

THE

COMPANION

HAPPILY EVER AFTER | SUMMER 2023

A PLAN FOR HEA'S FUTURE

>> PAGE 10

WORTH THE WAIT

>> PAGE 16

Hea



OUR VISION

A world where the life of every companion animal matters ... Every.Single.One.

OUR MISSION

To increase humanity's capacity to care for its companion animals.

OUR WORK

These five pillars guide our mission:

- > Adoption
- > Community Education
- > Spay/Neuter
- > Rehabilitation
- > Sanctuary (lifetime care)

OUR VALUES

- > Seek to understand
- > See what could be
- > Raise the bar
- > Change lives

LET'S GET SOCIAL!

 **Like us on Facebook:**
facebook.com/HEANOKILL

 **Join our Facebook Group:**
facebook.com/groups/Every.Single.One

 **Follow us on Instagram:**
[@heanokill](https://instagram.com/heanokill)

 **Follow us on TikTok:**
[@heanokill](https://tiktok.com/@heanokill)

On the cover:

Zeva's first trip to Door County, WI to see the cherry trees in bloom! (See her full story: Worth the Wait on page 16)

On a Mission!

This is the most "mission" critical volume of *The Companion* we've published. We'll get to that in just a minute. But first, the stories you're about to read are sure to touch the heart. As you read them, take note of the scale at which this work is happening – it's significant. Be sure to give yourself credit – you make it possible!

What makes this volume "mission" critical?

Well, let's pick up where we left off. We featured these exact words in our previous edition:

How will our behaviors (as a society) change if we begin to view organized companion animal welfare groups as facilitators and resource centers to strengthen the human-animal bond. What if these organized groups were only called upon to provide emergency or urgent care rather than being seen as a place to relinquish cats and dogs? To quote our founder, pets dying in shelters is a community problem.

"IT'S NOT A SHELTER PROBLEM. IT'S NOT AN ANIMAL CONTROL PROBLEM. IT'S ALL OF US, AND WE ALL HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION TO MAKE A CHANGE." - AMANDA REITZ

Since publishing these words just over 12 months ago, HEA's leadership has invested significant time discussing our future – as an industry, but more specifically as an organization. Through these discussions, it became apparent that the words of HEA's mission statement needed some attention.

This realization resulted in some intense brainstorming sessions, healthy debates, and beautiful revelations. The set of words we compiled are designed to change the way people think about, and more importantly, interact with companion animal welfare for generations to come. These 10 simple words precisely describe our founders' original intentions dating back 17+ years ago. Remember, HEA joined this movement when the majority of our country was killing roughly 50% of the cats and dogs that entered its shelters.

In the pages that follow we'll introduce you to our revised mission statement (and unpack its meaning). Additionally, you'll find key statistics and stories that highlight the impact you made possible in 2022, you'll read about a major announcement regarding what's next at HEA, and we'll invite you to join us for our 5th annual Hour of Love in July!

With all of this in the works – we think it's safe to say, **we're on a mission!**



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



JULY 20-22
HOUROFLOVE.ORG

Sponsor Spotlight

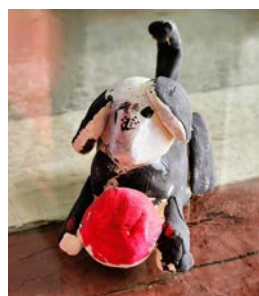
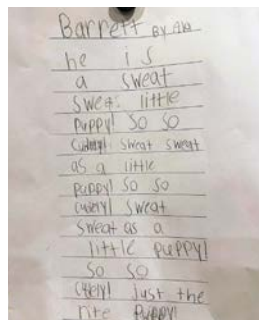
Each of these community-minded organizations made a pre-planned financial sponsorship commitment to HEA's events last year. We thanked them in various ways - on our adoption center welcome displays, in numerous event promo emails, on our social media channels, on event-day signage, on our event fundraising pages, on donor thank you letters, and right here in *The Companion*. On behalf of the animals, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of these businesses for their loyalty and kindness.

You may be surprised to know; we are just beginning to seek sponsorship commitments for 2023. **And the animals definitely need your help this year!** There's no way around it, HEA's mission requires funding.

If you are someone we should connect with about sponsorship (or you know someone who we should talk to), please reach out. By connecting, you can help maximize one of our scarcest resources – **time**. Sponsorship inquiries, leads, personal introductions, and renewed commitments are very helpful and always appreciated. Your help makes us considerably more efficient in our efforts to raise money, which leads to more direct mission impact!

If you can help, email Marcus at donate@heanokill.org.

* We are specifically looking for corporations and individuals who would be willing to sponsor a challenge match to incentivize others to make gifts during 2023.



Ava's "Help Others" Envelope

It's not just the fundraising dollars that make Hour of Love so special. We encounter many heart-warming stories during the cuddle sessions. Last year, Ava told us hers through her actions.

Ava came to Hour of Love to cuddle cats and kittens. When she checked in for her session, she handed us an envelope that included (25) \$1 bills. This young lady receives an allowance every week. Wise beyond her years, her budget includes a "Help Others" envelope. As we accepted Ava's gift, she was beaming. It was clear to us that she understood that her \$25 gift had just been doubled!

In the time since her Hour of Love shift, Ava's family adopted their second pet from HEA. Barrett (the puppy) joined Puma (the cat). Ava's pet-loving spirit continues to impress. On adoption night, she brought us a poem about Barrett. A couple of months later, she stopped in to give us a statue that she made in art class. You guessed it - it's Barrett!

Read more: Hour of Love Turns Five in July (page 8)



The Dream Teen

THE LIFE OF AN ORDINARY 15-YEAR-OLD IS BY NO MEANS BORING. SCHOOLWORK. FRIENDSHIPS. ATHLETICS. PART-TIME JOBS. TIKTOK. DRIVER'S ED!

But Sierra Brod is not your ordinary teenager. In addition to balancing all the things keeping her peers busy, Sierra devotes significant space in her schedule – and her heart – to changing the lives of the dogs and cats who call the Sanctuary their home (Marion, Wisconsin).

Sierra's call to the Sanctuary started five years ago. She learned about HEA at the age of 11. She then convinced her mom, Jolene, that they should start volunteering.

