishment process takes place over an average of at least a two-to-four-month span, if not longer:

1. Individuals come to the realization that they have or need to surrender their animal
2. They detach themselves so the pain of giving up their loved one is not so traumatic
3. They make the phone call

This is where our training comes in; people need options and we are here to provide information. We always want to use our knowledge to help educate them as to other options they may have, so surrender to a shelter is the very last option.

The one thing that I have come to realize from visiting other humane societies and animal control facilities is our Humane Society is on the right track. Our animals are receiving excellent care from the time they walk through the door, with proper vet care, positive stimulation, proper sanitation techniques and training, until they find a loving forever home. We are saving lives, not just by taking unwanted animals or abused animals off the street, but by educating people in a positive way about spaying/neutering and proper pet care, offering low income spay/neuter clinics

and, with the community's support, offering the low cost food bank for those who are experiencing financial hardship due to the economy.

As employees, we are proud to be part of the success of the Humane Society of South Central Michigan. As donors, volunteers and supporters, we hope you are too!

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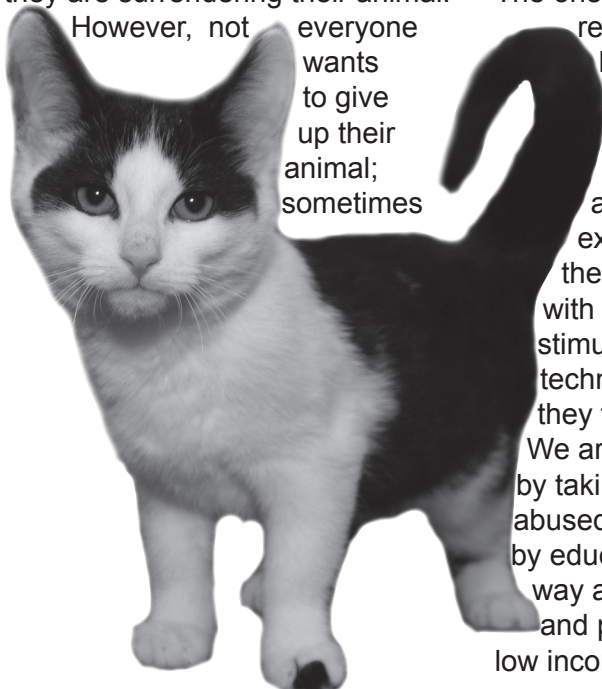


WORDPRESS

The Humane Society is committed to getting the word out about our animals and our programs. To connect with more individuals, the agency posts regularly on facebook and twitter, and maintains a blog, Whiskers, Wags and Wisdom, through its website. While no one media type will reach everyone in the community, more people are spending more time online.

Staff members post regularly, several times a day throughout the week. By 'liking' us on facebook or 'following' us on twitter, you'll get up to date announcements on adoptions, new animals arriving on the adoptable animal floor, volunteer opportunities and upcoming events. We also post photos! Our fans on facebook can post their own photos of HSSCM alumni animals.

To find us online, visit our website at [www.hs-scm.org](http://www.hs-scm.org) and click on the links. Help us get the word out to your friends and family about our social networking circle!



# Ask the Behaviorist

## Separation Anxiety

“Separation Anxiety” is a diagnosis that strikes fear, and anger, and frustration, into the heart of any responsible canine pet parent. So let’s talk about separation anxiety, what it is and what it isn’t; what we can do about it; what we may have done to contribute to it and what veterinarians and trainers may be able to do to help us.

In essence, separation anxiety is diagnosed when a dog, being left home alone, displays what the owners consider to be destructive behaviors such as constant barking, howling, chewing, digging, and inappropriate elimination. Separation anxiety can be mild, moderate or severe (we’ve all heard about, or seen, destroyed couches, holes dug in carpeting, doors scratched, chewed or pulled off their hinges). Trainers report that 20-40 percent of the cases they are working with are separation anxiety.

Separation anxiety is NOT a premeditated, malevolent behavior done by our pets to punish us. These repetitive behaviors, like OCD in humans, are a way for the dog to calm themselves when they believe they are in a situation that they can’t cope with; after all, chewing releases endorphins (a feel-good hormone) and a good bowel movement can be, momentarily, very satisfying!

So what is the real problem?

