Shelter Vet’s Patients Are the City’s Ailing Animals

Written by Barbara S. Moffet & Photos by Shelley Castle Photography
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She was a short-haired cat called Luna, and she was only one year old. After falling or jumping from her owner’s balcony in Alexandria she may have landed on all four paws — but one of her leg bones was severely fractured in the process.

Luna’s owners couldn’t afford costly surgery to save her. But instead of having her euthanized, they surrendered her to the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, which is operated by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA).

Enter Dr. Kaci Angelone. The shelter’s only staff veterinarian, Dr. Angelone, oversees the health of all animals who make their way to the shelter. That can mean a pet too sick for an owner to manage — even one with a seemingly minor skin problem — or an injured stray brought in from the streets.

“Luna’s owner did the right thing,” Dr. Angelone said. “We are a resource for Alexandrians. We’d rather have the animal brought to us than have it stay in a home suffering.”

Just about every animal at the shelter, even the occasional wild creature, meets Dr. Angelone, sooner or later. All animals seven years or older get blood tests to check the function of vital organs such as liver and kidneys. Many animals need fecal-sample testing for internal parasites.

If illness is found, the animals joins Dr. Angelone’s case list, and she works with other staff members to monitor their progress daily. Eight to 10 “visiting vets” come by regularly to help shoulder the caseload and offer opinions on tough cases.

And Dr. Angelone orders hundreds of surgeries annually, such as spaying and neutering, at local veterinary clinics and other shelters, all at the AWLA’s expense.

A 2-year-old pit bull called Moe created a significant medical challenge for the shelter. Hit by a car, his owners had taken him to an emergency veterinary hospital, where they were told his injuries were quite severe and treatment would be expensive. Desperate to help their dog, the owners turned to the AWLA.

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Dr. Kaci Angelone examines a beagle called Freda at the AWLA.
From the Executive Director

South Korea Dog Rescue

One of my goals as the Executive Director of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) has been to expand our partnerships with external organizations to build our capacity to help more animals. We now serve as an Emergency Placement Partner for the Humane Society of the United States to support communities in animal-related crises, and in return, we would receive this support if we ever needed help in Alexandria. This relationship has now extended beyond the United States with the group’s international arm — the Humane Society International (HSI).

The HSI approached AWLA in late 2014 to ask if we would help take 23 dogs from a dog meat farm in Seoul, South Korea, that they were working to shut down and convert to farming crops. We would be the first shelter in the country to receive dogs from meat farms in South Korea rescued by the HSI. We realized that this was not only an opportunity for us to help 23 dogs and put a spotlight on the issue of dogs raised for food but also to leverage this story to bring media attention to animal shelters in the region. We agreed to participate with the understanding that after we had quarantined all of the dogs at our shelter, we would organize the transfer of some of the dogs to the other shelters in the region and coordinate the media attention. It was a success! We were able to coordinate media coverage when the dogs arrived at AWLA on January 5th and 6th, and we then held a press conference at the shelter to announce the transfer of some of the dogs to our sister shelters: Animal Welfare League of Arlington, The Washington Animal Rescue League, Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Loudoun County Animal Services and City of Manassas Animal Control and Adoption Shelter. We received national and international media attention for all of our shelters, and all of them reported an increase in adoption over the weeks after the rescue.

Some of the dogs at the meat farm in South Korea before they were rescued. Bailey, who is also shown in the photo below, can be seen in the front row. Photo by the Humane Society International.

Katie Faxon, AWLA Transfer Coordinator, giving Bailey a kiss. Bailey, like the other puppies in his litter, was extremely frightened when he arrived at AWLA and would not allow anyone to touch him. Katie and other staff/volunteers worked with Bailey and he and his siblings made an incredible transformation. Photo by Shelley Castle

Billie smiling after being groomed. Photo by Shelley Castle.

Snowball, one of the puppies from the dog farm, enjoying the comforts of a blanket for the first time.
City, Shelter Working Hand in Hand to Serve Animals
Written by Barbara Moffet, AWLA Volunteer & Photos by Shelley Castle Photography

The animals at Alexandria’s Vola Lawson Animal Shelter are cozier than ever these days, thanks to a new state-of-the-art heating system recently installed.

