

71 Oglethorpe St., NW
Washington, DC 20011
202.726.2556

WARL's Medical Center

At the Cutting Edge of a Demanding Field

At rounds in the Medical Center one morning, Medical Director Dr. Janet Rosen put it frankly and succinctly. "We are not a normal animal hospital. There is an ocean of animals out there who need us."

In fact, the need can be overwhelming. Shelter animals continually arrive with injuries and illnesses that need immediate attention while a steady flow of desperate people with sick animals (but little or no money) flood the telephone lines. Sometimes they just show up at the door.

"It's constant activity, all day long," according to technician Geraldine Lee, "But somehow we manage to get everything done."

After rounds that same morning, Dr. Rosen is trying to get a handle on the day's schedule. There are many public appointments booked and many shelter animals scheduled for spaying or neutering. "Who is going home? Who needs to be neutered today?" she asks,

and then adds, "Let's start with the neuters."

Then it's off to see if Jackson, a mixed

rottweiler recovering in the parvovirus ward, is ready to go home. (He's not.) Next she checks on the cats in the ringworm ward. A hand-lettered sign on the door there reads, "RINGWORMVILLE, POPULATION 5 AND GROWING."

The fact that there are both parvovirus and ringworm wards at WARL's Medical Center

(continued on page 4)



WARL's Year of the Cat

In the big animal welfare picture, dogs have it bad, but cats have it worse. For example, District shelters take in almost two cats for every dog they admit, and while feral dogs are largely a thing of the past, feral cats are still everywhere.

The reasons for this discrepancy are many. For one thing, cats breed more quickly than dogs. A female cat can produce three litters in a year, and those kittens can begin producing litters when they reach six months of age.

Another factor—and one that is perhaps more significant—is that people are frequently less committed to their cats than they are to their dogs. At animal shelters it's not uncommon for a person to bring a cat in for adoption claiming the cat he has had for many years is not really his. In his mind, the cat is still a stray or still belongs to the person

who abandoned him. So cats are frequently caught in an "easy come, easy go" cycle.

Whatever the reason, more cats than dogs eke out a living on the streets, face euthanasia in shelters, and are being passed from home to home.

But there are signs of hope: statistics show that there are now more cats in American homes than dogs (88.3 million felines vs. 74.8 million canines according to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association). In urban areas such as Washington, D.C., the gap between cats and dogs is no doubt even

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For more information on adoption, education, medical services, or other programs we offer, please call us at 202.726.2556 or visit us at www.warl.org

HOURS

Closed Monday

Tuesday – Friday:
11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday:
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.



A Letter from the Departing Executive Director



Dear Friends:

The world can be a cruel place—especially for animals. So many are lost; so many lack the basics for life; so many suffer in silence in every corner of our planet.

But I've learned that when we take on the mantle of compassion, there is no cry that goes unheard, no wound that can't be healed, no animal who is beyond hope of rescue.

I believe in the immense power of compassion. It is a power that has the miraculous quality of getting stronger the more it is expressed.

For the past six and half years, I have led a dedicated team of truly caring people at The Washington Animal Rescue League. Driven by compassion, we created the Love Fund and the ShARE (Shelter Animal Relief Effort) program to save animals who were sick, injured, or faced with euthanasia at over-crowded shelters. We came to the aid of Michael Vick's pitbulls, animals lost in the Katrina disaster, neglected dogs and cats in dire animal hoarding cases, and dogs seized from massive puppy mill closures. We led the world in creating a new type of animal rehabilitation facility, one that is designed from the animals' point of view to promote healing in all aspects of their lives. That, in turn, led to the unprecedented increase in adoptions that we are currently witnessing.

I have a firm belief that the same power of compassion will propel WARL into new groundbreaking endeavors for the benefit of animals.

However, the time has come for me to respond to the widespread needs of animals in a new way. I have accepted a position as senior director of Disaster Services at the Humane Society of the United States. In accepting this new responsibility, I seek to employ the WARL model to bring comfort and hope to suffering animals in all corners of our nation.

I leave The Washington Animal Rescue League in the hands of a truly impressive team of devoted, compassionate people who will continue its life-saving work. I urge you to support them generously; they are among the very best in the animal rescue field.

And as always, I need to say that I am deeply grateful for all of your support. We have accomplished so much together: finding the lost, comforting the abandoned, binding wounds, and building families.

To be given the gift of compassion and tasked with the call to save animals is, in the end, a great privilege. Thank you for your company in this amazing work

For the animals,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scotlund Haisley". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a faint background image of a dog's face.

Scotlund Haisley

A Letter from the Interim Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Over the four years that I've served as The Washington Animal Rescue League's medical director, I've developed a huge love for this unique place and a deep respect for the critical work we do. I consider it a great honor to be asked to take over as interim executive director, a role that, by virtue of the importance of our mission, fills me with both excitement and appreciation.

