



**Potter League**  
*Enriching Lives*

# Paw-Print Press *Autumn* 16

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The Robert Potter League for Animals, Inc.  
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## Hiring full-time companionship



The shelter environment, no matter how much we try or what we do, is not a home. The elements of stressors, unfamiliar people and smells and, worst of all loneliness, tend to take a toll on the lives of the animals in our care. These factors manifest themselves differently in each individual animal's behaviors. You may remember Zipper, who found her way to the Potter League because her elderly owner could no longer care for her. Having grown up being this woman's constant companion and a loving cat, we here at the Potter League figured she would be an easy and quick placement into a new home. Enter shelter stressors and that theory went straight out the window. Zipper (or as she was

affectionately known by staff, "Zippy") was not a happy kitty in her small cat condo. Okay let's move her to a larger room; that will do the trick, so we thought! Nope. Zipper's large room did not make much of a difference, and she continued to swat and assert herself onto staff members'

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## Office Foster Cats *(continued from page 1)*

legs, feet and any other appendage she could catch when they entered to visit, feed and clean her area. Rather than label her as aggressive, our astute staff realized her behavior was actually her way of telling us she didn't want us to leave. She was lonely and was looking for the companionship she had grown up with. Zippy was placed in our Office Foster Program with Nancy, our Director of Finance, and after a few days of settling in, she relaxed and her demeanor changed. Nancy's patience, TLC, and companionship allowed Zipper to progress to a state where she was adoptable, and after five months in our care, Zipper found her perfect match!

Zipper, now named Zelda, is lucky enough to live with a person who works from home allowing them to spend lots of time together. Zelda's new person tells us she is more "like a dog-cat, as she greets me at the door when I come home and flops over for belly rubs". She sleeps in bed with her and still loves her head scratches.

Zipper charmed her way into many of our hearts during her tenure here, and she is just one of the many office foster cats that have gone on to enrich the life of their new person.



## Home for the Holidays

Festive decorations, good food, family together, love and laughter...there is nothing quite like being home for the holidays. Our four footed shelter friends would love the chance to be surrounded by love in a cozy home of their own this holiday season too. Please consider adding a pet to your home and adopting one of our deserving shelter animals. Our Home for the Holidays adoption promotions are a great opportunity to find the right fit for you and your family. The best part of adoption is the animals are sure to reciprocate with love and loyalty the whole year round. Be sure to keep an eye out for the adoption promotions we will be running throughout the holiday season. We will also be running a holiday drive for our "Dear Santa Paws" wishlist!

## In-Home Heroes Animal Foster Program

Figuring out what makes some animals tick often takes a little detective work. There are the obvious clues that jump right out at you, but sometimes further investigation is necessary to decipher exactly what may be going on. And because the shelter is an artificial



*Fostering kittens is life affirming and life saving*

environment with many stressors, we cannot always rely on our in-shelter observations to determine how an animal would adapt and behave in a new home. Behavior concerns such as inappropriate elimination, barrier frustration, under socialization, illness, injury, too young for adoption, and fear are just some examples of behaviors that may manifest themselves differently in a home. This is where you come in! We are always in need of foster homes for dogs and cats where people are willing to help us identify what an animal's true in-home behavior may be. Experience first-hand how you can make an immediate and lasting impact on the life of an animal that needs your help. A commitment of 2-4 weeks per animal is usually all that is needed to help gather vital information so an appropriate permanent home can be found. If you're interested in learning more about this program or if you'd like to become one of our In-Home Heroes, please call Anastacia at 401.846.8276 ext. 123 or email her at [AnastaciaS@PotterLeague.org](mailto:AnastaciaS@PotterLeague.org).

# Education and Advocacy is the Key



Since 1982, the Potter League for Animals has been offering humane education programs to the schools and youth organizations of Newport County and neighboring Bristol. The mission of the Humane Education program is to nurture a respectful and compassionate attitude toward domestic animals, wildlife and the environment through a variety of educational programs and creative workshops for all age groups.