"My mom didn't think we needed another activity in our lives, but I kept insisting we needed this," Sierra recalls. "I got us registered for orientation and soon we were dog care volunteers at the Green Bay Adoption Center."

Shortly thereafter, Sierra and Jolene started taking occasional trips to the Sanctuary (located about an hour from their home in Green Bay, Wisconsin). At any given time, approximately 30 cats and 40 dogs reside at the Sanctuary. Each of these animals is at a different stage in their life's journey, but what all of them have in common is their love for the devoted HEA staff and volunteers.

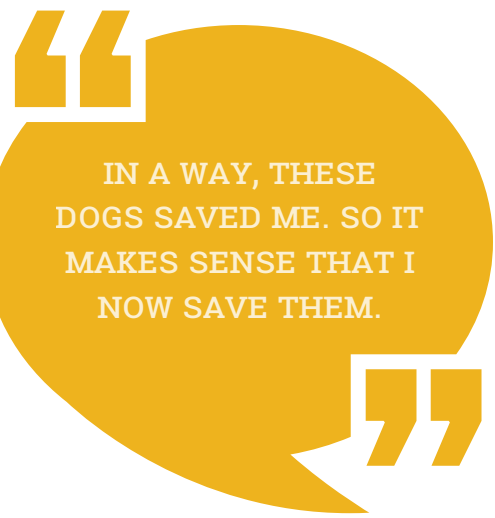
As Sierra and Jolene built a deeper bond with the animals at the Sanctuary, their visits became more frequent. Along the way, Sierra spent countless hours with HEA co-founder, Ken Reitz, to learn the ins and outs of the daily dog and cat care routines. Life at the Sanctuary is filled with lots of litter scooping and dog poop clean-up, but also plenty of socializing. Ken quickly realized that Sierra had a very special gift for connecting with every animal she met.

"She communicates with them in many ways," he notes. "She is an animal magnet. When she walks into the room, the animals flock to her."

Sierra cannot get enough! That's exactly why her mom rearranges the chaos of life to bring Sierra to the Sanctuary on most weekends and for extended periods during her summer break. In the company of her favorite furry companions, Sierra finds joy – a lot of it! She spends her days taking care of the animals' various needs: sanitizing kennels, filling food and water bowls, and of course, poop-scooping. In the evenings, Sierra retreats to one of the cozy guest cottages on the Sanctuary grounds. These cottages are the perfect space to do schoolwork, relax, and, most importantly, cuddle up with a dog or cat who's craving Sierra's company. Each one of Sierra's four-legged guests benefits from the valuable moments they share together.

According to Ken, "Sleepovers are an important part of getting the Sanctuary residents ready for adoption – and these days, no dog leaves the Sanctuary without at least





“ IN A WAY, THESE DOGS SAVED ME. SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT I NOW SAVE THEM. ”

one sleepover with Sierra! She is just such an asset to us – and to the animals."

In addition to the oodles of hours Sierra spends at the Sanctuary, she also pours her love into the many dogs her family has fostered – and her most special friend, Neely, who the Brods adopted from HEA in 2019.

"I always wanted a three-legged dog, and then along came Neely," she enthuses. "I'm so glad he's ours!"

Even though Neely and the foster dogs are always ready for a hug on the homefront, Sierra treasures her time at the Sanctuary. "It's my happy place. It's like no place else I've ever been," she states. "There's a sense of calm and peace, and it affects everyone who goes there in an amazing way – especially the animals. For me, when I'm there, I feel complete."

Of course, Sierra's friends notice when she's not around to hang out.

"My friends always ask why I spend so much time there," she muses. "I tell them I'm incredibly passionate about saving dogs. I've been through a lot (personally). I found HEA when I was at a low point. In a way, these dogs saved me. So it makes sense that I now save them."

With all the knowledge and experience she's gaining through HEA, it's not surprising that Sierra sees herself working at a vet clinic or starting her own animal sanctuary someday. But wherever her future takes her, those lucky enough to cross her path will quickly realize what HEA's staff, volunteers, and most especially, our animals already know – Sierra Brod is anything but ordinary. She is extraordinary! 🐾





Vision + Values = Victory

OUR VISION

A well-crafted vision statement inspires. This set of words paints a picture of an idealistic future state. Those charged with making it a reality should naturally aspire to make it happen.

We're proud of HEA'S vision – A world where the life of every companion animal matters...**Every.Single.One.**

OUR VALUES

Core values are the internal compass that guide the behaviors, decisions, and culture of an organization. When an organization intentionally weaves its core values into its cultural fabric, the values are truly lived.

On behalf of the cause we champion, we've found it easy and meaningful to intentionally live our values: seek to understand, see what could be, raise the bar, and change lives.

Since our founding 17 years ago, we've found homes for more than 6,000 companion animals. We've also prevented countless unwanted litters of cats and dogs from being born in the first place. These outcomes represent our vision and values in action, but we'd be hard-pressed to find another story that illustrates these important principles as vividly as Michael's.

SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND

We're unsure about where Michael's story began, but his journey to Happily Ever After started in April 2021 when he was brought to one of our shelter partners in Texas. He was heartworm positive, but that was the least of his troubles. Michael was missing entire patches of fur and skin, with the surrounding areas incredibly swollen, raw and infected. Even his eyes had been extensively injured: one was very damaged, and the other one was missing entirely.

Nobody seemed to know if the unsightly mutations all over Michael's tiny body were caused by a genetic condition or a result of something far worse. But what everyone did know was that this little guy was incredibly special. Based on the way he looked, one could only assume that he was living in immense pain. Yet, he somehow had the happiest disposition and just wanted humans to love him unconditionally..

HEA immediately arranged to bring him to Green Bay, where he started intensive and frequent treatments. Staff and volunteers were instantly charmed and inspired by his unbreakable spirit and willingness to endure any procedure his talented medical team administered.

SEEING WHAT COULD BE

Six months later, Michael's spirit jumped through a screen and into the heart of his soon-to-be family. "I was scrolling through my feed and saw a post about Michael," remembers Rachel. "I was so moved by his story and just felt this strong connection to him. I wanted him in my life so badly."

It was a new sensation for Rachel, who had never considered herself to be a dog person. She and her husband, Chase, have four rescued cats. Plus, they were already fostering cats for HEA at the time. But Michael's sweet face was constantly on their minds, so Rachel took matters into her own hands. She contacted a member of HEA's staff to ask if it would be possible to foster Michael.