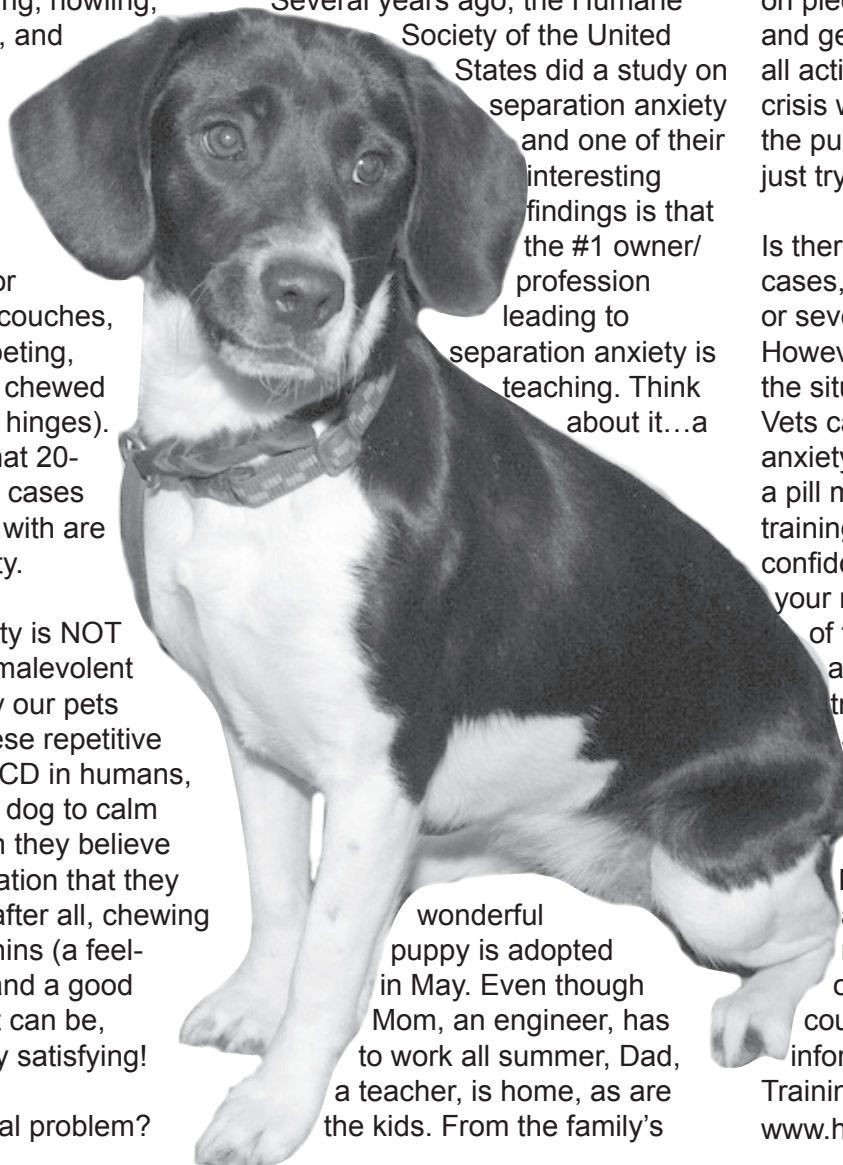
Your pet isn’t confident about two things: one, that you will return and two, that he will survive until you do. These two things have to be taught to a puppy. They include desensitizing your puppy to “controlled” family departures and returns (with appropriate use of confinement/crates) coupled with building the puppy’s confidence in herself, through training, problem-solving play, and providing some entertainment for a thinking mammal (stuffed Kongs, hidden treats, etc.).

Several years ago, the Humane Society of the United States did a study on separation anxiety and one of their interesting findings is that the #1 owner/profession leading to separation anxiety is teaching. Think about it...a

perspective, this is the perfect time to add a dog to their family, plenty of time and attention for training and housebreaking; in fact, puppy is with the family 24/7...and what a wonderful bonding this creates. Then comes the day after Labor Day and by 8:30 a.m. the house is empty, except for puppy, who is now 5-6 months old, has rarely been alone in his entire life and has no expectation if or when his people will be returning. What’s a puppy to do? Cry (bark/howl), then do things which bring comfort (eliminate, chew, chew and sleep on pieces of people-clothing, try and get out to find his people)... all activities guaranteed to cause a crisis when the family returns, but the puppy doesn’t know this, he’s just trying to find solace.

Is there a cure? Depends; in mild cases, probably yes; for moderate or severe cases, probably no. However, most trainers agree that the situation can be managed. Vets can help with various anti-anxiety medications, but popping a pill must be accompanied by a training regimen, which builds self-confidence and the expectation of your return in the pup’s brain. All of this is very doable with the assistance of your vet, area trainers and your Humane Society.

Lois Phelps is the behaviorist at HSSCM; her Puppy Kindergarten classes are taught on Saturday mornings. She also conducts one-on-one behavioral counseling sessions. For more information on HSSCM’s Canine Training Institute, visit us online at [www.hs-scm.org](http://www.hs-scm.org).



wonderful puppy is adopted in May. Even though Mom, an engineer, has to work all summer, Dad, a teacher, is home, as are the kids. From the family’s

# Canine Training Institute

The Humane Society is pleased to offer individual behavioral counseling, Puppy Kindergarten and Dog Obedience classes to the community. All sessions are held in the agency's NEW Binda Education and Training Center at the Humane Society, 2500 Watkins Road, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Taking these classes through the Humane Society is a win-win opportunity:

You and your dog receive high-quality education from certified behaviorists and instructors.

