



Big Hearts for Little Paws member, Maggie, age 9, made a monetary Christmas donation to Hinsdale Humane Society to help with the care of homeless animals. | PROVIDED

Hinsdale Humane Society recognizes young donors

PIONEER PRESS STAFF

During 2014, the Hinsdale Humane Society recognized more than 130 children for their generous contributions to the shelter. These donors, typically 5 to 13 years old, are members of the shelter's Big Hearts for Little Paws Club.

Because so many charitable children have come forward in the past few years, the Hinsdale Humane Society created the honorary club in 2013 to give them special acknowledgment. Through the children's efforts and generosity, the society has received monetary donations totaling multiple hundreds of dollars over the past year, as well as an abundance of pet food, toys and shelter supplies

"The children's ingenuity, creativity and commitment

to find ways to help homeless animals at the shelter is really amazing," said Kym Iffert, humane educator.

Some have celebrated birthdays, requesting pet items instead of gifts, while others have donated allowance or savings. Proceeds from lemonade stands, craft items, a piano recital and other activities were also given to the shelter.

The humane society hosts a quarterly party for contributors, focusing on different aspects of the shelter so the children can see how their donations are used and how they impact the success of the shelter's work. Attendees watch a video detailing the shelter, interact with a therapy dog, take a behind-the-scenes tour, and may have an opportunity to play with kittens or puppies.

"I am continually touched

by how the compassion and love of animals and concern for their well-being has inspired these children, with the support of their families, to reach out to HHS," said Iffert.

Big Hearts for Little Paws complements other shelter-related activities for older children and teens. Children, at least 12 years old, accompanied by an adult can volunteer as cat socializers. Teens, at least 16 years old, are able to volunteer for a variety of shelter activities. In addition, high school students are eligible to join the HHS Jr. Board, assisting with shelter events and developing youth-centered projects.

For more information about any of these activities or programs, contact Iffert at humane.ed@hinsdale-humane.org or visit Hinsdalehumane.org.