I expect that a great deal of my time and energy will be spent upholding and preserving the progressive programs and high standards for which The Washington Animal Rescue League is rightfully well known. I want to assure all of our friends and supporters that the legacy created by Scotlund Haisley will be honored and upheld. At the same time, I'm very excited about exploring areas which we only now have the time and resources to pursue.

For one, I believe The Washington Animal Rescue League should become our nation's model for animal sheltering. Our unique facility promotes the healing and rehabilitation of traumatized animals unlike any other on the planet. Our medical center could ably serve as a mentor hospital for both private animal facilities and other shelter medicine programs. And our community outreach programs are second to none. The fact that WARL is located in the nation's capital could greatly facilitate the promotion of WARL's approach to animal welfare.

I also believe an opportunity exists for the league to make a bigger contribution to the cause of animal care and protection in our own community. Key to this would be forging active partnerships with the many other animal shelters in the Washington metropolitan region. With its state-of-the-art animal hospital and its unique and pioneering shelter, WARL has a lot to offer our colleagues in the area. We all stand to benefit from such collaboration, but none more than the animals.

Finally, I feel that the league needs a stronger financial foundation to support our essential work. The shelter renovations have been completed, but they are not yet fully paid for. Our programs, such as those providing affordable and accessible veterinary care to low-income pet guardians and those that provide relief to over-crowded animal control agencies, are ambitious. This, in turn, makes them very expensive. Our ability to carry on and further the League's work in the future depends on our efforts to secure our financial stability today.

I would like to thank all the members of WARL's Board of Directors, all of our staff and volunteers, and all of our energetic and devoted supporters for their optimism about our future and their support of this wonderful, healing place. I am excited to ask for your continued and generous support and assistance as we open a new year and a new chapter in The Washington Animal Rescue League's remarkable history.



Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Weitzman".

Gary Weitzman, DVM, MPH
Interim Executive Director

Medical Center cont. from page 1

illustrates just how unusual the hospital is. Private practices see few of those cases; at WARL they are a staple and these wards are almost always full. Other cases that are rare in private clinics but common at WARL include feline distemper, abuse victims, and heartworm disease.

This is not to say that the center is not called upon to do the things that private veterinarians do as well. "Any veterinarian who becomes involved with shelter medicine will be practicing the medicine he or she went to veterinary school to learn," notes Gary Weitzman, who was WARL's medical director for four years before becoming the league's interim executive director.

In fact, several veterinary specialists regularly come to WARL as volunteers to help. The truth is that the animals at WARL's Medical Center, whether shelter animals or those with low-income guardians, challenge the staff with every imaginable sort of injury or disease. From gunshot wounds to tooth decay, they see it all. And that is what makes shelter medicine such a demanding field.

It also may explain why shelter medicine is a growing field. Some veterinary schools now offer special training

in this area, and topics in shelter medicine appear with greater frequency in veterinary journals and conference offerings.

Being one of the oldest and most comprehensive shelter-based hospitals, WARL's Medical Center has naturally become one of the country's foremost teaching hospitals. Each year the center attracts dozens of veterinary student interns, who come from as far away as California and even abroad to study under WARL's veterinarians. The center provided the keynote speakers and organized the entire shelter medicine track at the American Veterinary Medicine Association's 2007 conference; it was featured in *Vet Forum* magazine's premier article on shelter medicine; and it was the subject of *Vet Learning's* training film on the same topic.

"The most fundamental thing we teach is that there is a world of hurting animals out there," Dr. Rosen summarizes. "But if you like to keep busy, can be creative with your time and resources, and have a broad knowledge of veterinary medicine, then you can really do a world of good."

Year of the Cat cont. from page 1

higher. This should help, and in fact, cat adoptions from local shelters generally outstrip dog adoptions, sometimes by as much as two to one.

As things stand, WARL adopters run counter to the trend at other local shelters; they favor dogs over cats by a margin of 8 to 3. It may be that we are a victim of our own success. People tell us that they adopt elsewhere because the WARL cats appear to be living pretty well. It's true that we certainly do whatever we can to make their stay here comfortable, but a shelter can never be the home that every cat ultimately needs and deserves. What's more, each WARL cat adoption opens up a place

for another cat in a precarious position. The majority of our cats come from shelters that are forced to euthanize.

This year WARL plans to make a serious push to increase cat

adoptions. We are increasing publicity and advertising for cat adoptions, sponsoring more off-site cat adoption events, and making greater use of the Silver Whiskers, Golden Years Club (see box to the right).

In addition, cat adoption fees have been lowered to \$65, which still includes spaying or neutering, all standard vaccinations, and any other medical care the cat has undergone.

