

Annie's Story

Scared and plastered to the back of her kennel in a high-kill shelter . . . that was the first glimpse the Safe Haven volunteer had of the plump, female yellow lab who became known as Annie. With only one available slot for a dog that day, Annie was initially passed over for an outgoing, young male retriever. But whatever guardian angel hovers over Annie certainly was present that day, because the Safe Haven volunteer took Annie, who was scheduled to be transferred to a research dealer *the very next day*.

When Annie moved into a Safe Haven foster home, we discovered she wasn't pregnant, which we had thought might be the case — she was just plump. She was already spayed, totally house-broken, never chewed on things, loved to play with toys and could play fetch 24/7.

Two of Annie's very best qualities were her attentiveness and her willingness to please.

When she was ready for adoption, her description on Pet-Finder.com caught the eye of Joan from Sterling Service Dogs. Joan thought perhaps Annie had the potential to be trained as a service dog to assist someone with disabilities. It seemed like it might work, so the paperwork was completed, and Annie was picked up to begin her "trial period."

JOAN WRITES

Joan wrote to tell us that Kira (Annie's new name) was learning to retrieve full water bottles out of the fridge!

"We just started the refrigerator task," Joan said, "one of the most difficult of all, and she's tugging open the door like a 'pro' already. She is NOT fond of the Stay command, though . . . we still need a lot of work on NOT bouncing up every other minute to say hello to every-

one in a store or restaurant or my bank. She is so 'sociable'.

"She needs to learn to lie quietly under a table in a restaurant during a meal or in church during the service, for about a half hour, before she can graduate . . . I'm sure she will 'get it' eventually, just needs lots more practice.

"She sometimes fetches me a beverage or the phone without being asked, hoping I will give her another training session. Most of the time, she lies curled up at my feet, my faithful shadow — unless I have a visitor or my cleaning lady or the handyman over (she loves making friends). She is not a 'one person dog'. Seems to have zero separation anxiety. She's very easy going.

"Thank you for saving her! And for giving us a chance to work with such a well behaved, talented young lady."

KIRA MEETS STACIE

Stacie had been diagnosed with a spinal cord problem that would soon necessitate full time use of a wheelchair, and Joan immediately knew the best match for her would be Kira.

Kira excelled at providing wheelchair pulling assistance at a calm, window-shopping pace ideally suited to Stacie's mobility limitations. This task would give Stacie something precious: a few hours of independence from her parents several times a week. She would no longer be dependent on her father to push her in her wheelchair whenever the family took her on an outing to a mall or to Wal-Mart or some other location.

Ever since Kira met Stacie during team training in Michigan, Kira has shown remarkable initiative where Stacie's well being is concerned.

In fact, Kira surprised Stacie's mother at the hotel on the first night by waking her up and leading her to Stacie's bedside in the adjoining room, where she found Stacie moaning in her sleep due to pain.

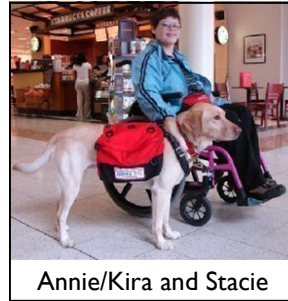
A few weeks later, when the defibrillator in Stacie's heart (a defibrillator gives off electric shocks during dangerous attacks of cardiac arrhythmia) caused Stacie to pass out, Kira performed the "Find Dad" task without a command. Stacie's bedroom door was closed tight, and Kira had to wrestle with a tug device she'd not yet had any practice using in order to get the door open.

When Kira got out, she woke up Stacie's father, who was napping on the couch, and insisted he follow her back to Stacie's room. When he revived Stacie, he told her what Kira had done. Stacie was astonished, because it is almost unheard of for a dog to perform a task without a command, and especially one like this: an obstacle of a tightly closed door to overcome. Stacie was deeply touched by this evidence of Kira's concern for her welfare.

One of Kira's favorite tasks is jumping up to operate the push plates that open handicapped accessible doors at locations like malls and hospitals, as they are not always conveniently located for Stacie, who has very limited use of her left arm and hand.

Joan and Stacie and her family are grateful to Safe Haven Humane Society for giving Kira a chance to become a service dog.

