

PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
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Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

Michigan's Best Homeless Pet Shelters, Volunteers and Legislative Friend Awarded

Four Michigan animal shelters are among those who have proved that landing in a shelter doesn't have to be a death sentence for homeless cats and dogs.

For the first time, shelters are being recognized for their efforts to save homeless pets, rather than destroy them. The Michigan Pet Fund Alliance, at its first statewide No Kill Conference held March 25 in Ann Arbor, gave Outstanding Shelter Awards to three open admission shelters with the best 2009 save rates. An open admission shelter takes in all stray animals and those given up by their owners.

In the small shelter category of 1,000 or fewer animals, **Helping Orphaned Pets Everywhere (HOPE)** of Gogebic County saved 100 percent of the adoptable animals that came to their shelter. The **Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter** in Marquette County was recognized for its save rate of 91.33 percent in the medium shelter category of 1,000 to 5,000 animals.

The large shelter award went to the **Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV)** in Washtenaw County with a 75% save rate in 2009. HSHV is the only animal shelter in Washtenaw County that takes in all unwanted, injured, lost, stray, abandoned and abused animals, helping over 10,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other small animals every year.

In the category of limited admission shelters, which refuse animals when there is no room, the award went to **Cascades Humane Society**, with a 96.7 percent save rate and 842 adoptions in 2009.

Conference participants toured the new state-of-the-art HSHV-WC facility which opened in October 2009. Shelter Executive Director Tanya Hilgendorf, who brought her experience from a human services agency, told the attendees, "It is all about the mission. Do it right or don't

bother. Be effective, accountable and transparent, you work for the community. Finally be bold, take risks on behalf of the animals you serve."

Joe Sowerby of (Chesterfield Township) created two of the largest animal adoption events in the country: *Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo* and *Pet-a-Palooza*. He took home the Best Friend Award for helping tens of thousands of cats and dogs find new homes since 1993. Sowerby also led a successful effort to remove gas chambers from several southeast Michigan shelters and has worked to introduce legislation to ban gassing in all Michigan shelters which still use this barbaric practice.

Senator John Pappageorge, whose district includes Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham, Troy, Clawson, Berkley, Royal Oak and Madison Heights, was recognized with the Homeless Animals Legislative Friend Award for championing the Animal Welfare Fund Act of 2007, creating a fund for taxpayer contributions which has generated over \$200,000 to assist shelters with spay and neutering prior to adoption.

The final award, recognizing an Exceptional Volunteer, was given in memory of **Adele "Del" Harvey**, who died October 5, 2010 at the age of 84. In 1994, after a life spent rescuing cats and dogs, Harvey founded Best of Friends Humane Society in her home and when she ran out of space, her husband and sons built the shelter where she cleaned cages starting at 5 a.m. until the end of her life. Volunteers now carry on her legacy. Julia Funds, vice chairwoman of Basil's Buddies (Romulus), and Kathy Bambach, adoptions director and medical coordinator of Paws for Life Rescue, (Troy) took home Honorable Mention awards

Honorable Mentions also went to open admission shelters which met the no-kill definition of a 90 percent save rate: Grosse Isle Animal Shelter, Greater Hillsdale Humane Society and Copper County Humane Society.

Photos are available of winners with their awards. E-mail chair@michiganpetfund.org for a photo.

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Michigan Pet Fund Alliance was formed to bring the No More Homeless Pets No-Kill philosophy and programs to Michigan. This 21st century approach includes new thinking about animal welfare, effective programs and best practices. When shelters and rescues follow the program, the need to euthanize either healthy and/or treatable animals due to lack of sheltering space and/or resources will be eliminated. For more information, call 877-FUR-PALS or visit www.michiganpetfund.org/

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