

Families give thanks for their adopted pets

Hinsdale Humane Society finds right dogs, cats to bring joy to adults and kids

By Pamela Lannom and Ken Knutson

Photos by Jim Slonoff

In this season of giving thanks, there are many who will count a four-legged friend among their blessings.

Pets provide their owners with unconditional love, companionship and plenty of laughs.

Families who have adopted a dog or a cat from the Hinsdale Humane Society have the added joy of knowing they provided a home for a pet that truly needed one.

Six Hinsdale families have shared the reasons they are thankful for the adopted pets that enrich their lives not only at Thanksgiving, but all year long.

■ MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Making a Difference is a partnership between The Hinsdalean and the Hinsdale Humane Society, which is dedicated to the care and adoption of homeless animals and advocacy for the compassionate treatment of animals



Kristen and Spilios Venetsanopoulos and daughters Daphne and Sydney with Maggie

The Venetsanopoulos family wasn't looking to adopt another dog when Honey arrived at the Hinsdale Humane Society in May. Honey was the name of the golden retriever the family lost the previous December.

"I walked her and knew. I videotaped her and sent it to my husband," said Kristen, a humane society volunteer.

Spilios agreed the dog would be a good fit for their daughters. Honey, now called Maggie, has a playful spirit and wonderful demeanor.

"From the heartache I went through putting my dog down, I would do it all over again for the joys of having a dog — just for the lifelong comfort, enjoyment, happiness that they bring," Kristen said.



Kathy Kinsella and her cats, Rugby and Minx

Kathy Kinsella hoists her cat, Rugby, by his front paws to display his accordion-like frame while his sibling Minx peers down from the top of a bookshelf.

"You can tell they're brother and sister because they look so much alike," Kinsella quipped ironically. Rugby is a tabby, while Minx is all black.

She adopted them from the humane society in October 2013, the most recent of a half-dozen cats she's brought home from the shelter over the years.

"I was afraid that these guys wouldn't get adopted because they were five months, not eight weeks.

"I find them an enormous comfort," she continued. "I wanted to fill my house with things I love and things that love me back, and I succeeded."



Kelly (from left), Mel and Noah Lim with Smokey

Smokey, a gray domestic short-hair, joined the Lim family about 18 months ago as Noah's eighth birthday present.

They wanted to rescue a pet and adopt an adult animal with a set personality. The Hinsdale Humane Society did a great job matching the family to a cat, James said.

"They wanted to make sure we got the right pet for our kids, our family," he said. "The other thing, too, was that we were the right fit for Smokey as well." Noah and his sister have enjoyed playing with and caring for Smokey.

"I am most thankful that she is well-behaved and does well with both our kids and other kids that are in the house," Kelly said.



Maureen Claffy with Dobby and son Joe with Buddy

Maureen Claffy and her son, Joe, have double dog delights thanks to the humane society.

The diminutive Dobby (named for the house-elf character from the Harry Potter novel series) joined the Claffy household in 2011. The larger Buddy became his house-mate last month.

"It's nice to know that we're making them feel happy because they make us happy," Joe said.

Buddy was almost the pet that wasn't after they discovered on a follow-up visit to the shelter that he'd already been adopted.

A few days later he was back.

"So we just knew that he was for us," Maureen said. "They keep everybody coming back home, and they're good company."



Shirley Moravec and Annabelle

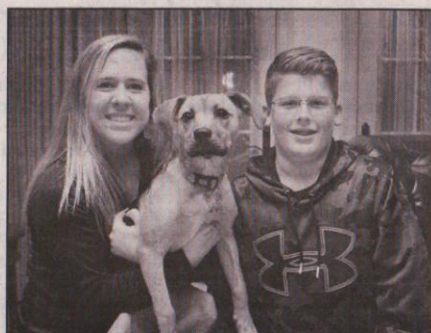
Annabelle helped heal Shirley Moravec's heart after she lost Trixie.

"When my other cat died, my daughter said, 'Wait until after Christmas,' and I didn't. I went over there and got another one. I missed Trixie too much."

Annabelle, a part Manx about 9 or 10 years old, is an affectionate cat who enjoys attention.

"She's a quirky little thing," Moravec said. "She will talk back to you. You talk to her, she'll talk back to you and it almost sounds like she's arguing with you."

Annabelle doesn't like to miss play time or snack time. "If I go into the kitchen to get a snack, she knows what I'm going in there for and if she doesn't get one, she's mad," Shirley said.



Riley and Charlie Burr with Lucy

It took a six-month lobbying campaign, but eighth-grader Charlie Burr was finally able to persuade his family to adopt its first pet this summer.

Older sis Riley was not enthused — until she met the energetic beagle mix puppy, Lucy.

"I feel like I'm a dog person now," she said.

They managed to turn her into a "cowgirl" for Halloween and quickly attracted dog-sitting offers from their young neighbors should the family need such service.

Mom Jan said Lucy has affirmed their belief that the timing was right for adoption.

"(My kids) will say to me, 'I can't believe we didn't do this years ago,'" she related. "And I'm like, 'If we had done it years ago, we wouldn't have her.'"