The answer? "Of course!"

A few days later, Rachel and Chase met Michael at the Adoption Center. "He was bandaged up and we were afraid to touch him at first because his wounds were still pretty bad," Rachel says. "But then we were just struck by how super happy he was – despite his issues. He just wanted to be loved."

RAISING THE BAR

While most animals take a bit of time to settle into their new surroundings, there was no adjustment period for Michael. He was home – and he knew it. So did Rachel and Chase.

"We had never 'foster failed' with any of our foster cats, but we knew early on we'd be keeping Michael!" she laughs. He became a permanent member of their family on July 7, 2022.

Since coming to live with Rachel and Chase in Appleton, Wisconsin, Michael has continued his weekly vet visits for ozone and laser therapy treatments. Rachel says he enjoys going to the vet as much as they enjoy having him there. "He walks in like he owns the place!"

CHANGING LIVES

Thanks to the love and care from his parents and vet team, Michael has made tremendous progress.

"In all the important ways, he is healed," Rachel notes. "His one injured eye has healed, and so has the wound on his back. There is no fur there, but we can touch that area and pet him normally."

That's good news for Michael, who loves nothing more than cuddling his favorite humans. And these days, there's one more human in his family to love because Michael's baby (human!) sister, Chloe, arrived in February!

While it's been a long road to recovery for Michael, his parents are committed to him. "Yes, caring for a pet with some special needs can be stressful, but it's just so worth it!" Rachel enthuses. "We'd do it again in a heartbeat – that's how rewarding it is. We can't imagine our family without him."

And with that statement, we celebrate victory. It's beautifully evident how much Michael's life matters. He mattered to his first rescuers in Texas. He mattered to HEA. He mattered to his veterinary care team. He matters to Rachel and Chase. And very soon, he will matter a whole bunch to little Chloe. 🐾





HOUR OF LOVE TURNS FIVE IN JULY – AND THE ANIMALS NEED YOU!

ON JULY 20-22, HEA'S ADOPTION CENTER WILL BE BUZZING WITH THE ENERGY THAT'S CREATED BY CONTINUOUS CUDDLE SESSIONS WITH AMAZING DOGS AND CATS!

WHY?

It's a well known fact; time matters in companion animal welfare. The clock is working against too many dogs and cats in shelters. And when time runs out, the result is something we would rather not imagine. What we do is truly a matter of life and death.

We have always understood that hours (and oftentimes minutes) are critically important in this line of work. But there was a moment at an industry conference in Los Angeles (2018) that shook our team. As part of a massive data collection effort that was conducted by Best Friends Animal Society, someone calculated the number of dogs and cats being euthanized in shelters every hour. The resulting figure was 150 lives per hour. That number was hard to process and impossible to accept. As that unsettling statistic scrolled across the screen, the knots in our stomachs grew tighter and tighter. This very moment sparked the idea for Hour of Love.

In just four years, Hour of Love has raised more than \$370,000 to support the programs of HEA's mission. **Thank you!**

As we enter year number five, the landscape is a bit rocky. Right now, many shelters are facing a crisis. Across the industry, intake remains up, adoptions are trending down, and we're all operating in unfamiliar (and in many ways unprecedented) economic times. But now is not the time to pull back. In fact, it's time to double down – the animals need your help.

WHAT IS HOUR OF LOVE?

Hour of Love is an annual campaign that gives pet lovers many simple ways to change lives in 60 minutes (or less)! The in-person element of this campaign is **completely free**, and it's designed to raise funds and friends to support the needs of the countless dogs and cats that HEA helps each year.

HOW DOES HOUR OF LOVE HELP THE ANIMALS?

This is our single biggest fundraising campaign of the year! Plain and simple, it plays a critical role in funding our programs. Here's a look at how various gift levels change lives:

- >> **\$10** gives a pet a microchip. This rice-sized chip helps a lost pet reunite with their family.
- >> **\$25** feeds a litter of puppies for a week. We all know how important full bellies are!
- >> **\$50** helps to offset the significant veterinary costs that are required with caring for so many lives.
- >> **\$100** provides a new foster family everything they need to get started – a crate, a healthy diet to feed, toys for play, treats to reward, and access to medical care for a healthy future.
- >> **\$300** makes it possible to spay and vaccinate (4) female cats or kittens. These surgeries will prevent an additional 272 offspring over the next four years.



GIFTS WILL BE MATCHED!

On July 20-22, every precious second presents an opportunity to help more cats and dogs. In the spirit of doubling down, donations made during the Hour of Love campaign will be matched! This means your gifts are being doubled. **AND, as the campaign total increases, so will the matching ratio!**

PLUS, like last year, **for every 100 donors that make a gift to the campaign**, the dogs and cats will receive additional funding.

SEEKING MATCHING GIFT SPONSORS

Additional sponsors (businesses and individuals alike) are needed to continue building the Hour of Love matching fund. **Interested in learning more?**

Email: donate@heanokill.org

Subject line: Let's chat matching gifts!

GET IN ON THE CUDDLES!

As an in-person participant at our Green Bay adoption center, you'll receive your very own in-person cuddle session. Just as it sounds, you'll spend time up-close-and-personal with adoptable dogs and cats while enjoying slobbery kisses, wagging tails, and endless purrs.

During and after your personal cuddle session, all you need to do is create engagement that promotes giving. We'll even give you an easy-to-use toolkit that will help you:

- >> Take & share photos of the dogs and/or cats you're snuggling
- >> Send text messages and emails to contacts in your network
- >> Make cute posts to popular social media outlets
- >> Place phone calls to the pet lovers in your life

The campaign's extra-generous donation matching offer makes it super simple for you to ask your social media networks, family, friends, and co-workers to make a gift to help the cats and dogs during this special event!

A NUMBER OF WAYS TO PARTICIPATE!

- >> Sign up for your very own Hour of Love snuggle session
- >> Rally your corporate team to sign up for cuddles
- >> Become a sponsor (see below)
- >> Plan an hour of volunteer time off
- >> Make a personal gift
- >> Help remotely - spread the word from any place that you can reach your friends - your couch, your desk, the lake, or anywhere else that inspires you to change lives!

SHARE AN HOUR, SAVE A LIFE!