The new heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system was provided by the City of Alexandria to the shelter, which is operated by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA). It’s all part of an increasingly vibrant partnership between the city and the AWLA designed to benefit the animals of Alexandria, both pets and wildlife.

“Almost every department of the city — General Services, Health, Licensing, Police — connects to the shelter in some way,” said Charlotte Hall, chair of the AWLA Board of Directors. “The city is a real lifeline to the shelter, and vice versa.”

Deputy Director of Administration Alfred Coleman oversees the relationship on behalf of the city. “We work very closely with the AWLA year-round to meet the shelter’s needs,” he said. “Increased communication and cooperation with the League’s director have made our relationship better than ever.”

A recently signed 29-page contract, continuing a relationship first forged in 1989, spells out the city’s responsibilities to the shelter — maintaining the facility, equipment and vehicles and providing custodial services. In return, the AWLA provides animal shelter management and animal-control services to the city.

Under the agreement, the AWLA regularly informs Coleman of its needs, and any necessary repairs or purchases that are consistent with the terms of the agreement come out of the city budget, which allocated $30,000 to the shelter for 2015. Recent purchases made to improve shelter operations have included two new vehicles — one of them a pickup truck that Animal Control Officers can use to transport dead or injured animals — and a web-based system that will allow pet owners to register their dogs or cats or renew existing pet licenses online.

The new HVAC system, which eventually will provide remote monitoring of kennel temperatures, was proposed by Building Engineer Kevin Jones, a city employee who’s a regular presence at the shelter and who works closely with city Portfolio Manager Patrice McAuliffe and Building Manager Pelham Park to keep systems running smoothly. The new HVAC arrangement, which is a heat-pump system with electrical backup, replaced a propane system and should save money for the city, Coleman said.

Coleman, a dog lover himself, visits the shelter every few weeks and meets with Executive Director Megan Webb once a month to review shelter needs. On the list for the 2016 budget is the addition of covers for the outside portion of each dog’s kennel to provide extra protection from the elements. Taking care of animals is central to the character of Alexandria, Coleman says. “Alexandria is such an animal-friendly town.”
The call that came in from the police to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) described a fox stuck in a residential fence. What Animal Control Officer Alex Cooke found on arriving at the house in Del Ray early that Sunday morning was that the fox, a large male, was hanging by his head. As she moved closer and tried to examine the animal, he hissed and tried to bite her. Finding no visible injury, Cooke decided the best plan was to help him escape. She quickly positioned crates under the fox’s paws and then tossed her catch pole around his jaw, causing him to bite down. Using the pole, she lifted the fox up, freeing his head. “He took off running and leaped over the next fence,” she said.

Many calls involve wildlife in distress. Citizens often call after “rescuing” baby birds that appear to have fallen from nests. These birds should be left alone, Rees said, as they are routinely nudged out of the nest by their mothers, who are teaching them to fly. The officers sometimes find themselves saving lives: Cooke, for example, routinely checks the pouch of opossums who have been killed on the road since finding a 2-inch live baby opossum inside a dead mother. That newborn was transported to a wildlife rehabilitator.

Keeping citizens and pets safe from rabies is a major responsibility of Animal Services. Untold hours are spent documenting animal bites and scratches, reporting them to city authorities, and, if necessary, quarantining animals suspected of having rabies or animals that were bitten. Pets that have had rabies vaccinations can be quarantined at home, Rees said, but those without vaccinations must go to the shelter for the quarantine period.

Rees and his team increasingly look for opportunities to educate citizens rather than penalize them. “When we’re out on patrol, we’re especially looking for dogs off leash, and when we find one, it’s our duty to determine if the animal has a city license and a rabies vaccine,” he said. “But instead of a citation, we often issue a ‘notice to comply’ and explain why the vaccines are critical. We’ll follow up later to make sure they did comply.”

Situations involving cruelty or neglect of animals warrant criminal prosecution, Rees said, and the AWLA works closely with the city Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office to bring charges in these cases. “That office is very supportive of what we are doing,” Rees said. “They see this as a growing area of law and have helped us to expand our abilities to bring strong cases to them for prosecution.”