The Potter League Humane Education programs provide a variety of opportunities for students to harness their interest and love of animals into a humane education curriculum. These programs are offered free of charge to the public and private schools in Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth, Tiverton and Bristol. The Third-grade series is a six-week program that



focuses on the history of domestic pets, choosing an appropriate pet, animal shelters, pet overpopulation, safety around animals and the local wildlife of Aquidneck Island. Reading, writing and mathematical activities are

integrated into each lesson, aligning the lesson with current state education standards. With the increasing demand on classroom teachers to have students meet state standards, our humane education program is still viewed as an integral part of students' education. The Seventh-grade series is a five-lesson program offered in the middle school science curriculum. These lessons provide students with perspective on human interaction with domestic animals, wildlife and endangered species, including animals in sports and animals in captivity. In addition to the multi-lesson programs, the Potter League Humane Education program offers single-session presentations in PreK through eighth grade. Appropriate reading, writing and mathematical activities are chosen for each of these lessons based on audience age and topic. After-school programs, which run anywhere from four to seven weeks in four separate sessions, support a continuation of the message of respect and compassion for animals conveyed in the classroom lessons through reading, crafts, games and animal interactions. Reading Fur Fun, a program aimed at children who are reluctant readers or are having reading difficulties, pairs a volunteer and their dog with an identified child. The child, who is able to read to the dog without correction or intimidation, experiences the simple joy of reading. This is a hugely successful program, according to the parents and teachers involved.

In addition to school-related programs, Potter League Humane Education promotes the lasting bonds between people and animals through many of our community-based programs. Potter League invites tours of the shelter facility by youth, community and school groups, allowing us to show first-hand how animal shelters help individual pets, and the community as a whole, and incorporates environmental education into the tour by highlighting the green features of the LEED Gold certified building. In the summer, Camp Happy Tails unleashes a child's love for animals and encourages kids to make a difference in animals' lives through games, crafts, and hands-on educational experiences with animals. Our specially designed Girl Scout Workshop patch programs for Daisies, Brownies and Juniors include a hands-on lesson about animal care and pet responsibility, crafts and a chance to



meet the animals at the shelter. Upon completion of the workshop, each Girl Scout is awarded an embroidered Potter League patch. Birthday parties at the shelter are tailored to meet the individual interests of the Guest-of-Honor. The birthday honoree chooses from a menu of animal-themed stories, crafts, lessons and games, ending with hands-on animal interaction with one, or two, of the shelter pets. To address the practical concerns of pet owners, Potter Pet University is held once a month and is free and open to the public. Topics are presented by experts in the fields of training, veterinary medicine, nutrition, animal care and other cutting-edge subjects, followed by a question and answer session. Potter Pet University is advertised on our website, Facebook and in local veterinary offices throughout Aquidneck Island.

## What's All the Fluff About Bunnies?



If you want a fascinating, funny, warm and wonderful companion animal, try a rabbit.

Over the past decade, a rapidly growing number of people have discovered the unique pleasures of living with companion rabbits. What accounts for this increasing popularity? The single most significant factor is probably widespread access to information about rabbits through the Internet and it being more available to more people than ever before. The word is out on rabbits as house pets, making it easy for new owners to get the information and support they need to care for rabbits as house pets. These resources are helping to close the knowledge gap, but there's nothing like interacting with rabbits "up close and personal". This is why every Tuesday at the Potter League we host *Love Some Bunny Tuesdays*, which is an hour block of time where adoptable rabbits can hop around and get plenty of exercise in our training center. It also allows rabbit lovers or potential adopters to come interact and meet these adorable companions. This time out of cages allows the bunnies' personalities to shine.

Rabbits have strikingly distinctive personalities. They can be as playful and silly as puppies or kittens, as independent and fascinating as cats, or as loyal and openly affectionate as dogs. And rumor has it that domestic rabbits are, in their own way, every bit as smart as cats and dogs. Rabbits can

easily learn to respond to their names, as well as to simple words, and they learn to use litterboxes readily.

Rabbits are the perfect pets for those who may not have time for daily walks, but still seek the social quality of a dog-like companion. You may be pleasantly surprised to know that rabbits too provide comic and stress relief. Bunny 500s (think the Indy 500, but with bunnies), binkies (little hopspins and kicks they do when they're happy) and bunny flops (flopping over and playing dead) are just a few of the quirky and amusing habits of bunnies.

Bunnies make great pets for city-dwellers. They happily stay in large cages or puppy pens during the day when you're at work and love to come out to romp around in rabbit-proofed rooms when you're home.

But don't be fooled. Rabbits require more time than just feeding and cleaning. They are intelligent, social and emotional beings that need love, stability, understanding, and companionship. They require mental stimulation, toys, exercise, environmental activity, and social interactions with people, other rabbits and sometimes other household companion animals when it is appropriate.

