

Have The Courage

Campaign encourages horse owners to make a difficult but kind decision before winter



Lynsay with her beloved horse Gooseberry in 1998

Lynsay was still in her teens when Gooseberry came into her life. The gelding was not quite three years old and needed quite a bit of training when Lynsay welcomed him into her world. And while she was teaching him, Goose (as she calls him) was doing the same for her.

“They are amazing. Man they teach you things,” Lynsay says of animals. “Responsibility, you need money to pay for things. Hard work, animals need a lot of care.”

The hard work paid off and one day, Lynsay says, the pair just clicked, “We were a good little team,” she adds. “We would do everything together.”

Gooseberry ended up spending 24 years in Lynsay’s family. In that time Lynsay graduated from university, got married and had children. Over the last few years, however, she could see Goose was showing his age. Lynsay knew he wouldn’t do well enduring another Alberta winter.

“It’s hard on those horses,” explains Lynsay. “The risk of coming out and finding your horse down and not able to get up; that’s a panic. That’s a horrible situation to be in and I really wish no one would be in that situation.”

Lynsay understood it was time. To delay this heartbreaking decision was to risk Goose’s welfare and potentially allow him to suffer, but Lynsay **had the courage**. Lynsay chose to end his life peacefully and to ensure he did not suffer. Gooseberry was euthanized this past summer.

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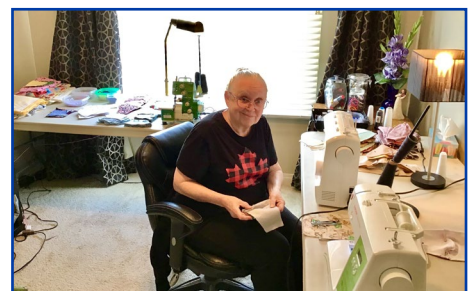
Making Masks, Helping Animals

When the pandemic hit, Jean Henderson could not sit still

The pandemic has affected us all in different ways and for Jean Henderson, it has prevented her from fulfilling her prolific volunteer opportunities. However, not even a world-wide health crisis could prevent Jean from using her time to help others.

Jean started making masks in her home; her way of helping prevent the spread of the virus. She also wanted her efforts to help a charity, and she chose to donate all proceeds to the Alberta SPCA.

Jean had small expectations for her campaign. She hoped to make a few masks, raise a little money, and help out a charity. It was nice idea but neither Jean or our organization could have predicted how this goodwill effort would take off.



...continued on p. 3

FROM OUR LEGAL FILES

Animal Distress Cases Victim of COVID-19

Normally, in this part of our newsletter, we detail the outcomes of our legal files from the past four to six months. However, we don't have a lot to report for this edition and unfortunately, COVID-19 plays a significant role.

At least five cases we had before the courts have been stayed or dismissed by the Crown due to pandemic-related reasons. The courts are normally backlogged but the emergence of COVID-19 has exacerbated that. Finding the time and staff to prosecute cases right now is very challenging. As a result, many cases that have a lower priority are being removed from the case load, including charges laid by the Alberta SPCA. It's another disappointing result from the pandemic.

Despite the challenges, we can still point to successful outcomes in these files. Our priority in all investigations is the animals and relieving their distress, and we have been able to help the animals connected to these files. We seized 14 horses and three dogs from the five cases, and brought all animals back to health before rehoming them to live their best lives. On top of that, several horses were pregnant when we seized them and had foals while in our care. These foals, along with their mothers, have been given the opportunity to live healthy lives because they were placed with loving families.

In a perfect world we would like to see all of our legal cases resolved through the courts, but we know the world is not perfect right now. We continue to investigate our files fully and with the same vigour, and we lay charges when warranted (13 cases have resulted in charges in 2020). If those charges are eventually set aside by the courts due to circumstances beyond our control, we take solace knowing that the animals received our help, and their living conditions improved, regardless of the legal outcome.

AnimalKind is published by the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Alberta SPCA)

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To find out more about the work we do for animals across Alberta, visit our website at: albertaspca.org.

The mission of the Alberta SPCA is to protect, promote and enhance the well-being of animals in Alberta.

Not all the opinions expressed in AnimalKind are necessarily those of the Alberta SPCA.

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Email: info@albertaspca.org



Horses seized during the pandemic

EHS Employee Found Not Guilty of Causing Distress

In September of this year the case involving charges against an Edmonton Humane Society employee came to a conclusion more than two years after the Alberta SPCA began an investigation. As a quick reminder, charges were laid after three cats were forgotten in a transport vehicle for over three weeks after being brought to Edmonton from Grande Prairie in the spring of 2018. Thankfully, the cats survived the ordeal.