We'll leave you with one important question: will you consider sharing a sliver of your time on July 20-22 to change lives?

Keep an eye on your email inbox and the Hour of Love Facebook event because registration opens during the week of June 19th! In the meantime, if you'd be so kind as to **put a placeholder on your calendar for July 20-22**, to snuggle, spread the word, make a gift, or any combination of the prior, the animals would be grateful!

We also suggest bookmarking houroflove.org so you can keep up on all of the campaign action! Nothing beats watching the total grow during the giving days because each dollar means the lives of more animals are being changed in all the best of ways! 🐾



HOURLY LOVE: WORKPLACE EDITION

Do you work on a team of people who appreciate puppy kisses and kitten cuteness? Are you an employer who wants to treat your team in a way that makes them feel good while also doing good? We definitely encourage Hour of Love opportunities for workplace teams!

Signup details coming soon!

***Statistic update:** Five years later, the most recent industry figures suggest that the number of cats and dogs losing their lives in shelters is approximately 100 per hour. This new number shows real progress, but we still have significant work to do to achieve our vision of a world where the life of every companion animal matters...Every.Single.One.

A Plan for HEA's Future



"IT'S NOT A SHELTER PROBLEM. IT'S NOT AN ANIMAL CONTROL PROBLEM. IT'S ALL OF US, AND WE ALL HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION TO MAKE A CHANGE." - AMANDA REITZ

When our founder spoke the aforementioned words in 2019 in relation to pets dying in America's animal shelters, we had no idea that her words would spark a change in how we communicate HEA's purpose.

As outlined on the front panel of this issue of *The Companion*, we have revised the wording of our mission statement. Before we go any further, it's important to note: We've been doing the work of our **new** mission statement since the day HEA was founded. **In short, while the words of our mission statement are changing, our work remains the same.**

THEN WHY CHANGE THE MISSION STATEMENT?

In simple terms, our "old" mission statement only describes some of the efforts of our mission. Making this change will help us articulate all of our work with much greater clarity and intention. Take a look:

- >> **"Old" mission statement:** To provide a loving home to every companion animal that enters our care. Lifetime guaranteed.
- >> **New mission statement:** To increase humanity's capacity to care for its companion animals.

While we will continue to provide a loving home and a lifetime guarantee to every companion animal that enters our care, we believe that our new mission statement has the potential to change the way that people think about and interact with companion animal welfare for generations to come.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM THAT OUR MISSION STATEMENT INTENDS TO SOLVE?

There's a wise communication adage, "Stated problem does not equal actual problem."

In the case of companion animal welfare, the overarching problem presents as overpopulation. But is overpopulation the problem, or is it actually a byproduct of the root problem? In our opinion, overpopulation stems from an absence of care. In order to solve the problem, we need to increase human beings' (collective) capacity to care.

SO, WHAT DOES THIS NEW SET OF WORDS MEAN?

We expect that we'll be asked to explain this statement often, which is exactly what we want. We designed this statement to invite conversation. Our goal is for it to be explored with curiosity.

Let's unpack it!

To increase humanity's capacity to care for its companion animals.

In the context of this single sentence, there are three words that are extremely important to its meaning..

- >> **Who is humanity?** Human beings, collectively.
- >> **What does capacity mean?** So many things – knowledge, ability, resources, access, space, volume, etc.



>> **Why was the word "its" included?** As Amanda stated, the problem that needs solving does not belong to animal shelters. The word "its" is important because this three letter word assigns ownership. Shelters have long been viewed as a place to bring and leave problems. We see HEA's role differently. In order to create meaningful solutions, we need to facilitate. Only so much can be done inside the walls of shelters. To maximize our impact, we need to facilitate problem solving with and through a caring community (wherever that may be).

SO HOW DOES AN ORGANIZATION LIKE HEA INCREASE HUMANITY'S CAPACITY TO CARE?

We could tell stories for hours about how this happens on a daily basis, but for the purposes of this publication, we'll paint with very broad strokes:

- >> It's taking immediate action to spay and neuter a large number of cats that are living in a single residence. This is done to prevent the cats' caretaker from bringing litters of kittens to their local humane society every spring.
- >> It's investing in talented staff to engage the hearts of passionate volunteers in the work of our mission. It takes a concentrated effort and significant time to recruit, onboard, train, and retain these incredibly valuable human (volunteer) resources.
- >> It's sharing rehoming resources that allow a pet's existing family to choose their pet's new family. This approach never requires the cat or dog to enter the shelter when transitioning between homes.
- >> It's using a thorough, yet efficient, adoption application process. Our process is designed to educate applicants – not judge them. Our objectives are healthy pets and solid matches.
- >> It's asking volunteers to wake up at 3:00 a.m. (at least once a week) to transport precious cargo to different parts of the state to be spayed and neutered. Just as it is for pet owners, access to veterinary care is a real issue in our industry.
- >> It's monitoring data to measure the efficiency of our own operations. It's using automation in our processes. Efficient processes allow us to do more (faster and at a lower cost to our donors).
- >> It's collaborating with other shelters and pet resource groups to share knowledge and experiences with each other and the members of our communities.

These daily efforts are mission critical, and they are certainly increasing humanity's capacity to care. But this is not where our work stops. We have a responsibility to the dogs and cats to pay close attention to what's happening at an industry level – trends, educational opportunities, and future-minded care models – and to innovate accordingly.

HOW WAS THE NEW STATEMENT CREATED?

Once we recognized the need for a wording change, we went to work. We brainstormed, debated, gathered feedback, and refined the statement (multiple times).

To inspire big-picture thinking and to elevate our creativity, we turned to a 1997 video from Apple's "Think Different" campaign. In this brief clip, we hear the late Steve Jobs say, "Apple at the core – its core value is that we believe that people with passion can change the world for the better."

Just moments later, Jobs pushes play on a commercial that this megabrand is ready to introduce to the masses.

The message: *"Here's to the crazy ones... they push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world are the ones who do."*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

We are crazy enough to think that we can change the world.

HEA's founding included an inordinate amount of individual and familial sacrifice (time, money, life in the public eye, etc.) from all members of the Reitz family.