Perhaps one of the best reasons to adopt a bunny is that there are so many waiting to be adopted. Come on in and meet these amazing creatures and see what all the fluff is about yourself.

## We ♥ Snail Mail



Even though we are extremely web savvy here at the Potter League, there are a few of us who still pine away for an old fashioned piece of mail. The sending of cards and letter writing is a dying art, but some of us feel a glint of nostalgia and remember when people used to send actual cards and photos through the mail. We thrive on getting updates on the animals we have cared for and adopted out. You can always tell when a card and its accompanying photos are circulating throughout the office – you hear swooning and cooing over the photos of adorable furry friends who used to be our residents. The staff has a special place in our lounge where we post these cards and photos. Please keep them coming; they make us feel good about what we do! Of course, we are just as happy to receive updates through social media as well!

## Everyone Needs a Hero!

Interested in helping the shelter? Consider becoming a Corporate Community Humane Hero. Your involvement – at any level – through our corporate underwriting program helps the animals at the Potter League and allows us to continue our life-saving work. Becoming a Corporate Community Humane Hero is a great way to demonstrate your corporate compassion to employees, clients and the community. With many opportunities to get involved in both our animal welfare and community programs, it's easy to give back, feel good, and spotlight your philanthropic contribution. To view our underwriting packages and benefits, visit [www.PotterLeague.org/WaysToGive](http://www.PotterLeague.org/WaysToGive) or contact Erin O'Gara Dollard at [ErinD@PotterLeague.org](mailto:ErinD@PotterLeague.org) or call 846.0592 ext. 116.

# We Welcome Eight New Members to The Board of Directors

On October 18, 2016 the Potter League Board of Directors elected and welcomed eight (8) new individuals to join the Board of Directors. New officers were elected and long-time board members retired at the end of their term limits. We are excited to announce our changes for the important Board of Director positions for those who serve as ambassadors in the community and who provide guidance, fundraising and financial stability, legal and tax compliance, governance and stewardship for the Potter League. Please join us in welcoming: **Pat Heller, Betsy Leslie, Dick Brickley, Jean Ingraham, Ann Mencoﬀ, Noelle Shiland, Elena Kissel, and Barbara Odegaard.**

Leilani Brenner & Mike Grandchamp were also elected for a second term on the Potter League Board of Directors.

We said goodbye to four dedicated individuals who retired from the Board after completing their second term, as required by our by-laws: Ellen Ford, Charlene Karns, Howie Naugle, & Eric Radler. These individuals have been remarkable stewards of the public trust during their six years of service at the Potter League. They have responsibly planned and managed our resources and guaranteed they were used eﬃciently for the Potter League to fulfill its mission to the animals and people of Newport County. Ellen, Charlene, Howie and Eric will be missed.

New officers for the Board of Directors were also approved. Mary Edwards continues as President, with Joan Johnson-Freese (Vice-President), Leilani Brenner (Secretary) and David Thalmann (Treasurer) joining Mary to lead the governance of the Potter League.

## Communities Come Together for Cats



Flea infested, underweight, under-socialized, dehydrated, parasitic, and anemic are just some of the issues we come across when dealing with a hoarding situation. And sadly, the Potter League is no stranger to taking in cats from these horrific conditions. This past summer we got a call asking animal welfare organizations across the state to aid in a warehouse hoarding cat situation with over 70+ cats in Cranston, RI. Without hesitation, the answer was yes.

Overcoming the medical issues was just one hurdle, but many cats faced behavioral challenges because they were forced to grow up in a very different environment than the one

that we were preparing them for. While many ended up being well socialized with other cats, they were not used to people or being touched and handled. A few adjusted immediately, but many did not want to come out of hiding, so staff got to work gaining their trust through treats. For some, being with other cats increased their confidence, but for others, a lack of competition helped them to come out of their shells. Over time each cat slowly learned to tolerate and then enjoy their time with people and homes were found with understanding, patient adopters.

Joy is the only one of the warehouse hoarding cats left at our shelter. Slowly she has discovered that she enjoys spending time with people and actually likes to rub on people and be pet down her back. However, reaching over her or touching her head still scares her, and Joy lets us know by swatting without nails. Joy LOVES other cats so she is now a "two-for-one" adoption with her buddy Felix who is a good wrestle-mania playmate to her and is helping her to adjust to life with humans.