Bryan Porter, the Commonwealth’s Attorney for the city of Alexandria, says he has made animal cases a priority since taking office last year and has assigned one of his staff prosecutors, Joseph Martin, to specialize in these cases. A recent case involved a dog so neglected by its owners that it had to be euthanized. The defendant — the dog’s owner — pleaded guilty to a count of animal cruelty and was sentenced to suspended jail time and ordered not to care for or possess any companion animals again.

“Animal cruelty victims can’t speak for themselves, and they need strong advocates to hold people who treat them inhumanely accountable for their actions,” Porter said. “Education about these issues is key. When judges and juries hear about the horrible things people do to animals, they are more likely to take the cases seriously.”
In Honor of
A. J. Terio
from Patrick & Frances Sankey
Abbie Hubbard
from Lisa Barry
All Rescued Animals
from Sarah Haut
Allan Cagnoli
from Alicia Cagnoli
Allyn The Hammies Wagner
from Romon Aranda
Amy Rose
from Doug and Sue Rose
Amy Ryan
from April Guice
Ana Lachelier
from Paul and Suzanne Lachelier
Andrew Matz
from John Levenworth
Annie Belevetz
from Timothy Belevetz
Annie Backhus
from Theresa Backhus
Arnold and Chong
from Patrick Brawand
Barbara Draughon
from Ruth Perez-Kim
Bella & Sumter Magee
from Nicole Schindler
Bella and Governor
from Natalina Gleason
Belle Carena Boron
from Elizabeth Carena
Benji and Arthur Barsic
from Tessa Barsic
Billy Marra
from Michael Marra
Bowser Locke
from Tim Locke
Brook E.
from Michael Colonna
Buddy McCullough
from Shawn McCullough
Cary Garcia
from Scott Maslow
Catherine Hollan
from The Alexandria Committee National Society of the Colonial Dames of America
Cathie Davis Kaplan
from Catherine Davis
Cathy and Jaime’s Marriage
from Lorett Archut
Charles Cottrell
from James Hollist
Charles & Jackie Cottrell
from John and Vicky Cottrell
Charles and Peggy Martin
from Hazel and William Winkoski
Chico and Renee Gholt
from Barbara Gholt
Cooper J Hetzel-Field
from Danneke Hetzel
Daisy and Steven Wheeler-Berbeco
from Evan Gay
David Lundberg
from Victoria Stevenson
David Chilton
from Duane Chilton
David and Kim Brummerstedt
from Laura Wilson
Deb Delmar-Ledder
from Dawn Perez
Dempsey
from Neil & JC Milner
Diane Vidoni
from Patricia Black
Dixie Goodin
from Bibb Hubbard
Doug Morningstar
from Diane Vidoni
Dr. Ami Krasner
from Todd and Courtney Savage
Dr. Krasner & Yvonne Cunningham
from Richard and Carrie Leeveridge
Drew Kahle
from Marsha Kahle
Ed Senn
from Charles and Jackie Cottrell
Ellie & Evan Pribil
from Sylvia Almeida
Ellie
from John Degenerova
Emma Moulan
from Brenda Drebsch
Family and Dogs
from Harriet Gore
Flareon
from Thomas Cuddy
Fred and Susan Smith
from Betty Hix
Gary Matz
from Ed Kozalek
Goldie Payton
from Catherine Poyton
Greg, Cole & Maggie Gallishaw
from Charles and Jackie Cottrell
Harlow
from Elizabeth Davies
Henry Meyers
from Meade Ranck
Howard and Bob Katz
from Mary Ann Collins
Jack and Jane Tabaka
from Christine Tabaka
Jada Bilson-Walker
from Andrea Bilton
Jasmine Goodrich
from Lindsey Burkholler
Jasper and Mr. Stripes
from Susan Goughan
Jessie
from Butler
Jill Langsom and Jan Hume
from Thomas and Faith Halcombe
Jingle Colvin
from Libby Cooperman
from Andrew Cohen
Joanne Messura
from Darlene Branges
Jodi & Alan Capps
from Shelley Conway
Joe Traehn
from Joseph Trahrn
Joe Myers
from Ami Sanchez
Jon & Kelsey Hurst
from Aaron Hurst
Kathy Van Kleek
from John and Alayn Bannon
Kendra Davis
from Joseph Trahrn
Lacey Burnette
from Carolyn Brudelove
Laura Lee Ledbetter
from Karen Taylor
Lee
from Angela Villanueva
from Deanna Bucquereu
Libby Cooperman
from Amy McCloy
from Anika Torruella
from Benjamin Murray
from Beth Arason
from Carol Weber
from Caroline Allen
from Charles Sumpter
from Dina Recor
from Di Fang
from Dana Reid
from Heather Shleifer
from Jeanne Chambers
from Jennifer Butlin
from Joan Stanley
from Leeta Constantoulakis
from Lori Schroeder
from Mary Bondmass
Libby Cooperman (continued)
from Nidia Gaona
from Robert Rosseter
from Stephanie Charreau
from Susan Dugrenier
from Suzanne Miyamoto
from Tara Gattis
from Toni Frazier
from William O’Connor
from Yan Li
Liza Szalkowski
from Cynthia Novak
Lola
from Nancy Anderson
Lucky and Hank
from Jane Strnad
Lucy and Katy Powell
from Linda Powell
Luna and Willow Greenspan
from J. R. Greenspan