If you're new to HEA's story, here's an abbreviated version of our origin and a brief introduction to the members of the founding family:

"In 2006, our founder was a 21-year-old college student when she learned that 50% of cats and dogs entering shelters lost their lives. Amanda Reitz set out to save them, one by one. This young lady had visions of a refuge for any dog or cat in need of a safe and loving home. That dream became a reality when she found Walter, Happily Ever After's first rescue dog, wandering the woods of Northern Wisconsin. Amanda and her parents, Ken and Lois Reitz, brought Walter home and founded HEA in the family's garage. In 2016, Amanda's brother, Marcus, joined the team, making HEA the entire Reitz family's venture."

Since 2006, the world has certainly improved for companion animals, but there's still more change that needs to happen – a lot more. We plan to be leaders in this work.

WHICH BRINGS US TO OUR BIG ANNOUNCEMENT...

In addition to an inspirational vision, a critically important mission, and crystal-clear values, the financial footing, infrastructure, community, and passion are in place at HEA. In order to achieve our long-range goals, it is going to be imperative for us to have:

- >> A clearly defined strategic plan
- >> Financial resources to achieve the prescribed plan
- >> A talented leader who will bring the vision to life

Understanding all of this, we are extremely excited to announce that we are beginning a formal search for our very first Chief Executive Officer (CEO)!



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The journey to this announcement started with a very serious conversation on January 1, 2021. It feels like that meeting was just yesterday, but somehow more than two years have already passed.

Just weeks before that important discussion, HEA distributed its annual appeal letter. You may recall reading these words from HEA co-founders Ken and Lois Reitz:

"We've committed deeply to HEA. As you might imagine, living onsite at the Sanctuary becomes all-consuming. Living creatures rely on us every day. As we continue to grow older (wiser too), our thoughts have started to turn to HEA's future."

They concluded by stating, **"Our single most important wish is to know that this mission will carry forward and be healthy for as long as it adds value to the lives of companion animals and the communities we serve."**

It's pretty clear that HEA's work adds value to the lives of companion animals and the people who love them. And it's just as clear that Ken and Lois are not alone in their thoughts about the future. The Reitzes' children, Amanda and Marcus, feel exactly the same way. From conversations with HEA donors, sponsors, and volunteers, it's evident that this is important to everyone.

WHAT DOES HIRING A CEO MEAN TO THE REITZ FAMILY?

For the foreseeable future, HEA's leadership model will remain unchanged. Once this person is hired, there are specific business objectives we expect them to achieve. One of those objectives is role definition and clarity for the members of HEA's staff, including the Reitzes. In collaboration with the Reitz family, we will also be looking for our CEO to define a retirement plan for Ken and Lois.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SANCTUARY LOCATION WHEN KEN AND LOIS RETIRE?

Speaking specifically to the physical location, the Reitz family needs help answering this question. Setting a direction that will answer this question is an early expectation of the person who's hired. Regardless of physical location, the concept of sanctuary (lifetime care) will remain unchanged.

WHY NOT PROMOTE ONE OF THE REITZ SIBLINGS INTO THIS ROLE?

Amanda and Marcus have massive hopes and dreams for HEA. They want their visions to actualize, and they know that hiring a CEO is the first step. Amanda and Marcus are excited to continue sharing their true gifts and passions with the mission.

- >> For Amanda, it's working closely with the animals and collaborating with other shelters and rescues.
- >> For Marcus, it's innovation, relationships, branding, and storytelling.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO HEA'S VOLUNTEERS?

HEA has unequivocally been built by the hands and hearts of volunteers. It's an expectation that HEA's future leader continues to incorporate the same strategy and commitment to the spirit of volunteerism. (This is specifically outlined in (4) different places in the position summary document.)

HOW WILL THIS INVESTMENT HELP THE ANIMALS?

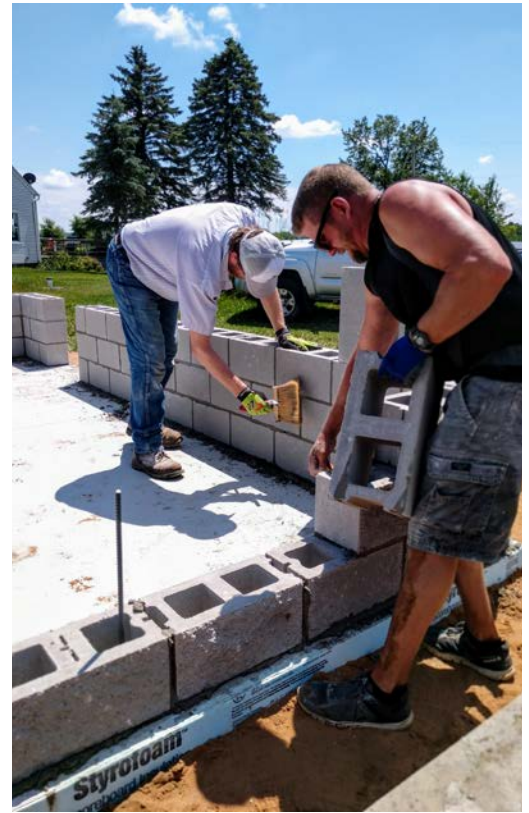
The decision to initiate a search for our first CEO was made carefully. This is an investment in the future of HEA and companion animal welfare at large. Companion animal welfare organizations need to be run like businesses, with one key exception – **we measure our profits in the lives we change.**

Nonprofit organizations are formed to solve societal problems. If the objective is to truly solve these problems, talent is a necessity. The term "nonprofit" is widely misunderstood; "nonprofit" is merely a tax designation. Like for profit businesses, nonprofits need resources – capital funds, operating dollars, leadership talent, human resources, assets, relationships, etc. The idea is to have the resources we need to make a meaningful, measurable, and lasting impact on a very complex problem.

HEA's CEO will be responsible for leading:

- >> Strategy & Planning
- >> Human Resources
- >> Operations & Program Impact
- >> Industry Expertise
- >> Financial Management
- >> Communications
- >> Relationship Building
- >> Governance
- >> Board Relations

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



HOW WILL THIS INVESTMENT HELP THE ANIMALS? (CONT.)

As you'd expect, this person will be paid a salary to do this important work. In return, they will be expected to add value that substantially exceeds their compensation. HEA's CEO will be accountable to a budget and program-specific goals. Ultimately, this means our mission will grow and do more to support dogs, cats, and the people who love them.

