



# KALAMAZOO ANIMAL RESCUE

Phone: (269) 226-8570

## KAR Friends

March 2015

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Dear Reader,

Cats and dogs provide many benefits to their human caretakers: unconditional love and affection, encouraging exercise and, of course, companionship. Having a pet can also be therapeutic, offering mental and physical advantages such as reducing stress and anxiety, easing loneliness and promoting socialization.

In this issue we explore some of the therapeutic benefits derived from reading to a dog or cat, and how it helps children to improve their reading skills and self-esteem, and how pet therapy enriches the lives of hospital patients and residents in nursing homes or retirement facilities.

Also this month, check out Shadow's animal spotlight. He is a senior boxer and pit bull mix that is looking for his forever home, and read the tale of Phoebe and Hans, two KAR kittens that found a home together and are living their happy ever after.

Danielle Wallis  
Marketing Coordinator

Lynn Bolhuis  
KAR Friends Editor

## Reading to Pets

By Kim Bourner

When I worked to tame my [feral felines](#) a decade and a half ago, one of the tools in my tool belt was my voice. Since my kitties weren't much at sharing with me when I asked about their day, I decided instead of conversation to read them books that I thought they might enjoy. Have you read to your pet lately?



As an avid reader, I have found that my cats do not like being on the other side of the book from me. Reading to them brings us together through the book. At this point in time, they do occasionally converse with me about what I'm reading. Well, perhaps it isn't exactly what I'm reading, but the tone of my voice, but who's to say they don't understand my every word? My brother, a farmer of over 40 years, has found that so long as his voice is pleasant, he can say anything to any animal and they wag their tail, purr, or moo pleasantly. If he says anything in an angry voice, they may cower,

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growl, or turn away. Therefore, it could be the content that the kitties are discussing with me, or an inflection in my voice that enticed them to talk with me.

In researching this topic, I found the majority of documentation related to the benefits of children reading aloud to pets. Some libraries and schools across the nation offer programs where children are invited to sit comfortably with a cat or dog and read to them. In an [article](#) written by Silvia Foti for WebVet and reviewed by Amy I. Attas, VMD, "According to studies on the subject a young student's reading scores can advance significantly – two to four grade levels – by reading to a dog for just 20 minutes a week throughout the school year (40 weeks)."



The article went on to state that "children who read to pets have less absenteeism, visit the library more often, and improve their grades on report cards. Also, children with low self-esteem are often more willing to interact with an animal than with another person. Pets can also teach children empathy and compassion." Some of these programs include foster pets, and this allows the pet to acclimate well to children while they wait for a forever home. Everyone benefits from these programs: children learn invaluable skills and the cats and dogs become better companions.

Recently, I took one of my cats to the vet for a checkup. The vet said that I needed to calm her, so I pet her. But it wasn't until I spoke to her that the vet said my cat's heartbeat calmed and became regular. Have you read to your furry friend or foster pet lately? Whether or not they understand our every word, our furry friends appreciate our time and attention.

**Additional Resources**

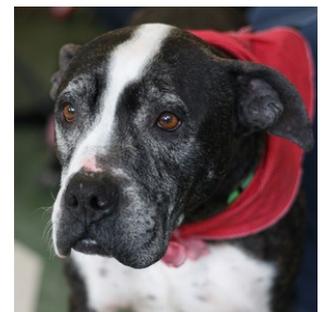
- [Dogs Boost Kids' Reading Skills](#)
- [Study: Reading to Dogs Helps Children Learn to Read](#)

**Animal Spotlight**

**Gentle Shadow**

By Lynn Bolhuis

KAR has a fabulous fella' looking for a forever family—Shadow is a mature, seven-year-old gentleman with plenty of love to give. He adores people (adults and kids), is great with cats, and would like nothing better than to shower his affections on a new family. Could it be with you?



Shadow is calm and well behaved. He rides well in the car and enjoys going for walks. He also likes playing with tennis balls or rope bones. Shadow would do best in a home where he is the only canine. He is a senior dog with [special needs](#), in particular, Shadow has food allergies so he needs to be on a strict diet and be bathed twice a month. Fortunately, he loves getting baths.

