



## NORTHEAST ANIMAL SHELTER'S

# animal tales

### All in the Family

**C**harlotte was in really rough shape when we found her at our front door last October. Someone had dumped her there, knowing that we would come to work, find her and take her in. Abandoning an animal is a crime in Massachusetts, but we had no evidence.

So we brought the extremely dehydrated and emaciated cat into the Shelter to have a better look. We were horrified that her chest bone was protruding and we could see every vertebra. Angela, one of our dedicated staff, remembers meeting Charlotte. "Though she was down and out, she was purring away at us and seemed very happy to be snuggled and fed."

Charlotte weighed in at a tiny five pounds. After doing blood work we learned that she was anemic and her kidney levels were alarmingly elevated. We knew she needed peace and quiet so she could get stronger, so we transferred her from the Shelter to a wonderful foster home.



At first, Charlotte had a huge appetite in her new temporary home, but another blood test a week after her arrival told us that her kidney levels were still worrisome. The veterinarian was concerned that she had permanent kidney damage from starvation. Then Charlotte stopped eating and started vomiting. By now we all knew about Charlotte and were pulling for her from the sidelines. It was a very emotional time for everyone.

After two weeks in foster care, where she had special food and medicine and love and cuddles, Charlotte started fighting her way back to a normal and healthy life. By the end of November Charlotte weighed seven pounds! We were thrilled when it was time for her to come to the Shelter to be put up for adoption. Her foster mother had a hard time saying goodbye but knew that Charlotte's best chance of being adopted would be because she was at the

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### The Funny Bone



Comfy Dog

## All in the Family... *(continued from page 1)*

Shelter where people could meet her. She kissed Charlotte goodbye and tearfully left her with her "blanky" and a bed from home.

People immediately noticed sweet Charlotte when they visited the Shelter. They couldn't help but comment on her friendly, happy demeanor. But her kidney damage, though it would never progress further, made people nervous. For two weeks, we kept hoping our little friend would find that perfect home.

And soon Joyce came for a visit. She fell for Charlotte right away and wasn't daunted in the least by her story. She and her husband were longtime cat people and her medical history was not a big deal to them. The next day her husband, Bob came to meet Charlotte, fell in love, and took her home.

But that's not the end of the story. After almost two months of having Charlotte in their home, life changed. Bob's mother, Margaret, was a cat person,

too. When her beloved 23 year old cat passed away Margaret had a very difficult time.

Despite being surrounded by people in her assisted living facility, as Bob said, "her light went out." After much deliberation, Bob and Joyce decided that Charlotte could cheer Margaret up and that Charlotte would get constant attention in return. Once Charlotte arrived at Margaret's apartment, Bob said, "Charlotte turned a light switch on" in his mother's life.

Once too skinny, now Charlotte is a happy, chubby cat. She is Margaret's constant companion and her "shining light."

"Cats are family members," says Bob. His decision to share Charlotte with his mother was a very generous and loving gesture. He kept her in the family and he "turned on the switch" for his mom. The added bonus is that Bob sees Charlotte when he visits Margaret. After all, Charlotte's part of the family!

## MAIL BOX



*Friends at the Northeast  
Animal Shelter.*

*Thank you for the work you  
unselfishly do each and  
every day.*

*Lynn, MA*



*Max is so playful  
and loving, we couldn't  
have made a  
better choice.*

*Stoneham, MA*



*To everyone at NEAS,*

*...Jessie is a wonderful companion, playmate,  
comforter - all I hoped for and more!  
...I am very grateful for all you do for  
the pets and people you bring together!*

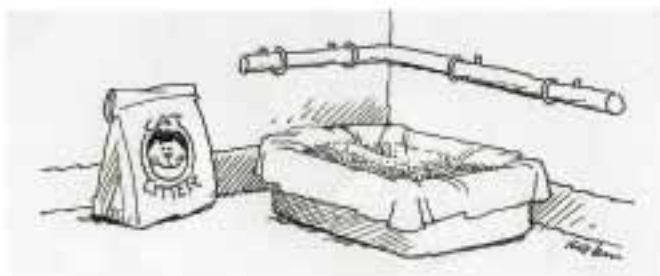
*Newburyport, MA*

## Easing into Old Age

**D**ogs leap into the air to catch a ball. Cats climb the curtains. Any motion can send dogs and cats into a blur of fur. Proud dog or cat owners can go on and on about the joys of watching dogs and cats play.