Margret King
from Donald and June King
Marie and Jim Middelford
from Bob Palmateer
Mark, Laura & Stella Davis
from Kevin Davis
Mary Snow
from Darlene Minor
Mason
from We Grow Companies
Maya Kozlowski
from Vivian Greenberg
Megan Webb
from Charles and Jackie Cottrell
Michaela Mayer
from Ellen McCray-Mayer
Mickey
from Helen Davis
Mugsy Morrison
from Rebecca Morrison
Nancy Pierce
from Jan Hart
Natalie St Louis
from Allison St. Louis
Noni and Dean Hill
from Betty Fields Copeland
Olivia Baez
from Donna Baez
Pam Godwin
from Nancy Siegel
Patricia Snead
from Rebecca Newman
Patricia Oldfield
from Jeffrey Garber
Peggy Cook
from Bradley Carlson
Pele
from Mary Anne Kruger
Quintico VRE Train Station Kittles
from Kim Logue
Ralph Emerson
from Randall and Theresa Walker
Robert Siconolfi
from Jullian and Robert Siconolfi
Rocky (aka Ben)
from Rafael Malocchu
Ronnie Nathanson
from Steve Weinberg
Busty Swarthout
from Katherine Swarthout
Butch Arnold
from Sarah Tufts
Byke Walker
from Randall and Theresa Walker
S. Korean Dogs.
from Lisa Schoenfield
Saddle and Rappels
from Melissa Hopkins
Same Westhers
from Stanley Westhers
Sarah Kehoul
from Robin Clerk
from Brantam Eskib
Shea and Seaver
from Lynndey Curtis
Snead Oconnell
from Snead Oconnell
Stephanie Pollock
from Paula Mattis
Stitch
from Susan Boyd
Sundae & Camden Black
from Diane Vidoni
Sunshine (adopted 4/14)
from Stephen Naylor
Suzie
from Tanya Stemp
Suzie
from Megan Webb
Teddy, Poons, Stuart & Cleo Forbes
from Christina Forbes
The Dogs from Korea
from Susan Sawyer
Tiger & Cleo
from Christine Hogan
Tigger
from Michael Toguchi
Tina Chu
from Kate Julzadeh
Tisha Fitzgerald
from Maria Fitzgerald
Tom & Cindy Schwindle
from Charles and Mary Schwindle
Trice
from Lynn Chinaraj
Tykie Tobin
from Barbara Stone
Verne Morland
from Verne Morland
In Memory of
Abby
from Brian and Barbara Mason
Abby Ramsey
from Charles Ramsey
Agnes Woodcock
from Dan Nichols
Anne Dunn
from Michael Carro
Annie Meadows
from Geoff Mannings
Apollo
from Judi Gillespie
Arline E. Larose
from Vima Gonzalez
Arminda Hola Erbsch
from Mary Ann Fletcher
Bailey Ward
from Andrea Brower
from Diann Hicks Carlson
from Karen Keefler
Banna Powers
from Jim Dorman
from Shana Duncan
Barnes beloved Dog
from 3rd grade teachers of Tucker Elementary
Beagle Maggie Julian
from Randy Julian
Bear Cat
from Wes Rutte
Beau, McGill & Scruffy Gulford
from Linda Gulford
Belke Derin
from Jeanne Montals
Belle McCone
from Denise Schraderwey
Billy The Cat
from Margaret Hodges
Black Lefand Scott
from Leigh Westland
Bobby
from Mary Noel
Bobby, Missy, and Ronin
from Timothy Hays
Continued on next page
In Memory of
Bode Eiswerth from Dove Eiswerth
Bogie from Rebecca de Louise
Bowser McCue from Heather McCue
Baxter Mullen from Robert Williams
Brandon Roth from Donna Krochak
Brian Bradley from Brian and Elizabeth Bradley
Britt Grouby’s Sister from Les and Susan Ravitz
Buffie from MS. Bradley
Buster from Diann Hicks Carlson
Buzz Monnot from Rebecca Monnot
Caley from Deborah Shelton
Callie Grafton from Trudie Williams
Carl Raskin from Laurie Drysdale
Carleton Mabee from Rebecca White
Mary Van Son from Caron Roadcap
Deidre Schexnayder from Deidre Schexnayder
Carta from Page Warren
Cathy Varlas from Tara Zarowski
Chapin Johnson from Katherine Johnson
Charlie from Robert Bovee
Chelsea Wilson from Meagan Notari
Chewy from Kent and Leanne Smiley
Chloe Nolte- Hamly from Paul Kennington
Chloe from Sherri Pappas
Choo and Truffle from Francine Rosenfeld
Christie Raukar from Sheri Moore
Christine Napoli from Susan Tarsek
Christine Napoli from Elaine Ambrosio
Christine Napoli from James Briggs
Christine Napoli from Marianne Byrne
Christine Napoli from Kathleen Harmon
Christine Napoli from Nancy James
Christine Napoli from Jean Kim
Christine Napoli from Graham King
Christine Napoli from William and Florence Leaver
Christine Napoli from Andrew Napoli
Christine Napoli from Francis and Anne Marie Sellitto
Christine Napoli from Jody Tracey
Christine Napoli from Thomas Ambrosio
Christine Napoli from Lauryl Berg
Christine Napoli from Linda Douglas
Christine Napoli from Barbara J. Maier
Christine Napoli from Theodore Nakata
Christine Napoli from Creighton Wilson
Christine Napoli from Chubby, Baby, and Jack
Chubbs from Liesl Swagger
Clyde Bear from Will Daniels
Coliba Levin from Loriana Cipalletti
Couch from Babette Smith
Cuddles from Bertina Carey