If you are interested in learning more about Shadow, [click here](#) or fill out an application to meet him. You'll be glad that you did!

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## Pets of the Month



[Apache](#)



[Dottie](#) and [Maize](#)

## Doggie Den

*Pet Therapy*

By Gail Mills

Imagine you have found yourself in an assisted living facility or nursing home. You grew up with pets, and had pets until you had to leave your home. Maybe there's some other reason why you had to give up your furry best friend—life's changes made it too hard for you to provide the proper care your pet deserved and needed. But, you say, "I still have plenty of love to give!" And love to get, right!?

Now imagine how you'd feel if a tail-wagging, smiling dog or softer-than-a bunny cat appeared in your room or home and you spent 15 or 20 minutes giving pets, getting licks and lovin', happy head bumps and purrs. You're smiling as you read this, aren't you? And it's not only the ill person who reaps the benefits. Family members and friends who sit in on animal visits say they feel better too.

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue recently implemented a Pet Therapy program and has both dogs and cats available upon request. Two dogs, [Russell](#) and [Farrah](#) (pictured above), and one cat, [Pepe](#), have already served as Animal Therapists for KAR while they wait for forever homes. They provide entertainment and affection to a local assisted living and memory care home. The residents look forward to weekly, hour-long visits where they can feed Farrah treats, laugh as they watch Russell jump three-feet in the air to catch a tennis ball, and have Pepe rub, head bump, and knead them expressing his unconditional love for them. The dementia-stricken patients held the smaller dog on their laps and were helped by nurses to pet him—faint smiles could be seen and a brightness appeared in eyes that wasn't there minutes before.

One of the biggest concerns about pet therapy, particularly in hospitals, is safety and sanitation. Most hospitals and other facilities that allow pet therapy have stringent rules to ensure the safety of their patients, residents, and staff. Kalamazoo Animal Rescue has the same stringent rules and screens pets for appropriate behaviors before they are chosen to be Animal Therapists. KAR's dogs and cats are always vaccinated, dewormed, microchipped, and clean before entering any facility.

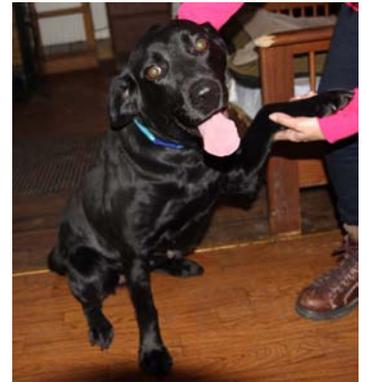
Another concern that KAR addresses when talking with facilities about pet therapy is allergies. KAR Pet Therapists are happy to work with facilities to arrange sessions so resident/patient exposure to allergens is reduced. Therapists will only go into rooms of patients/residents who are not allergic or meet residents in a large, open area and have a group therapy session. KAR Pet Therapists are happy to meet with facility managers and discuss the best possible arrangement for the patients/residents because of the strong belief and proof of the benefits of pet therapy.

As one of KAR's Pet Therapists I must share that the experience has benefited me as well. The friendships I've made with the residents I see every week has brightened my life, and the trust I see in the eyes of the animals that go with me warms my heart.

If you are interested in having a KAR Pet Therapist come to your facility, or have questions about the program, please contact us at [kzooanimalrescue@gmail.com](mailto:kzooanimalrescue@gmail.com).

**Additional Resources**

- [Toula, certified therapy dog](#)



Adoption Events



March 21st and 28th  
April 4th



April 11th

Visit the [Events](#) page on our website for upcoming adoption and other special events.

