



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Hope” Gets a Home

Dogs Removed from Suspected Hoarding Situation Getting Care, Finding Homes

GRAND RAPIDS – When Malachi, a twelve year old terrier mix, was taken by Kent County Animal Control from a suspected hoarding situation in Grand Rapids this summer, she was a mess. She hadn’t been groomed in a while, and was suffering from grade four dental issues (on a scale of 1-to-4, with four being the worst). Most of the 37 dogs taken that day had a host of medical, dental and behavioral issues, many had been stored in travel crates for long periods of time, and some were sitting in their own waste.

The stories about these 37 dogs tugged at the heartstrings of the veterinary community in West Michigan. “I put out a call for vets to ‘adopt’ a dog, to provide care,” said Dr. Laurie Wright, Kent County Animal Shelter Veterinarian. “Within minutes, I had veterinarians offering to care for these struggling pets. They wanted to make a difference in the lives of these dogs.” As of the writing of this release, eleven veterinarians have provided free care or pledged care:

Great Lakes Hospital for Animals - Belmont	Animal Medical Center of Wyoming
Kelly’s Animal Hospital - Walker	Eastown Veterinary Clinic of Grand Rapids
Weisner, Innis & Schoen, PC of Grand Rapids	Westwood Hills Animal Hospital – Grand Rapids
Allendale Animal Hospital	Wyoming Animal Hospital
Safe Harbor Veterinary -Cascade	Animal Hospital of Kentwood
Northland Veterinary Hospital - Rockford	

Tracy Brandt of Green Paws, Unlimited has groomed several of the dogs already free of charge, and has several more on her schedule. Alissa Elderkin, a Licensed Veterinary Technician, has provided massage therapy for dogs who have mobility issues. An anonymous donor is sponsoring several adoptions by paying the fees for three unsuspecting adopters.

Malachi spent eight hours in the care of Dr. John Drobish of Great Lakes Hospital for Animals in Belmont. She required 15 teeth to be removed. The tab would have been over \$2200; Dr. Drobish and his team donated the services free of charge, and immediately agreed to help another dog. While at Great Lakes, a woman named Kelly saw Malachi and texted pictures to her mom, Linda and sister, Tammy. “We got in the car Thursday morning and went straight to the shelter,” Linda says. “We knew we could give her hope for a better home, for a better life. We called her “Hope” because she has *hope* now. I hope more people will consider adopting an older dog; they bring such joy.”

(more)

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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Another senior pet, Mr. Dog, received \$1400 of dental care at Eastown Veterinary Clinic. Harmony's dental work was over \$600. And the list goes on. "If these dogs were individually being treated at cost, our tab would be over \$10,000 at this point, not to mention all of the costs associated with boarding, vaccinating and caring for the dogs since June," says Kent County Animal Shelter Supervisor Carly Luttmann. "We've received not only the generosity of area veterinarians, groomers and their staffs, but also from the general public, including a recent gift of \$1200 worth of food and toys. We are so incredibly fortunate to have such a caring community."

So far, eight dogs have been adopted, two transferred (Bellowood Rescue and Keeshond Lovers United). Seven are scheduled to be transferred; two will go to Vicky's Pet Connection (including one with heartworms) and the other five to breed-specific rescues. Seven are currently up for adoption, and thirteen are in the process of moving from KCAS on-hold status to adoption kennels as they receive dental and medical treatment.

The application to adopt from the Kent County Animal Shelter can be found at www.accesskent.com/KCAS. Dog adoption fees are only \$62, due to generous funding from the Bissell Pet Foundation. Spay/neuter and all age appropriate vaccinations are included in the adoption price and adopters are counseled on making an appointment at their personal veterinarian 2-3 weeks after adoption for a check-up and any needed vaccine boosters.

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