Incentives and increased publicity will certainly help, but the best adoption promotion has always been word of mouth. So WARL is asking all its supporters to encourage their friends and families to adopt our cats. There is no shortage of cats who desperately need the sort of care we provide and a chance to find a permanent, loving home. Until that changes, cats need all the friends they can get.

The Silver Whiskers, Golden Years Club

Created as a fund to encourage the adoption of older and special needs cats, SWGY pays the adoption fee for select cats and provides anyone who adopts them with nearly everything their new cat will need—food bowls, litter box, scratching pad, cat bed, etc.



Tails of Hope!

Life on the Streets Nearly Took Bella's Life

On a ShARE visit to Philadelphia's animal shelter, a WARL employee ducked into the cat room looking for felines who were badly in need of a break. It didn't take her long to find one.



Bella was pressed into the back corner of her cage, where she sat curled up into a ball of misery. Her hair was clumped in dirty mats; her nose was a raw, open sore; and she was shivering uncontrollably, either from fear or cold. The cat weighed almost nothing. She

was too weak to stand, crawling with fleas, and her ears were packed with mites.

By that evening, Bella was in WARL's Medical Center. The staff shaved her matted fur and got rid of the fleas and mites. A veterinarian set up a special feeding routine for her, and Bella began to gain weight and strength. The initial assessment that the cat was about five months old turned out to be wrong. Bella was about a year old, but her emaciated condition made her appear much younger.

After a few weeks, Bella was healthy enough to be moved into the adoption area. She looked much better, but she continued to shiver. The shivering, as well her angelic personality, endeared her to the volunteers. They put a sweater on her and monitored her recovery closely.



In the end, one of these volunteers took Bella home, and there she blossomed into a stately, radiantly healthy cat. You'd never know she was the same pathetic cat who was rescued from the shelter in Philadelphia.

Brandy Was Abandoned, Then Rescued Twice

When Brandy's family moved out of their Maryland home, they took all their things. But they left their four-year-old shepherd/akita mix behind. They just closed the door, and there was Brandy, all alone in an absolutely empty house.

Were it not for a 10-year-old girl who lived next



door, Brandy would have died, abandoned and forgotten in that house. The girl knew the dog, heard her plaintive barking for help, and went to investigate. Fortunately, the house was unlocked and the girl was able to give Brandy food and water. That was in August of last year.



The girl's mother would not let her bring the dog home, but for the next four months the girl came every day to care for Brandy and take her for a walk. When the weather turned cold in December, the girl knew that Brandy needed more than she could give her. She had her mother call animal control, and the dog ended up in a shelter.

Brandy is now at WARL, where she successfully underwent treatment for heartworms. Now this gentle, patient, and dignified 56-pounder is waiting to meet the people who will give her her next—and final—home.

WARL Takes in 105 Dogs Seized from a Puppy Mill

On November 8, two WARL employees went to Hillsville, Virginia to assist in the rescue of 1,100 dogs seized from a puppy mill there. WARL took a total of 105 of these dogs; 61 came back to WARL directly, while 9 nursing mothers and 35 puppies (some as young as a day old) were placed in foster care with WARL volunteers. Among the breeds represented were Jack Russell Terriers, Shih Tzus, Lhasa Apsos, and Bichon Frises.



Over the next few days, the WARL Medical Center cleared its schedule so that each of the dogs could be thoroughly examined, treated and given an individual treatment plan. Among the problems they found were respiratory infections, parasites, dental disease, severe matting, eye maladies, and malnourishment.

Next, two professional groomers volunteered to give the dogs much needed make-over's.

The process of sorting through the hundreds of adoption applications these dogs received required long days and considerable overtime from the adoptions staff, but by the year's end, all but a few of the 105 dogs were in good homes. The adoptions staff even organized special seminars for the adopters of these dogs to help them work through typical problems that puppy mill dogs have.

The WARL Street Journal



Elizabeth Kiernan, 1917-2007

Elizabeth Simpson Kiernan, who served as WARL's president from the late 1960s to the early 1990s, died on December 26, 2007. During her 20-plus-year tenure as head of WARL's board of directors, she oversaw—among other things—the purchase of the land where WARL is currently located and the construction of the first shelter on it. She and her husband, Dr. Paul C. Kiernan, frequently took in WARL dogs who were not adopted. Her legacy lives on in the league's high standards for animal care, which were always a priority for her.

2007: A Banner Year for WARL Adoptions

A total of 1,007 WARL dogs and cats were placed into permanent, loving homes last year. This represents an all-time record for WARL. At the beginning of the year, WARL staff had expressed the hope that they would find new homes for 1,000 animals in 2007. They ended up surpassing their own informal goal by 107. The attractive and welcoming new facility is often credited with the increase, though sweeping improvements in the adoptions process also contributed significantly.