As a social enterprise, the proceeds from the classes go back to the agency to provide care for the dogs and cats currently living in the shelter environment, helping the Humane Society become more self-sufficient.

Trained dogs who are vital members of their families are more likely to receive appropriate care over their lives and are less likely to be surrendered to a shelter.

The Humane Society's vision is a society where every pet is a wanted pet; dog training classes are one strategy to help us achieve our goal!

## ***Why attend training with my dog?***

A good training class is fun for your family and your dog, and creates a family bond that lasts a lifetime. Too many dogs wind up at a shelter because their owners were unable to correct unacceptable behaviors. Often, these issues are easy to modify through basic training.

## **Puppy Kindergarten**

We decided to offer this training curriculum after careful analysis of the reasons owners gave us for surrendering their pets. The majority of dogs surrendered to HSSCM 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.

## **Dog Obedience**

This curriculum continues on after the basics learned in Puppy Kindergarten, but is a must-take class for any dog who needs help learning optimal behavior. Help your dog be the best dog ever!

## **Dog Tricks**

This class, for dogs who have completed the basic Dog Obedience class, helps your dog remember basic commands and behaviors and learn fun tricks!

## ***What kind of training is available?***

## **Individual Behavioral Counseling Sessions**

are held in hour-long increments, by appointment only, at a rate of \$40 per hour per dog. A trainer will be assigned to match the needs of you and your dog.

## **Puppy Kindergarten**

Six-week course  
\$60 per dog (\$5 discount if puppy was adopted from any shelter)  
Puppies ages 12 - 18 weeks

HSSCM's Puppy Kindergarten classes are 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. Families are encouraged to attend together - puppy training is a family endeavor! Puppies must have received all three sets of puppy vaccinations to participate; proof of vaccinations must be submitted with registration form.

## **Dog Obedience**

Six-week course  
\$80 per dog (\$5 discount if dog was adopted from HSSCM)  
Dogs six month and older

This class teaches basic dog obedience in a fun, interactive setting. Dogs must be up to date on all vaccinations to participate; proof of vaccinations must be submitted with registration.

## **Dog Tricks**

Six-week course  
\$75 per dog  
Dogs must have attended basic Dog Obedience training.

This class expands on the basic dog obedience curriculum and teaches your old(er) dog new tricks!

## **Master Classes**

Two-hour special sessions on a variety of topics. Visit our website to see our upcoming schedule.

## ***How do I learn more? Can I register online?***

To register for classes or schedule an individual behavioral counseling appointment, call 269.963.1796, visit the Humane Society during normal business hours or visit us online at [www.hs-scm.org/caninetraining](http://www.hs-scm.org/caninetraining). Fees must be submitted at time of registration.

# The Art of Racing in the Rain - Battle Creek Reads!

Barnes & Noble, Lakeview Square

Thursday, February 17 at 7:00pm  
Willard Library Meeting Room

## **Downtown Local Author Reception**

Come meet local authors and have complimentary snacks and coffee. Music too!

Thursday, January 20  
Starbucks in McCamly Plaza  
4:00pm - 6:00pm

## **Meet Enzo's Racing Friends**

Learn about Iditarod Dogs  
Miller Stone Auditorium - 77  
Capital Ave. NE  
Thursday, January 27, 7:00pm

## **Book Signing**

February 2011 (date TBD)  
Author book signing, held at Miller Stone Building.

To learn more about Battle Creek Reads!, please visit [www.battlecreekreads.org](http://www.battlecreekreads.org). Thank you to Willard Public Library for inviting the Humane Society to collaborate in these wonderful community events!

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The Humane Society of South Central Michigan is so pleased to partner with organizations throughout our community. By working with other organizations, we can stretch our reach and make an even greater impact on animal welfare. HSSCM will be going into 40 Head Start classrooms from Community Action in the spring of 2011 to educate children on the importance of taking good care of companion animals. If you work for an organization that is looking to make great partnerships to help ensure that every pet is a wanted pet, give us a call! We all need to work together.

"In Mongolia, when a dog dies, he is buried high in the hills so people cannot walk on his grave. The dog's master whispers into the dog's ear his wishes that the dog will return as a man in his next life. Then his tail is cut off and put beneath his head, and a piece of meat or fat is placed in his mouth to sustain his soul on its journey; before he is reincarnated, the dog's soul is freed to travel the land, to run across the high desert plains for as long as it would like.