Cynthia Keechin from Robert Keechin
Deborah Manarin from Leonard Manarin
Diablo the Cat from Richard Schwartz
Dolly Kerr Solter from Susan Kerr
Don Nicholson from AARP Editorial Media Group
Darinig from Hilarie Grey
Janet Fitzgerald-Wilson from Kathleen Kelly
Larry Lipman from Larry Lipman
Mary Tirths from Nancy Thompson
Patrick Cobb from S. Smith
Sandra Carpenter from Stacey Swartz
Susan Crowley from Susan O’Brien
Doozy from Robert Hartung
Dublin Sheridan from Jillian Swayne
Dudley from William and Barbara Lynch
Dudley Madison from Paul and Barbara Lynch
Dudley Ruiz Fitzgerald from Leah Yoo
Dunstan Porterfield from Phillip Terry
Dusty Kneppe from Pet Care by Kaye Brown
Edna Capps from Edna Capps
Edna Amelia Capps from Edna Capps
Ellen Bankroft from Andrea Levario
Elsie and Emily from Ignacio Pessao
Erik Davis from Irene Davis
Fanny Klein from Mary Ann Collins
Erin from Joyce Giuliani
Lori Neidermeyer from Lori Neidermeyer
General from Adele Shapiro
George Slike from Allegra and Chris Leibengood
Ginny from Mary Fitzpatrick
Michael Royal from Michael Royal
Gordon Compton from Mary Grafton
Gracie from Pamela Corsini
Eliza Davies from Michele Melita
Wm Polek from Wm Polek
Grover Koutsoky from Susan Koutsoky
Hugo from Thomas Koutsoky
Gypsy Robinson from Susan Edenfield
Huggoo from Mohammad Jahan-Parvar
Heide & Hideaway Niedermayer from Jacky Niedermayer
Helen Hurwitt from Mara Hurwitt
Hercules from Diann Hicks Carlson
Herschel Booth from William and Barbara Lynch
Herschel Booth from James and Joan Booth
Holly Berry from Allison Hedges
Honey Bun D’Amico from Maria Fitzgerald
Howard Mitzel from Hillary Michaels
Idgie from Christine Becker
Ike from Jodi Vittori
Jackson Huddleston from Rachael Huddleston
Jackson from Michele Melita
James A. Hunold from Emily Radford
Janie Madden from Aim Krasner
Jasmine from Pauline Becaj
JC from Kevin and Jacqueline Christian
Joe Popaden from Lorinda Brown
Joel Robert Cannon from Adrienne Cannon
Joseph Vinci from Louis Vinci
Josephine Pranik from Sonja Horsman
Josephine Keechin from Robert Keechin
Kabuki Wilkinson from Wendy Wilkinson
Katherine Gagliano from Theodore Nilsson
Kazee from Meghan Ball
Kazi Sok from Sarah Ristau
Keating Carrier from The Ziegler Family
Chuck and Janet Ziegler from Chuck and Janet Ziegler
Kenya from Shanda Georg
Kipling Copley from William and Bethanne Copley
Kitty from Christian and Sherry Hassel
Kobe from Dean Hill
Kosmo Borena from Joseph Carena
L.O. from Melodie DeMulling
Larry Frommer from Bob and Judy Bregman
Lesa from Francis and Susan Mardula
Lori from Daniel and Sandra O’Keefe
Lucy from Carlyle and Jane Ring
Lura from WL and JLT WLT and JLT
Ludmilla from Claudia Hamblen
Lynette from Granville Knox
Mary from Jean Smith
Lenny from Gregory Sullivan
Lentl Snyderman from Selma Zhuravlev
Leisi Leinaweaver from Leslie Leinaweaver
Libby Clemmer from Lorraine Douglas
Sally Nist from Sally Nist
Lily Longtail from John Kupiec
Little Man from Suzanne Eibeze
Lois Walker from Jane Finn
Lucky Tan from John Turner
Lucy from Carolyn Turner
Lucy from Judith and Thomas Vitale