A trial was held earlier this year and last month the judge found the employee not guilty of causing animals to be in distress under the *Animal Protection Act*. We respect the court's decision. While the decision means no single person was ultimately declared legally responsible for the incident, we do know the public attention on the case resulted in changes to policy and procedures that will help prevent a similar situation from arising again.

To report animals in distress outside of
Edmonton and Calgary, call: 1-800-455-9003

Common Occurrence

Have The Courage ...cont'd from front page.

Alberta SPCA Peace Officers attend situations throughout the fall and winter where they see senior horses struggling. Elder horses need extra care and attention to meet their dietary and health needs, and to keep them warm during Alberta's sometimes extreme winter conditions. Even still, many suffer through the cold months despite their owner's best efforts.

"Owners may have to make that hard decision when they consider whether the horse can make it through the winter," says Alberta SPCA Peace Officer Stuart Dodds.

The Alberta SPCA encourages owners to **have the courage** to make difficult but responsible decisions to euthanize animals before they come to be in distress. While it may be difficult to say goodbye to an equine who has been a part of your family for decades, that attachment should not prevent owners from making a decision that is appropriate for the animal.

"Aged horses often have teeth problems and they're not utilizing the food properly," adds Peace Officer Dodds. "And so you have to put so much more in to them just to maintain that condition."

Lynsay admits she struggled to know when the right time was to put Gooseberry down, but she tried to take a practical view. She says, "If I can't maintain you, I have to let you go."

Another Difficult Decision

Unfortunately, Lynsay has another difficult decision on the horizon. Her 17-year-old mare, Aspen, has a lame leg following an injury, and she knows her girl will struggle this winter. So, before the snow flies, Lynsay says, "We're going to let her go to greener pastures because I don't want to come out when she's struggling in the winter, or the ice. I need to know that she's safe."

And even though Aspen is not a senior horse, her health challenges are significant. Lynsay is at peace with her decision, acknowledging it comes from a place of kindness.

"That truly is the best thing we can give back to them is let them leave earth with grace and dignity."



Aspen and Lynsay

Factors to consider when trying to choose the right time to euthanize an animal include;

- Are they losing weight?
- Are they tired and lethargic?
- Are they in pain?
- Are they enjoying life?

For more tools to help make end-of-life decisions for horses, visit our website at albertaspca.org/animal-care.

Making Masks ...cont'd from front page.

Six months later and the numbers from Jean's campaign are staggering. She has made over 3,200 masks and raised over \$15,000. And those are the totals as of mid-September. With the pandemic far from over, so too are Jean's efforts. As the orders continue to come in, Jean continues to churn out masks. She's worn out several sewing machines only to find others willing to donate their machines to the cause. And numerous people have donated material and other sewing supplies, ensuring more money from the sale of the masks is available to be donated to the Alberta SPCA.

We are truly inspired by Jean's efforts and her willingness to support the work we do. If you need masks and would like to support us at the same time, reach out to Jean at JeanHenderson1947@hotmail.com. Your purchase protects people and animals at the same time!

EDUCATION

Visit our website for teachers: everylivingthing.ca



Cat Corner: Weight Management

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder in cats, and it is approaching epidemic levels. Obesity indicates an excess of body fat that can lead to compromised health and is a significant animal welfare issue. There are many health impacts associated with obesity including, but are not limited to, diabetes mellitus, hepatic lipidosis, urinary tract diseases, arthritis, dermatopathies, and shortened lifespan. The good news is, obesity can be overcome by making a few changes in how you care for your cat.

Fluff or Fat?

It can sometimes be difficult to tell if your cat is overweight - and many with obese cats are unaware their cat may have this condition. Body condition scoring charts (available on our website) can help determine the body condition of your cat by assessing them visually and getting hands on to feel what is underneath their fur. The best way to ensure your cat is at a healthy weight is by consulting your veterinarian.

Killing with Kindness

Cats are very convincing that they need food and treats and have us trained to respond to their desperate cries. Instead of using food or treats to placate them, try offering petting or playtime to distract them. Socializing and play also help to develop the bond you have with your cat and may reduce any guilt associated with not feeding them unnecessarily. Playing with your cat also helps them to get some much needed exercise and provides enrichment through opportunities to express normal behaviours.



