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Animal shelter mural would be a class act

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BEVERLY — On Sept. 9, Harry, an 18-year-old cat adopted from a shelter, was put to sleep.

The next day, Harry's distraught owner, Kathleen Burke, director of continuing education at Montserrat College of Art, received a phone call from Yetti Frenkel about starting a class where students would paint a mural and donate it to a nonprofit.

Frenkel was thinking the Northeast Animal Shelter in Salem.

It was clearly a sign.

"I said, 'Yetti, you just made my day. I'm sitting here mourning,'" Burke said. "I said, I'd really like to see this happen."

The eight-week course starts Feb. 2.

With Frenkel's help, students will design and paint an original mural on panels and install them on a wall of the newly opened animal shelter on Highland Street.

The Northeast Animal Shelter, which does not euthanize any of its animals, recently moved out of the basement of the New England Veterinary Clinic on Highland Avenue and into its own, larger space on the same street.

"We opened at the end of May, and it's taking time to decorate things," Executive Director Randi Cohen said.

She said she's excited to receive the mural, which will go in a very visible hallway right outside the cat room.

Cohen said she wants to make sure the shelter feels warm and welcoming, and the mural will be an interesting focal point.

Frenkel has tried previously to create a mural for the shelter through a similar class at Salem State but had to cancel it because not enough people signed up.

So far, three students are registered for the Montserrat course, and she's hoping to have at least five, in order to break even on the materials.

The class costs \$200 per person and runs through March 30. To register, click on "continuing education" at www.montserrat.edu or call 978-921-4242, ext. 1180.