As we at Safe Haven like to say, come and visit our pets, you never know who you might meet.





We're heading to Tractor Supply

Tractor Supply Company on South State Street in Ionia has invited Safe Haven to "set up shop" in their store or parking lot during the next few months, to allow potential adopters another opportunity to view Safe Haven dogs and sometimes kittens.

Not only will you be able to come and watch the playful pooches — and perhaps meet your BFFF (best furry friend forever) — you may also run into an old acquaintance or two and meet some new friends (even the two-legged kind).

We'll be having crafts for sale and fresh baked goods and soda pop. There will also be some really cool stuff for kids, like wash-off tattoos and free coloring books and more!

During the nice warm months of July, August and September, our Saturday events will include a "Chip and Dip": microchip and a bath for \$20 (nails clipped for a donation). Give yourself peace of mind with the permanent identification of a microchip. Put these dates on your fridge so you don't miss out!

Please come out and join us during these fun filled days at Tractor Supply on the following Saturdays:

- June 13**
- July 11**
- August 8**
- September 12**
- October 10**



Safe Haven Humane Society gets new, more efficient fax number 517.579.5948

Safe Haven has a new fax number, making it easier to submit your adoption or foster applications.



What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you see the above picture? We at Safe Haven would like to know. Write us, email us, call us . . . let us know what this picture makes you think of. We're so in love with this photo and we want to know how it impacts people.

Fluffy means more than cute

When adopting a pet, remember no matter what his hair type, there will always be some type of grooming needed. Some dogs and cats may only require a toenail trim and minimal brushing, while the pets of the fluffy persuasion are going to need more attention.

Recently some new mixes have become very popular. Fluffy dogs are appealing but some coat types will require frequent grooming. This is especially true with some of the new mixed breeds, more commonly known as designer dogs.

Keep in mind that periodic visits to a groomer may have to be part of your pet budget. It is a good idea before picking out that new family member to visit a groomer and find out what costs may be involved to keep your new friend looking and feeling her best.

Remember, getting your pet groomed isn't just about looks. Often the groomer is the first to notice issues that might require veterinary attention. Skin irritations, moles, tumors, hot spots and parasites are some common issues seen during a groom.

Spay/Neuter express is in full swing

Dr. Bruce Langlois' mobile surgical unit is busy making its rounds in Ionia, Montcalm, Newaygo, Allegan and Kent Counties, as well as other areas. The Spay/Neuter Express offers low-cost spay and neuter surgeries for dogs and cats, in addition to certain other procedures, such as routine vaccinations.

The targeted population of the mobile clinic includes pets of low-income owners, barn and feral cats, rescue and shelter animals, and stray and unclaimed animals.



The schedule of the mobile surgical unit so far is as follows:

- Monday Newaygo**
- Tuesday Greenville**
- Wednesday Allegan**
- Thursday TBD**
- Friday Ionia**

Call 616-897-8865 to get the local phone number of the location where you want to make an appointment or to offer to volunteer your services at the mobile clinic. To learn more about the mobile surgical unit, visit www.spayneuterexpress.com.

(fluffy continued)

Bringing a pet into your family has many rewards. As a good pet owner it is your responsibility to provide regular veterinary care, proper grooming, and the love and attention your pet deserves.

Holly the Groomer
Grand River Veterinary Hospital

I would like to help by

- Donating. My check made payable to Safe Haven Human society is enclosed for
 - \$20
 - \$30
 - \$50
 - \$100
 - Other _____(you can also donate online at www.shhspets.com)

Fostering. Please send me information about fostering cats or dogs

Becoming a member of Safe Haven: \$10 individual or \$18 family

Other:

- Help transport animals
- Hold or help with fundraiser
- Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

cut out and mail this form to:
Safe Haven Human Society
P.O. Box 55
Ionia, MI 48846

SAFE HAVEN HUMANE SOCIETY

P.O. Box 55

Ionia, MI 48846

Telephone: 616-522-1611

e-FAX: 517-579-5948

email: shhspets@hotmail.com

"Where Happy Endings Begin!"

If you would prefer not to receive future copies of our newsletter, please call or email us and let us know.

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