DOES HEA REALLY NEED A CEO?

The answer is emphatically, YES! The Reitz family has led HEA "by committee" for the past 17 years. This leadership structure is not sustainable (especially with Ken and Lois nearing retirement age).

Additionally, HEA's potential is significant, the vision is much bigger than meets the eye, and the effort that it takes to lead our existing operations is not a small task.

- >> Our care network provides for more than 200 cats and dogs every day.
- >> We operate (3) locations in Northeast Wisconsin with a team of 12 staff members and more than 200 active volunteers.
- >> Since 2006, we've paired 6,000 adopted pets and families. (More than 2,000 of these adoptions have happened in the last 3 years.)
- >> The impact of our spay/neuter program is growing at an exponential rate – this program spans across Wisconsin and reaches into the southern regions of the United States.

As you can probably sense, this leaves very little time to plan and execute a vision for HEA's future. Investing in this executive leadership role proactively is critically important to the animals and the future of HEA's work.

IF THE DISCUSSION STARTED IN JANUARY 2021, WHAT TOOK SO LONG?

Our primary focus is changing lives – which means there are never enough hours in a day. Further, this is a sizable change and a large investment. The Reitz family had to be ready; the organization had to be ready. Each member of the Reitz family (along with the Board) invested significant time, consideration, and heart into making this decision. This is complex and emotional, but it's definitely right. And, above all else, we are committed to getting it right for the dogs and cats.

IS THERE A SEARCH FIRM INVOLVED?

Yes, we do not have the bandwidth to do this on our own. After contacting multiple search firms, we carefully selected a boutique search firm to guide and support this process. We are excited to partner with Mike Mueller of Signature Search in the effort to identify the right talent and fit for this extraordinary opportunity.

HOW IS THE SEARCH BEING CONDUCTED?

In an effort to manage our financial investment in the search process, HEA will leverage its vast network of contacts to connect candidates to the opportunity. **(You are one of our contacts. Please help us share it with others to expand the reach of our search.)**



Signature Search will lead an in-depth screening process. They will be the initial point of contact for all interested candidates.

Mike Mueller - President
Signature Search
mmueller@signaturesearch.com
920-841-3539

ARE THERE ANY PARAMETERS TO THE SEARCH?

We are looking for someone who has been successful, can translate that success into our work, and is looking for significance in their career.

We are not limiting the search by geography, industry, or sector. We are looking for the talent who can make the biggest impact on behalf of companion animals.

WHAT IS THE HIRING TIMELINE?

The search is officially open! We are not measuring the success of this search by how quickly the role is filled. Our success will be defined by selecting the right person. Signature Search is committed to "bringing the right people together for the right reasons."

WHAT WILL CHANGE WHEN THIS PERSON IS HIRED?

When investing in a leadership position like a CEO, change is to be expected. While we do not know exactly what will change, we know what will remain the same.

WHAT WON'T CHANGE WHEN THIS PERSON IS HIRED?

HEA's vision, mission, and core values will not be changing. Additionally, the value placed on family, volunteer service, and life are non-negotiables.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY?

All details are available at heanokill.org/ceo. You can also scan the "Hiring" QR code in this article.

AS A SUPPORTER, HOW CAN I HELP?

There are two very simple and important ways you can help:

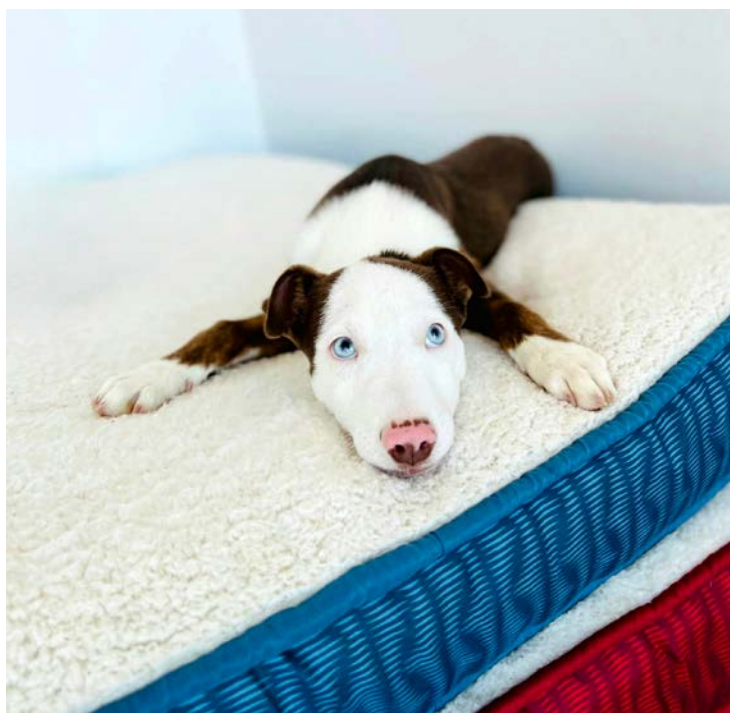
- 1) Tell people about this opportunity to change lives! The "Hiring" QR code links to the position summary and this article. **Share it!**



2) **Make a gift!** When an organization of HEA's size (we're still quite small) prioritizes something this important, other initiatives naturally receive less attention. At HEA, we all wear many hats. If you follow our work closely, you likely know that Marcus is responsible for HEA's branding and development efforts. In our current structure, this includes: overall organizational leadership, fundraising campaigns/events, donor relations, communications and marketing, retail sales, and a number of process-related initiatives. Understanding his skillset and networking abilities, Marcus is running point on sharing our CEO opportunity with HEA's network of contacts. This is not a small undertaking. **As a result, our traditional funding initiatives are receiving less attention right now.** If you're able to make a gift (of any size) to ensure that our daily operations remain fully funded, the animals would be extremely grateful.

If you'd like to make a gift by check or cash, there's an envelope included in this publication. If you'd prefer **to make a gift online, please visit heanokill.org/donate**. Thank you for your consideration!

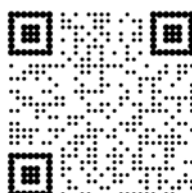
To conclude, thank you for believing in HEA's mission. The investments you've made over the past 17 years have positively changed the lives of thousands of animals. **Your commitment has brought us to this point.** This is a defining moment in HEA's history; it's a fantastic launching point for what's to come! From the bottom of our hearts, **thank you!** 🐾



Questions about these exciting changes?