Maggie Katz from Amy Rosenthal
Marvin Metge from Lois and David Stover-Finkelman
Mary McLean from Sylvia Oliver
Matsie Sernoff from James and Joan Waggener
Maurice Silverman from Linda Loy
Max from A. Wainwright
Max from Margaret Hodges
Maxine Flowers from Abbey Flowers
Maxine Swift from Scott Rzeszenewig
Maxx Miller from Leland and Ingrid Miller
May sausage from Margaret Zeigler
Mickey My Bud from Laurie Koronowski
Mika Roesner from James and Joan Waggener
Miss Violet from Samara Ebiner
Mister Miste, Tabitha & Ruble from Julie Greenwood
Mo Byshue from Sandra Byshue
Molly from Charles and Jackie Cottrell
Molly Xia from Taylor Rosado
Molly & Abby Luther from Sharon Forsythe Luther
Molly and Bailey from Frank and Katharine Wood
Mr. Kitty from William and Shirley Binder
Mr. Lawrence J. Frommer from Julian and Maureen Witherell
Muffin Cafolla from Fred and Peg Albert
Nancy Sennwald from Barbara Doornink
NASCAR Baby Leith from Aaron and Nancy Leith
Natasha, Radar, Hunter, Louise & Tut from Jules Kolberg
Nicholas Buffler from Trudie Williams
Nicholas (loline) from Mary Grafton
Nicky from Konstantin Von Schmidt-Pauli
Nikki from Helene Safford
Noah from Nancy Sies
Oliver from Benjamin Stein
Otto Dunston from Jennifer Goode
Paco Kity Brownlee from Sara Brownlee
Patricia Powell from Cynthia Powell
Patricia M. Newhill from Dorothy Lynn Newhill
Patsy Catherine from Penelope Cottrell
Pepper from Joan and Mary Ferrill
Philip Modlin from Brian and Diana Waller
Pippa Marcus from Matthew Dubnansky