Thrift Shop Benefits WARL's Animals

Proceeds from the sale of high-end, second-hand items at the Life4Animals Thrift Shop (15938 Luanne

Drive in Gaithersburg, Maryland, 301-963-1444) now benefit WARL. The shop sells and accepts tax-deductible donations of gently used clothes, jewelry, collectibles, electronics, and other items. A coupon worth 10% off purchases can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Michael Vick's Pit Bulls at WARL

When the U.S. government was concerned about the well-being of some of the pit bulls confiscated from the kennels of former Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick, they contacted WARL and asked for assistance caring for the dogs until the conclusion of Vick's dog-fighting trial. WARL cared for eleven of these dogs from October 29 until January 2. During that time, WARL spayed or neutered the dogs, treated them for a variety of illnesses and dental problems, and developed individualized enrichment and socialization plans for each of them. At the end of their stay, all eleven dogs went to pit bull rescue groups or animal sanctuaries per arrangements made by a court appointed guardian. By the time they left, the dogs were clearly much healthier, happier, and better socialized.

Online Purchases Save Lives

Buying something online? You can start by going to our Web site, www.warl.org, and look for the "Other Ways To Donate" page. From there, you'll find a link to Amazon.com and GoodShop.com (for Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, PetSmart, Lands' End, and lots more). With GoodShop, you can put "WARL" in the spot for your designated charity, and our animals will receive a nice donation. If you go to Amazon.com from our site, you don't have to do any additional designating to have your purchase benefit the animals.

Vaccination Clinic

On the last Saturday of each month, WARL's Medical Center holds a low-cost vaccination and microchip clinic for all dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens. Between 9:30 a.m. and noon, guardians can purchase rabies, canine distemper/parvovirus, feline distemper, feline leukemia, and canine bordetella vaccinations for \$10 each. Microchips are \$25, and multi-dose packages of flea and tick preventative cost between \$40 and \$45 depending on the size of the animal. No appointments are necessary for these special clinics.



How to Give Stock to The Washington Animal Rescue League

Did you know that you can make a gift of stock directly to the league at any time of year? The instructions are simple. Please have your bank or brokerage firm deliver the shares to the following account:

Ferris Baker Watts (FBW)
DTC Participant #039
Broker / Dealer ID Clearing #00039
FINS #005165
Account #86402302
You, your bank, or brokerage

firm should notify the league when the transaction has been completed. Stock shares will be sold the day they are received and you will benefit from a tax deduction in the full amount of the sale.

Rescuers Keep Crucial Programs Going

A significant portion of the financial resources needed to carry on the league's life-saving work is provided by the Rescuers (those who make donations of \$500 or more).

We depend on their generosity to rescue animals from over-burdened shelters, provide them with the highest level of care, treat their injuries and illnesses, and find them the permanent, loving homes they deserve.

The Rescuers enable our Medical Center to treat the well loved pets of low-income guardians, who would otherwise have no choice

but to surrender their animals for euthanasia.

And without the gracious support of the rescuers, we would be unable to operate our one-of-a-kind shelter, which is uniquely designed from the animals' point of view to promote their healing and enhance their well-being as they recover from past traumas.

We would like to invite you to join this circle of compassionate individuals, who are dedicated to the rewarding work of rescuing the lost, forgotten, and abandoned.

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Your continued support is appreciated!



This reflects our current record of donations made since our last issue of Animal Report. Capital campaign gifts will be reported in a future issue. We apologize for any omissions or misspellings. Please bring corrections to our attention by calling 202-726-2556, ext. 217.



How You Can Help the Animals

Your Support is Always Appreciated

We are a people-driven organization, so whether your gift is in the form of your time, a check, or even those old blankets and towels, it will make a difference in the lives of countless animals in the Washington area and beyond.

Here's how you can help:

ON-LINE at www.warl.org, to make a secure credit card donation or to see our current wish list of the goods and services we need.

PHONE 202-723-0038 to make a ViSA, MasterCard or American Express credit card donation.

MAIL your gift to The Washington Animal Rescue League, 71 Oglethorpe Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

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TO VOLUNTEER please call 202-726-2556, ext. 216 for more information.

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WARL Receives Largest Foundation Grant in its History

In late December, The Washington Animal Rescue League received the largest foundation grant since it's founding in 1914. The Freed Foundation pledged \$1,000,000 to support the League's Medical Center, which serves the Washington metro area and provides veterinary services to low-income animal guardians. In honor of the gift, the hospital will now be named the Freed Medical Center.

The Freed Foundation gift is a result of a collaborative effort between WARL president Gigi Castleman, WARL staff, and foundation representatives.

The Freed Foundation's recent focus has included animal welfare and wildlife conservation support on a national basis. Through this generous gift, the foundation has recognized WARL's medical center and shelter as a national model.

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