When we have young dogs and cats we don't dwell much on what it will be like when they are older and not quite as agile. But like older humans, dogs and cats will experience the same creaks and aches that go along with aging. Our job, as their human caregivers, is to make them as comfortable as possible during their "autumn years." Here are a few ideas for ways to help them age with grace and dignity.

If you have a large- or medium-sized dog, think about how an aching neck or back would make it difficult to reach all the way down to the dog bowl on the floor. Elevating food and water bowls, by putting them on a plastic crate or in a special stand (available at pet supply stores), would ease their discomfort immeasurably. Cats with rickety joints might not be able to vault onto the window perch anymore. Consider building a set of stairs or moving a piece of furniture close to the window to help your cat get to her favorite spot.



If you allow your pets to sleep on your bed, it is heartbreaking the first time they try to get onto your bed and just can't. You might consider building a ramp with footholds and carpeting that helps them get up to the bed with little effort. Or try pet supply stores to see if they carry any type of ramp or steps. The same holds true for getting a bigger dog into the car. There are special ramps available to help them navigate into vehicles.

Sometimes it makes sense to change from using a collar and leash for your dog to a harness that doesn't apply pressure in sore spots. And make sure the sides of your cat's litter box aren't too high for her to step over.

Remember that bladder control in older animals can be an issue. Keep your cat's litter box clean and accessible enough so she can get to it. Make sure to take your old dog out more often to avoid mistakes in the house.

There are so many ways to help make your older pet more comfortable. It takes a little research and creativity, but it's worth the effort on your part. Your cat or dog will appreciate your extra pampering and you will feel good about making their last few years the very best possible.

Be sure to consult with your veterinarian for medical treatments and other suggestions for aging pets. And don't forget full body massages. Think about how much YOU like them!

## We are so Grateful

**W**e love hearing from our adopters. Sometimes they write or call right after adopting their new family member. Sometimes they write many years later to tell us how much they love their dog or cat. And some visit the Shelter with their pooch in tow. And sadly, there are times when we receive a card telling us that they have said the final goodbye to their beloved friend.

No matter what the message, it's heartwarming to hear about our animal friends. When we get happy letters and photos they



make our hearts sing. It feels good to know that the animals we have loved, cared for and worried about are happy, safe and loved.

Then there are the letters from people who have to give their dog or cat up. When people are faced with having to surrender a pet to a shelter, we know it is an agonizing decision. Often the decision comes after many phone calls and pleas for help. By the time they make the decision, they arrive at the Shelter resigned to giving their dog or cat to us.

Some blink back tears, some appear to be aloof, and some sob. We know how much it must hurt. We don't get lots of letters from these people, probably because it hurts.

But when we do receive a card or a phone call, it really means a lot to us. Recently we heard from a mother and her daughter who were forced to give up their two beloved cats. They said they "were so grateful" to us for being there for them during a difficult time in their lives and that, "It was heartbreaking to have to give them up for adoption, especially when we had already had them for so long, however you all made the transition that much easier."

Northeast Animal Shelter is there for the animals, but it's nice to know that we help the humans, too.



### Please Join the Northeast Animal Shelter's Monthly Pledge of Love Program

See the enclosed reply form for details. It's easy and you'll help animals even more!

You will be glad you did!!!! And so will the animals!!!!

**H**ave you made a New Year's resolution to help more animals? You might want to consider becoming a member of our "Monthly Pledge of Love" program. Many generous animal lovers are already part of the Northeast Animal Shelter monthly giving program and their support is life-saving. If you are not already a member, please consider joining with the gift you send today.

Here are some commonly-asked questions to help you better understand the Monthly Pledge of Love program.

*How does a monthly pledge help more than my regular contributions?*

We can depend on your monthly gifts! When we receive your donation every month, we'll know we have enough money to provide food, medicine, veterinary care and shelter for our animal friends.

*How does the Pledge Program work?*

We'll send you a monthly statement that shows the amount due. Just send a check with the return form in the envelope we will provide. If you prefer, you can pay by credit card or have your gift automatically deducted from your bank account.

*How much should I pledge?*

We suggest a pledge of \$10, \$15, \$25 or more — or whatever you can manage. However, we do ask for a minimum pledge of \$5 per month.

*Can I make my contribution larger than usual once in a while?*

Sure! You can make an extra gift at any time that will be shown on your statement. We'll be very grateful — and so will the animals!

*What happens if I have to cancel my pledge?*

You may cancel your pledge at any time. If your situation changes, you can reduce or increase the amount of your pledge just by letting us know.