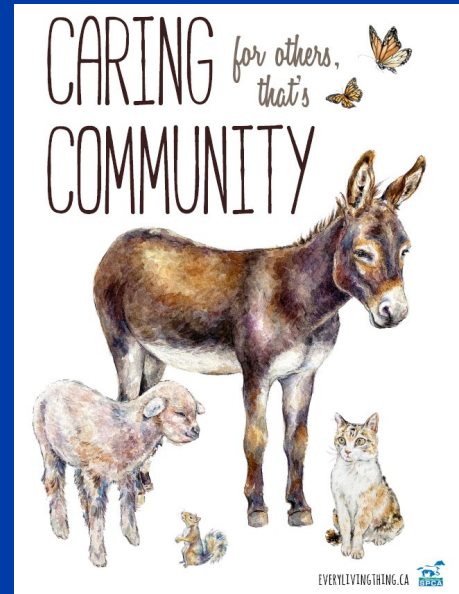
Reducing Weight

Obesity treatment is mainly focused on calorie restriction to promote weight loss, and encouraging more activity through play. Your veterinarian can determine a target weight range and set up a plan to reduce your cat's weight. The amount of food necessary for a cat depends on the calorie content of the food, and your veterinary team will help figure out the appropriate amount by doing a formula calculation.

Instead of allowing cats to free feed, restrict food to certain times to assert control of the quantity being provided. Try using feeding devices or food puzzles that encourage cats to work for their food, which makes meal time more enriching. If you have a number of cats, feed them separately to control the amount of food each is consuming. As cats are solitary hunters, separate feeding also reduces food competition. The provision of treats should also be considered as part of a diet plan as treat giving can be very satisfying for owners, but provide excessive calories for your pet.

...continued on p. 6.

Caring for Others, That's Community!



This year's Alberta SPCA theme is **Caring Community**. Communities become more connected, inclusive and collaborative when we care for one another. Animals are also an important part of our community and play a vital role. We have co-existed with animals, both domestic and wild, for thousands of years and we rely on them. Animals are often part of our families. We depend on them for food and other uses and we share space with them in both rural and urban environments. Learning how to provide care for animals is an important part of being in a community and caring about all members and the environment we share ensure that communities are healthy and thriving.

Our **Caring Community** poster is available for free to Alberta teachers. The poster includes curriculum-linked discussion questions and activities that promote being engaged and active in our community to benefit animals, people and the environment. By working together, empathizing with others, and demonstrating care for all, we are making our communities better for everyone and every living thing.

For more information visit:
everylivingthing.ca/CaringCommunity



ONE FAMILY WELFARE

To Contact the One Family Welfare Dept., Please Call 780-447-3600 ext 3750

COVID-19, OFW & Pet Ownership

COVID-19 has created far-reaching impacts beyond physical health implications. Vulnerable and marginalized populations such as lower income families, seniors, racial and ethnic minorities, victims of family violence, the homeless, and those with chronic mental health illness are more likely to live in crisis as result of the pandemic.

Health and economic impacts of this virus disproportionately affect vulnerable and marginalized social groups. The One Family Welfare department has seen a spike in phone calls from pet owners dealing with homelessness, addictions, and senior health issues. Programs and services offered by One Family Welfare are more critical than ever as the physical health implications and economic depression associated with the pandemic influence acute mental health.

When humans are in crisis so are their animals because animal welfare and human welfare are deeply connected. Staff at the Alberta SPCA have witnessed first-hand how the pandemic has affected pet owners in Alberta.

We are seeing an influx of phone calls from panicked pet owners facing financial stressors which are affecting their ability to care for their family pets. Many are struggling with substance abuse and homelessness because of economic issues. Over the last few months, the Pet Safekeeping Coordinator has had her hands full with many complex cases.

Every pet owner that accesses One Family Welfare programs and services has a unique and often heartbreaking story. We have taken a few of the most recent and noteworthy case files and shared them below to provide a small glimpse into the world of One Family Welfare during COVID-19. The names and identifying details have been changed to protect client confidentiality.



Charlie became a client of OFW during the pandemic

Roger and his 14-year-old cat were living under a tarp for several weeks without adequate protection from the heat and rain. Roger lost his job due to changes in the economy and eventually overstayed his welcome with family/friends as he couch-surfed. He refused to apply for government assistance because he had always been independent and felt those who need it more should be the ones to use government help. Eventually, with the support of OFW staff, his cat was placed in our Crisis Care Program while he worked on finding stability. He was put in touch with a housing support agency and is now in the process of securing stable housing.