Please contact Marcus Reitz, HEA's Director of Branding & Development.

Email: mreitz@heanokill.org.



Interested?

If you (or someone you know) is interested in leading this noble charge, please contact:

Mike Mueller - President
Signature Search
mmueller@signaturesearch.com
920-841-3539

Worth The Wait

THERE'S A WELL-KNOWN STATEMENT THAT RESONATES WITH PARENTS OF RESCUE PETS: SAVING ONE ANIMAL WILL NOT CHANGE THE WORLD, BUT SURELY FOR THAT ONE ANIMAL, THE WORLD WILL CHANGE FOREVER.

Over the past 17 years, the staff and volunteers at HEA have witnessed the truth of this statement 6,000 times over. With each new life we welcome into our care, all it takes is one look into their eyes and our "why" is reaffirmed.

For some cats and dogs, it's just mere days between the time they arrive at HEA and when they're adopted. For others, it takes a little – or a lot – more time to find their perfect match. And that's okay! Throughout their stay with HEA, they are part of our family – which means they enjoy the love, snuggles, and care offered by our staff and volunteers.

Yet as wonderful as the HEA family is, we know the ultimate happily ever after for our animal companions is in a home of their own. The stories that belong to Precious Bella, Freedom and Zeva spotlight our love for life! We never gave up, neither did they, and now they're living storybook lives with the understanding people who adopted them.



PRECIOUS BELLA

ENTERED HEA'S CARE: AUG. 29, 2013

ADOPTED: JAN. 17, 2023

Like many stray dogs, Precious Bella was a bit of a mystery when she found her way to HEA. But what we did know was all we needed to know: She was gorgeous, funny, and she needed our help.

Over time, we learned she was the biggest cuddler on the planet. And this girl loved people like crazy! However, she was not fond of other animals. Luckily, the Sanctuary in Marion was able to give Precious Bella exactly what she needed – unconditional love for nearly 10 years!

When people are interested in adopting a dog, there are a variety of reasons why they're looking for one who gets along with other dogs or cats. This limited Precious Bella's prospects. As years went by, Precious Bella learned to tolerate other dogs walking near her during her walks at the Sanctuary. What never changed was how much she adored her friends at HEA, and how much they adored her.

But then, a full decade after coming to HEA, Ana enters the picture.

"I was looking to adopt an animal, and HEA was in my area," she recalls. "I looked through the adoptable dogs online and I thought Bella would be a great fit for me. I went to meet her, fell in love and the rest is history!"

Today, 12-year-old Precious Bella (now known as Bella, Bells or "Good Girl") lives with Ana in Shawano, Wisconsin. She is loved by Ana's grandparents, parents, brothers – and even the family dog Axl.

"Bella adjusted slowly but surely into my home," Ana says. "She was a bit uncomfortable at first as she figured out her new lifestyle. She followed me around like a shadow for the first few weeks anywhere I went! She has now become very comfortable, and we know how to communicate with each other about her needs."

Ana says Bella spends her days chewing on stuffed animals,



napping on the couch, and "going to town" on a spoon of peanut butter.

"Her facial expressions are hilarious, and she has me laughing and running around the house when she wants to chase me around."

Unsurprisingly, what Ana appreciates most about her "good girl" are the same traits that charmed her HEA caregivers over the 10 years she stayed with us.

"I love that she is a chill, unconditionally loving, cuddle-bug, with a great sense of humor and attitude. She gives kisses to everyone she meets and has so much love to give."

What a truly happy ending for a truly precious girl's tale.

FREEDOM

ENTERED HEA'S CARE: MARCH 9, 2022

ADOPTED: JAN. 28, 2023

Last winter, HEA undertook a massive rescue effort – rescuing over 60 cats from cold, dangerous conditions in a very rural area in Central Wisconsin. Among those cats was a brave mama cat (probably only about a year old herself) with four tiny, adorable kittens. She had likely given birth outdoors in February.



The day I came to the Adoption Center, I wasn't coming specifically for Freedom - I was just happy to meet any cat. But I had read Freedom's story and felt a connection to her independent spirit.

- Carrie D.

Freedom's Adopter



Somehow she found the strength and courage to keep her babies safe and healthy until the March day they walked into HEA's humane traps – and into our hearts.

They were quickly transferred into foster care and given names based on characters in the children's book *Riding Freedom*. Mama Cat, now known as Freedom, and her babies thrived with their foster family. Freedom continued to be an excellent, patient mom, but she was happiest basking solo in the sun or lounging on the cat tree.

The kittens all inherited Freedom's big, beautiful, expressive eyes. Once they were old enough, they quickly found homes. Freedom stayed in foster care a bit longer. Without her kittens around to demand attention, Freedom's personality started to shine. So she moved to the Adoption Center in hopes of finding a family of her own.

It took Freedom some time to settle into her new routine at the Adoption Center. For the first few months, she preferred life in her cubby. She was satisfied watching the activity taking place outside her big window. When she came to trust our volunteers, she happily accepted head scratches and treats from many of them – eventually deciding to take daily strolls into a meet and greet room for a quick change of scenery. But meeting potential adopters was not on her agenda – until the day Carrie came in to pick out a new feline friend.

"The day I came to the Adoption Center, I wasn't coming specifically for Freedom – I was just happy to meet any cat!" Carrie explains. "But I had read Freedom's story and felt a connection to her independent spirit."

The volunteers on duty that day sensed Carrie might be the one Freedom had been waiting for. When the volunteers introduced Carrie to Freedom, they were overjoyed to see Freedom immediately taking treats from Carrie's hand – and not only accepting pets from her, but demanding them!

Carrie knew she'd found her girl. When Carrie opened the door to the pet carrier that she planned to transport her new friend home in, Freedom surprised everyone – she strutted right inside. Clearly, Freedom knew she'd finally found her person!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Once she got to her new home in Algoma, Wisconsin, Freedom spent a few days in hiding. This is not abnormal for cats as they acclimate to their new surroundings. But when Freedom decided her adjustment period was over, she took her rightful place as the queen of Carrie's home.