## Save the Date

### Artisan Craft Fair

Saturday, December 10

### LoveBash for the Animals

Friday, March 24, 2017

at Atlantic Resort Newport

### Walk for the Animals

Sunday June 4, 2017

### Potter Pet University

Wednesday, January 11

Wednesday, February 8

Wednesday, March 8

Wednesday, April 12

Wednesday, May 17

Save the date for our new spring fundraiser – **LoveBash for Animals!** It is happening on Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at the Atlantic Resort Newport in Middletown, Rhode Island. This new event replaces our well-known Have A Heart Cocktail Party with a new date, new venue and a new vibe. We anticipate this will be one of Newport County’s must-attend fundraisers for 2017. Join animal lovers like yourself and party with the animals in mind! All money raised supports the animals in our care, and the programs and services of the shelter. For underwriting opportunities, please contact Susan Ryan at 401.846.0592 ext. 125 or [SusanR@potterleague.org](mailto:SusanR@potterleague.org)

# A Purrfectly Put Together Program



Every cat is an individual with their own needs and ways of dealing with the stress of being in a shelter. While we provide the best care we can, shelter cats have very little choice regarding what happens to them day to day. They can't seek out affection on their own terms – instead they are “socialized” by well-meaning volunteers who enter their space. While some cats love any attention they can get, others find the variety of people stressful and overwhelming.

No cat showed this so clearly as Kiki, a 14 year-old female. When Kiki arrived at the shelter, she was sweet and friendly, but as she spent time waiting for a home on the adoption floor, she became more standoffish until one day she scratched a young volunteer. Staff decided Kiki needed a break and sent her to a foster home where she became her old, sweet self. After some time, she returned to the shelter and back out onto the adoption floor she went – and again as the days passed, Kiki stopped asking for attention. However, realizing the trend, staff decided to limit the number of volunteers who could spend time with Kiki. With only staff and our Kneady Cat Team visiting her, Kiki's stress went down and her friendliness increased until she was adopted after nearly eight months in our care.

Kiki's story showed us how important it is to think of each cat as an individual and imagine what the shelter experience is like for them. To help our cats get the most from their time with volunteers, we have started a “Leveling Program”, where each cat receives a level – either 1, 2, or Kneady Cat. A level 1 cat is a social butterfly who wants attention from anyone and everyone. Level 2 cats might be a bit more stressed, shy, or just finicky about how they are pet or played with. Kneady Cats prefer to interact with a small group of people who are skilled in cat behavior. These cats are usually on their own behavior plans to help them learn to deal with fearfulness or overstimulation in the shelter.

After spending some time working with Level 1 cats, our volunteers can attend a training session on cat behavior and body language to become “Level 2 Socializers” and from there, if they wish, they can attend additional training

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and shadowing to work towards Kneady Cat Certification. This program has benefits for everyone involved. The cats are happier because they get attention in the manner and amount that they want and the volunteers have new levels of knowledge to strive for. In addition, there have been no scratched or bitten volunteers since the program started!

## Making a difference while at work

### Donate through your Workplace Giving Campaign

*For 86 years, the Potter League has made a difference in the lives of animals. Your contribution will provide quality care to thousands of homeless animals and funding for programs that offer people and animals a more humane future.*

If you are a federal or state government employee or participate in a United Way or workplace giving campaign, then designating the Potter League to receive your workplace contributions is another important way to help the animals. To donate through your Workplace Giving Program, please follow these procedures:



#### United Way Campaign:

Write our agency name, Potter League for Animals, in the appropriate place on the United Way pledge form.



#### Rhode Island & Southeastern Massachusetts Combined Federal Campaign (CFC):

Give online via CFC–Employee Express, CFC Nexus or MyPay, or you can complete a paper pledge form provided by CFC. Please make sure to note our **five digit code #37967**.



#### State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA):

Write the Potter League's **four digit code #3450** on the pledge form.

For more information on workplace giving, call Susan at 401.846.0592 ext 125 or email [SusanR@PotterLeague.org](mailto:SusanR@PotterLeague.org).

The Potter League proudly feeds Hill's Science Diet to all the cats and dogs in our care. Hill's Pet Nutrition has a mission to help enrich and lengthen the special relationships between people and their pets. Learn more about Science Diet® and Prescription Diet® pet foods at [HillsPet.com](http://HillsPet.com).