Marcy, a social worker from an addictions centre, contacted the One Family Welfare department to inquire about supports for her client Rebecca. Rebecca fled an abusive home in another province with her three pets. She was having a hard time coping with her trauma and substance abuse issues which made her recovery challenging. Rebecca had two cats and a dog that were living in a small car with her. She would not enter full-time programming because she worried about her pets as they were her family. The social worker explained, without utilizing their recovery program full-time, it was unlikely Rebecca would overcome all of her issues. After several phone calls with both Marcy and Rebecca, arrangements were made to bring the pets into the Pet Safekeeping Program.

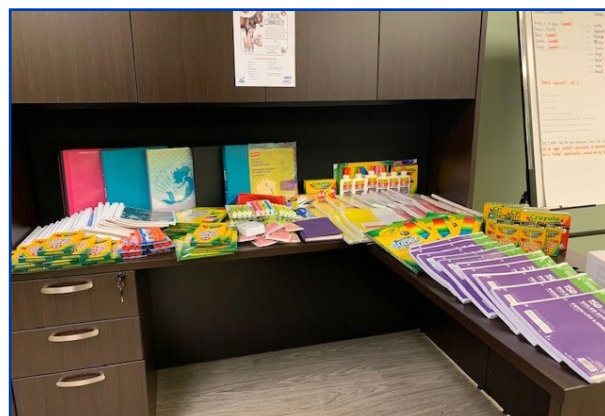
Lydia contacted One Family Welfare in an emotional state because her father was hospitalized and no one in the family was able to look after his dog Lincoln. Ken (her father) was emotionally attached to Lincoln and was unable to focus on his health recovery until he knew his dog would be okay. To make matters worse, Ken was diagnosed with COVID-19 while in the hospital. Lincoln was quickly placed in our Crisis Care Program so the family could focus on Ken's recovery, knowing Lincoln was safe.

Connecting School Supplies to Animal Welfare

Alberta SPCA staff and our board of directors recently held a fundraiser and product drive for the United Way's Tools for School program; recognizing that a lack of needed supplies is a known barrier preventing children and youth from successful learning and participation in school.

As a supporter of the Alberta SPCA you might be asking, "why does this matter to animals?" Our response and central to our humane education programming is, young minds need our support to become caring, kind, compassionate and responsible individuals. Inspiring children to demonstrate compassion and empathy for animals, people and the environment supports our collective sense of belonging, well-being and a true sense of community.

As a **Caring Community**, we are aware that support comes in many forms. During the global pandemic, our organization has stepped up to support those with animals who are suffering from illness or economic hardship. Our Help for Animals feed program assisted over 250 families and almost 1,100 animals. At other times, the assistance has been more personal, such as a Peace Officer helping an owner with a very sick pet mouse. The owner had plans to take the mouse to a vet, but his transportation fell through. Our Peace Officer attended and carefully transported the mouse to be assessed by medical staff. Sadly, the mouse required euthanasia but his owner understood this was the kindest action to take, and we remain comforted knowing his pet is not suffering. And finally, we point to the assistance of our Pet Safe-keeping Coordinator who continues to look after a cherished pet fish for a client in medical crisis.



*School supplies donated by
Alberta SPCA staff and supporters*

These acts of kindness seem small, but they remain at the heart of a **Caring Community**. At an organizational level, this awareness and understanding of approaching situations with compassion guides us to work with people in support of better outcomes for animals. We inform and educate individuals through our Education, Animal Protection Services and One Family Welfare departments, and we believe our supporters - you - join us in this **Caring Community**.

Cat Corner ...cont'd from page 4.

Successful weight loss needs to be gradual and can take months to achieve. If food intake is reduced significantly and/or if cats do not eat a new diet food for a few days, they could develop a serious liver condition called hepatic lipidosis caused by food restriction.

Maintaining Ideal Weight

Once target weight is achieved, maintaining that weight is equally, if not more challenging. This means it's important to stay engaged in monitoring your cat's body condition.

For tips on how cats like to play or adding food puzzles to engage your cat at meal time, visit our website: albertaspca.org/animal-care/

Body Condition Score Your Cat

www.albertaanimalhealthsource.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/body_condition_score_chart_cats.pdf





IN LOVING MEMORY

Tribute donations can be made by cheque, or on our website: albertaspca.org

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The image shows the Canada Post logo, which consists of a stylized bird in flight inside a circle. To the left of the logo, the word "CANADA" is printed in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right, the word "POSTES" is printed in the same font. Below the logo, the word "POST" is printed on the left and "CANADA" on the right. Below "POST", there is a QR code. To the right of the QR code, the text "Postage paid" is printed above "Personalized Mail". To the right of "Personalized Mail", the text "Port payé" is printed above "Courrier personnalisé". At the bottom of this section, the number "5973651" is printed in a large, bold font.



Fall 2020

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