"She owns the place!" Carrie laughs, noting that Freedom (now known as Gertie) races around the house and has a long list of new favorites: looking out windows, watching birds and squirrels, playing with crinkle balls and laying on Carrie's lap. But just as she did in her foster home, Gertie can most often be found on her cat tree or in a sunny spot.

When asked to share what she loves most about Gertie, Carrie struggles to name just one thing. "She's so smart! In fact, she figured out how to open all of my closet doors! And she's quirky. I love that she reveals more about herself every day."

Her independent streak is still high on the list, too.

"She's just a perfect match for me," Carrie enthuses.

We agree, Carrie!

ZEVA

ENTERED HEA'S CARE: MARCH 24, 2014

ADOPTED: JAN. 30, 2022

Look up photogenic in the dictionary, and there you'll find Zeva. But her natural beauty is only the beginning. She likes to take beauty to the next level by dressing up for her photo shoots! It's anybody's guess if Zeva had ever donned an outfit before – like so many others she arrived with the "stray" label. No worries, because Zeva has more than made up for any lost time in her modeling career—first during her



time with HEA and now with her very proud mama!

While living at HEA, she endeared herself to everyone who met her. As they took photos of her, it became clear she had a gift for the camera. When one volunteer placed a costume on Zeva, it became obvious how much she liked the spotlight! As the years passed, more photo shoots followed. So when Malia of Green Bay started looking for a dog that fit her criteria (older, female pit bull), she found Zeva's profile online and was "sold" by the fact that Zeva enjoyed (or was at least very accepting) of costumes.

"I used to dress up my family dogs, so when I saw that Zeva liked to do that, I knew she was perfect for me," remembers Malia.

Malia went to the Sanctuary to meet Zeva – and bring her home. Today, Zeva is 11 and lives in Green Bay with Malia, her dad, and three bird siblings. According to Malia, Zeva may be a senior, but she still acts like a puppy – the only thing that gives her age away is her "powdered sugar" face.

In addition to photo shoots, Zeva likes walks (except when it's cold outside) and rides to different places. She loves everyone she meets, chasing squirrels, enrichment toys, lick mats with peanut butter, and dental chews.

Because Malia is a veterinary technician student, Zeva is also helping Malia hone her professional skills. Malia reports that Zeva is a great "patient" for practicing things like physical exams and heart rate checks.

"The thing I love most is that she is my shadow," Malia adds. "The best way to describe it is that I am in a video game and she is my side character that follows my every move. And she will just flop on top of me like a whale – all 60 pounds of her!"

Zeva clearly adores Malia, and the feeling is mutual.

"It makes me happy knowing how much love she received at HEA, but I am so happy that I got to be the one to bring her home. I couldn't imagine a life without her – she is my heart dog. I am very, very lucky to have her."

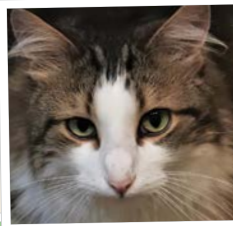
And Zeva is very, very lucky to have Malia! 🐾



Understanding Our Impact

IMPACT REPORT

	2021	2022
Animals Cared For	932	908
Total Intake	757	715
Cats	324	328
Dogs	433	387
Animals Fostered by Community Members	438	490
Foster Homes	60	64
Adoptions	694	685
Cats	270	292
Dogs	423	393
Returns	45	29
Post-Adoption Support Emails (sent proactively)	2,589	3,474
Where Our Newest Adopters Live		
# of Communities	104	114
# of States	5	6
Lifetime Care Companions (In Memory)	10	9
Remembering those who crossed the Rainbow Bridge		
Feline angels: Tuck, Rhapsody, Princess, Nissa, Lynnette, & Twin		
Canine companions: Champ, Golla, & Savannah		
Spay / Neuter Surgeries	616	1,363
Female Cats Spayed	292	647
Feline Offspring Prevented (over the next 4 years)	19,885	44,010
Other Key Measures		
Hours of Volunteer Service	23,914	26,403
New Donors	530	760
New Social Media Followers	1,512	2,262
Admin Tasks Automated	37,761	43,378



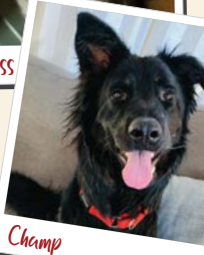
Rhapsody



Savannah



Princess



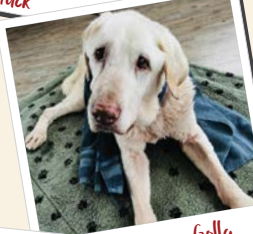
Champ



Nissa



Tuck



Golla



Twin



Lynnette



Happily Ever After Animal Sanctuary
E5714 Bork Road
Marion, WI 54950

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Your Support Changes Lives.

HEA relies solely on the generosity of individuals like you to help a growing number of animals every day. We receive no funding from the federal, state, or local government to perform our mission.

DONATE

Your gifts provide shelter, medical care, and the love that our animal companions deserve.
heanokill.org/donate

MATCH YOUR GIFT

Many employers match their employees' charitable gifts. Your impact doubles (some even triple) when your employer matches your generosity.

SHARE A MEMORY OR TRIBUTE

Honor that special someone or a four-legged friend with a memorial or tribute gift.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Including HEA in your will, estate plan, or as a beneficiary is easier than you'd think. There's even an option to create a completely **free will** that is valid and legal in all 50 states.

heanokill.org/legacygiving

ADOPT

Find your newest family member at HEA! Adopt a cat or dog and change lives, yours included!

heanokill.org/howtoadopt

HOURS & LOCATIONS

Green Bay Adoption Center
2255 Fox Heights Lane
Green Bay, WI 54304
Visit by appointment

Marion Sanctuary
E5714 Bork Road
Marion, WI 54590
Visit by appointment
Sleepover (staywithhea.org)

OUR VISION

A world where the life of every companion animal matters...Every.Single.One.



Get Involved!

FOSTER

A remote volunteer opportunity! From the comfort of your own home, you'll provide the care necessary to prepare an animal for adoption.

heanokill.org/foster

VOLUNTEER

Looking to make a difference in the lives of companion animals? We have opportunities for groups, individuals, and families. There are many ways you can change lives!

heanokill.org/volunteer

SPEND THE NIGHT

The guest cottages at HEA give our animals the chance to experience something truly life changing - a sleepover with YOU!

staywithhea.org