Continued on next page
Sarah’s Legacy

Thirteen years ago, a black Labrador named Sarah was hit by a car in Alexandria. She was brought to the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, which is operated by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, with a shattered back leg. Thankfully, Dr. Jerry Hinn, DVM, now an AWLA Board member, heard about Sarah and offered to donate his services to attempt to save her leg. He reconstructed Sarah’s leg with a metal rod.

AWLA staff knew that Sarah would need love and attention to fully recover. They contacted the Cala family, who had been looking to adopt a dog. Bernadette Cala and her three children, ages 10, 12 and 14, met Sarah after her surgery. Cala said that Sarah looked terrible — she had dandruff everywhere and was very skinny. “I was hooked, and we took her home right away,” Cala said. She spent many nights sleeping on the floor with Sarah to comfort her during her painful recovery.

Sarah healed fully and became an important part of the Cala family over the next 13 years. Sarah formed special bonds with each of the children. The youngest daughter, for example, would sneak Sarah into her bed at night after everyone had gone to sleep.

Sadly, Sarah eventually became sick with a tumor that had invaded her jaw, and on March 17, 2015, the Calas brought Sarah to Hayfield Animal Hospital to be euthanized. Dr. Hinn, the same vet who had saved her leg over a decade before, performed the procedure. He shared a box of tissues with the family as Sarah peacefully passed away at the age of 15.

Dr. Hinn worked with AWLA to set up “Sarah’s Fund,” a donation fund to care for animals with severe medical issues. Many animals have followed Sarah’s paw prints and have been healed with donations to this fund. Cala said, “I would encourage others to take on a dog with challenges; you feel their appreciation and loyalty for the care you give.” Donations to Sarah’s Fund can be made by mail or online to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria attention “Sarah’s Fund”.

Thank You!
Shelter Vet’s Patients Are the City’s Ailing Animals

(continued front page 1)

Dr. Angelone said. “His skin had been completely torn off the bones of his back legs.” Months of treatment, especially painful changing of bandages, were involved in order for the skin to grow back. “Moe never complained — he was so stoic and such a great dog,” Dr. Angelone recalled. “No matter what was happening to him, he greeted us every day with a wagging tail.” The new, improved Moe has been adopted.

Dr. Angelone’s passion for veterinary medicine surfaced in kindergarten, when she declared she wanted to become a vet. After earning a doctor of veterinary medicine degree at Iowa State University, she began to focus on shelter medicine. She likes the AWLA’s philosophy: Use the limited resources judiciously with one main goal — getting animals adopted.

That approach worked for Luna, the white-and-black-spotted cat with the shattered leg bone. Amputation of the leg was the only recourse, Dr. Angelone says, and Luna responded beautifully to the surgery, purring her way through exams. After a few weeks’ recovery in foster care, her caretakers have invited her to stay – permanently.

Note: Readers interested in helping Alexandria animals with serious medical conditions can contribute to the AWLA’s “Sarah’s Fund.”

A domestic long-haired cat called Topanga sits patiently as veterinarian Kaci Angelone checks her out.

A beagle named Freda gazes into the eyes of veterinarian Kaci Angelone at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter.

Alexandria’s Walk for Animals

Give them your heart and soles.

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Thank you to everyone who put their soles to good use and gave of their hearts to make our Alexandria’s Walk For Animals a great success. We want to especially thank all the volunteers and sponsors who gave of their time and support to make this event a success.