KAR Links

- [Volunteer](#)
- [Become a Foster Family](#)
- [Adoptable Dogs](#)
- [Adoptable Cats](#)
- [Adoptable Kittens](#)
- [Special Needs Pets](#)
- [Senior Cat Companions](#)
- [KAR Website](#)



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Cat's Corner

*Phoebe and Hans ~ A Modern Kitty Fairy Tale*

By Kara Harmsen

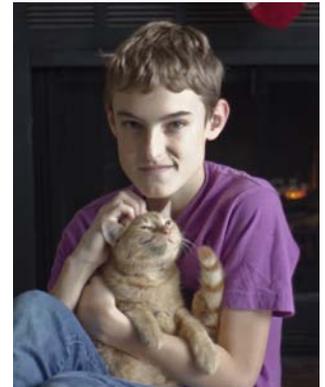
It's so hard to believe that a beautiful, tiny, Russian-blue kitten was put outdoors by her owners when they moved and left to fend for herself. The little girl wandered over to a neighbor's house and the woman kindly contacted KAR. Once under the rescue's care, the kitten was taken to the vet to be examined. She weighed only two pounds yet she already had her adult teeth. The vet was shocked at her teeny size and estimated that she was four to five months old. The kitten had managed to survive outdoors. The vet was amazed by her outgoing and puppy-like disposition towards the staff.



The little kitten was given the name Phoebe, which suited her to a tee. I became her foster mom and Phoebe came to love her new cozy living situation that included a young child and two other adult cats. Phoebe was lavished with attention and lots of cooked chicken. She had a hard time transitioning to canned cat food (at first) due to surviving on who knows what. My son and I enjoyed spoiling her—she was so darn cute and lovable. In no time at all, Phoebe caught the eye of a

family looking for a companion for their kitten, Hans. Hans is a friendly, orange-striped fur ball that Will, Malachi and Berkley recently adopted from a KAR event at Petco.

After a personal meeting, Will and the boys quickly fell in love with Phoebe's beauty and her fun-loving personality. Hans also warmed up to her. Malachi and Berkley call Phoebe and Hans, "playful and snuggly." Better yet, they each have a feline to snuggle. Could it be anymore purr-fect—Hans and Phoebe—a match made in heaven? Sounds like a Prince and Princess in a fairytale and they are living happily ever after.



Welcome New Volunteers

- Nancy Barnes • Abigail Clark • Karen Conner-Beck • Allan Dawson  
Lindsey Delton • Loryn Downey • Ellen Dzierzye • Sydney Fillar  
Shannan Frank • Emma Hernandez • Yvonne Johnson • Amir Koldorf  
Lauren Kwasny • Jackie McFarlan • Rob McFarlan • Geanice Miller  
Vanessa Niederleig • Kaitlyn Phillips • Courtney Pilette • Alexander Poff  
Elizabeth Raeder • Kendra Ragan • Judith Resler • Cydnie Shephard  
Laurie Smith • Craig Swanson • Melissa Tache • Lauren Vocke

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[Email us](#) with any newsletter suggestions or questions!

## Fun Facts

### Most Popular Dog and Cat Names of 2014

Each year, Veterinary Pet Insurance Co., sorts its database to derive the most [popular pet names](#). Here are the top 10 most common names for dogs and cats, as well as the fun and [wacky list](#) of pet names.

	Dog	Unique Dog Names	Cat	Unique Cat Names
1	Bella	Peanut Wigglebutt	Bella	Snuggles Butt Le Lee
2	Bailey	Sir Hog Knucklehead	Max	Count Flufferton
3	Max	Sasha Biggiepotamus	Chloe	Katy Purry
4	Lucy	Otto Von Longdog	Oliver	Walter Croncat
5	Molly	Zippity Do Dawg	Lucy	Joey Banana Pants
6	Charlie	Airbubble McMuffin	Charlie	Felix Thunder Paws
7	Daisy	Hamburger Patty	Lily	Nuttykitty
8	Buddy	Angus T Brackencrack	Sophie	Senor Meow
9	Maggie	Mister Buddy Pickles	Tiger	Sassy Brat Kat
10	Sophie	Waffle Dots	Shadow	Purrscilla

## About Us

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, federally recognized 501(c)(3) charitable organization that was founded in 1991 and is funded entirely through donations from the public.

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Kalamazoo and the surrounding communities.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent, committed and life-long homes.

Visit our [website](#) for more KAR information!