I learned that from a program on the National Geographic channel, so I believe it is true. Not all dogs return as men, they say; only those who are ready.

I am ready."  
--*The Art of Racing in the Rain*

What it is: Battle Creek Reads is a community-wide reading program where people can connect through a shared reading experience. The program is sponsored by Willard Public Library.

How it works: Everyone in the community has the chance to read the same book and participate in a variety of events such as book discussion groups, an author visit, and other fun activities.

The upcoming book for Battle Creek Reads! is *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, by Garth Stein. The book is told from the dog's point of view.

Not only are Humane Society staff members and volunteers participating in reading *The Art of Racing in the Rain* for Battle Creek Reads!, we will also be participating in several events. We encourage you to join us, in both reading and participating in the events.

## **Photo Contest**

Take a picture of you and your dog reading *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, or doing some activity related to one of the book's themes, and email it to Willard Library's Sue Freemire ([sfreemire@willard.lib.mi.us](mailto:sfreemire@willard.lib.mi.us)).

Photos will be judged by creativity, photo quality, and overall dog-cuteness.

The deadline for photo submission is Friday, February 17 at 5:00pm.

The winner(s) will be announced at the Author visit at 7:00pm on February 24th at the Lakeview Middle School Auditorium.

A prize will be awarded to both the winning human and dog!

## **Book Discussion Meetings**

Come discuss the book with others!

Tuesday, February 15 at 7:00pm

# Will Cupid be Your Valentine?

When an animal arrives at the Humane Society, it may already have a name. Perhaps the previous owners surrendered the animal to one of the high-kill facilities from which we receive dogs and they provided the name. Or maybe, the animal control facility provides a name, not just an identification number, to the dog. Most of the time, the task of naming an animal falls to staff members at the Humane Society.

In February of 2010, we received some shelter transfers from an animal control facility. Among the group was a very large-eared dog with loads of energy. Her stare was like an arrow through your heart; her energy made her seem to fly. We couldn't have thought of a more fitting name than "Cupid." And here, coming up on a year later, our special valentine is still at the shelter.

Cupid is a 1.5 year old Cattle Dog mix. She came in with little-to-no training, but has blossomed with help from staff members and

nearly all of our shelter pals (she is a favorite!). She has chosen to learn and keep learning. She has never had a proper unconditional relationship, where someone vows to love her forever and she returns that love unconditionally. The Humane Society has been her first home. She never has to worry about being cold, or not having enough to eat, and she is very much loved. But a shelter is not a real home.

We think Cupid is overlooked when people come to visit the shelter; they see her only as a pacing ball of energy that is nothing but work and trouble. Haven't they heard the expression "don't judge a book by its cover?" All things great are worth waiting for, and that's Cupid in a nutshell!

She has learned so much since her first few days here. Many dogs go backwards in an environment as stressful as this one (try remaining housetrained

when you're inside from 6:00pm to 8:00am each night!), but Cupid has blossomed. Dedicated volunteer Steve Bulson has worked tirelessly with Cupid! She now sits before exiting her kennel and sits before exiting or entering the building. She loves to play fetch, be brushed and spend time with her human friends.

Cupid's personality is just as unique as the coloring of her eyes and the size of her ears. She would make a great exercise buddy and she could keep your yard free of rodents. She responds to the tone in your voice and gives a smile of understanding when you're having a tough day. We hope that she will steal someone's heart the way she has ours, and that she finds a loving forever home before Valentine's Day.



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but our upcoming work on the dog kennels will require foster parents for dogs, too! Watch our website or facebook for updates on training for potential foster parents. Fostering is an incredibly rewarding experience, for both you and the animal in your care!

## Binda Education and Training

We get a lot of use out of our new Binda Education and Training Center, but other organizations can use the facility, too! In 2010, the room was used for a yoga class, Red Cross CPR training for Community Action, and Calhoun County Animal Coalition meetings.

If you are interested in using the Binda Education and Training Center for your event or meeting, please call 269.963.1796, ext. 13.

## Calendar of Events

Mark your calendars! We have dates set up for all of our events next year.

February 11, 2011: Special Valentine's event, location TBD. Your cover-charge will provide hor d'ouvers for you, and daily care for the animals in the shelter!

February 12, 2011: Let Your Heart Go A-Stray at the shelter.

May 19, 2011: Wine Tasting at Southern Exposure Herb Farm.

July 9, 2011: Annual 5K Fun Run, Strut for the Strays.

September 22, 2011: Whisker Mixer - Bid for Barks at Southern Exposure Herb Farm.

December 9, 2011: Home for the Holidays annual open house.

Looking to spend a little more time with the animals? We are always looking for volunteers! Thank you for your support throughout 2010, and in the future.

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### Hours of Operation

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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](http://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 and bedding for the animals.**



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