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Pets in the Home with Children: Maintaining Safety

Children and pets can make the best of friends while they grow up with each other under the loving care of their families. But keeping your pets – and children – safe from unintended stress and injury caused to your pet (as a result of innocent behavior from your child) is an important part of enabling a lifelong bond between both parties.

Far too many times in the news you hear about a beloved family pet that might bite under the wrong circumstances. This unintended consequence is a natural instinct for your dog or cat, and teaching your children at an early age how to care lovingly for your pet can extend its life and allow tons of shared happy experiences.

Kids no doubt love to play with animals. But they don't necessarily play with them in the ways that animals like, according to pediatric experts. One common example is when young children often try to innocently hug dogs and cats or pet their faces, which can scare the pet into biting the child's

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Spotlight on Our Volunteers: Michael Cruickshank

When Mike Cruickshank first converted to Judaism, his rabbi, Adam Feldman, told him that the world has many holes, and everyone has a responsibility to fill those holes the best way they can: that each person has his or her own unique talent or skill that they can use to do their part.

Mike has certainly found his, and the dogs at EASEL's shelter are lucky because it means they get a lot of exercise and outside time as a result.

"The one thing I am very, very good at doing is I can walk for hours on end with a dog and not say anything," he explains. "If there is one thing I can do, it's just go and go."

About three days each week for one hour, and then for about two hours each weekend, Mike spends his time volunteering to walk the shelter's dogs.

His volunteering journey began more than a decade ago with another area shelter. At the time, he had a bull terrier named Bumper who had not wanted to walk as much anymore, as she was aging (when she was younger, she could walk forever).

"I had this void in my life," he explains. "I was driving home, and I saw this kid walking a dog that looked like mine did when she was a puppy."

Mike stopped to talk to the kid and learned that he had been walking dogs

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As the fall ushers in a new season, we know that the holidays aren't too far behind. With the pending celebrations, we must also keep the safety of our pets in mind. Seemingly innocuous decorations and traditional foods pose risks to both cats and dogs. Here are some ways to keep the holidays festive and joyous for both you and your furry friends.

While Thanksgiving evokes a sense of bountiful portions and feasting with family and friends, be mindful that some traditional foods served during this holiday are not suitable for your household pets, beginning with a holiday staple: stuffing.

Many stuffing recipes include garlic, onions, or scallions. These ingredients are extremely toxic for both cats and dogs and can cause life-threatening conditions like anemia. Additionally, ham and other pork products can cause pancreatitis, upset stomach, vomiting and diarrhea.

You might also be tempted to give your dog a leftover turkey bone from your Thanksgiving dinner as a special treat.

But according to news site WLBT, “bones can cause severe indigestion in dogs and cats, potentially causing vomiting and obstructing the bowel. Bones may also splinter and cause damage to the inside of the stomach and intestines.

Chocolate – whether in pudding or other types of candies or desserts – is a favorite for all the upcoming holidays: Halloween, Thanksgiving and the winter holidays. However, they spell bad news for pets, and you should never give them to your dog or cat.

“Chocolate is toxic to dogs and cats, yet dogs love the smell and taste of it,” states WLBT. “The darker the chocolate, the more toxic it is. Keep all chocolate desserts out of the reach of pets to prevent an emergency trip to the veterinarian.”

We may love hanging the lights, decorating the Christmas tree, or lighting the Menorah, but there are ways to also ensure your pet is safe from danger, starting with tinsel and stringed decorations.

Any cat owner will tell you how much they like playing with shiny string-like materials. But it's not as innocent as you would think. According to the ASPCA, "a nibble can lead to a swallow, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, severe vomiting, dehydration and possible surgery. It's best to brighten your boughs with something other than tinsel."

The same goes for candles. Pets can easily burn themselves by getting too close out of curiosity, or they can cause a fire if they knock them over. Be sure to use appropriate candle holders, placed on a stable surface, and if you leave the room, put the candle out.

Special holiday plants also pose risks. "Holly, when ingested, can cause pets to suffer nausea, vomiting and diarrhea," the ASPCA states. "Mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. And many varieties of lilies can

EASEL'S PAWLOWEEN PET PHOTO COSTUME CONTEST

Planning to dress your furry friend up for Halloween? You could win \$300!

Help raise money for EASEL Animal Rescue League by participating in our Pawloween Pet Photo Costume Contest.

**THREE
WINNERS!
THREE PRIZES!**

1ST

\$300 VISA Gift Card

2ND

\$100 VISA Gift Card

3RD

\$50 VISA Gift Card

A composite image featuring three Halloween-themed subjects. On the left, a tabby cat sits wearing a black witch's hat. In the center is a carved jack-o'-lantern with a classic triangular face. On the right, a black and white dog sits wearing a red cape and a blue and yellow Superman chest emblem.

an event to benefit


ease

animal rescue league
mercier county, new jersey

www.easeinj.org

\$10 photo entry fee. The deadline to register and submit photos is Oct. 24.
Voting starts on Oct. 26. Winner will be announced on Oct. 31.

Pet costumes will be judged on creativity, originality, and overall cuteness!

Our mission is to reduce the number of unwanted animals euthanized in Mercer County through collaborative coalitions and community alliances.

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KITTEN PAL COZA



October 16, 17, 18
Fri 4-7 • Sat 12-4 • Sun 12-3

PetSmart at 111 Nassau Park Blvd, Lawrenceville NJ

Falling in Love!

Join **EASEL Animal Rescue** for reduced adoption fees through the weekend. Don't forget to go onto **easelnj.org**, complete your applications and get pre-approved so you can bring your new furry family member(s) home the same day.

KITTEN SPECIALS
\$110 per kitten
Two for \$200



PETSMART

 **easel** | animal
rescue
league

609 • 883 • 0540 ■ www.easelnj.org

Happy Tails:

Howie and Beckett: A Forever Brotherly Bond

For one handsome little EASEL cat, finding a forever home has also turned into finding a forever best bud!

Marlon Brando, now Howie (his full name is Hawthorne), was found wandering the streets of Trenton by EASEL's friends at Trenton Rescue Cats.

When they found him, he was scrawny and struggling for scraps, overlooked by bigger and tougher tomcats. His extremely friendly and outgoing personality led them to bring him to EASEL with the idea that he would be a good candidate to finding a forever home in a loving environment. From there, EASEL gave him some much-needed care and fattened him up – all in the hopes that he would be adopted soon.

Well, as it turns out, Marie Jones and her family were looking to add to their family. With their infant, Beckett, in tow, they set out to find him or her.

"In December of last year, we lost two of our furry family members – we lost our dog early in the month, and then right after Christmas, we lost our cat," she explains. "It was pretty tough, but at that time, Beckett was 7 months old. We focused on the baby and gave ourselves some time."

However, Marie and her husband had always been a family that had a dog or cat, and this was the longest stretch that they ever went without a four-legged companion.

"It started to feel a little lonely; we believe it's not truly a home unless you have furry family members to share it with," she says. The couple talked about it and decided to visit PetSmart in July for the cat adoption display. EASEL happened to be there that day, and invited the family, including Beckett to visit the shelter to introduce them to a few cats.

It came down to a decision between Howie and a pair of kittens. They recommended bringing Beckett in to see how the interaction worked.

"I felt like that was very important – to not only see how the baby would react, but also to see how the cat would feel around the baby," Marie explained. "Howie has this chill personality that even when the baby would squeal loudly, he wasn't too phased by it." Still undecided, the couple talked about the



decision for another day and went back for another visit. By then, Howie had made up his mind for them.

"Howie just literally climbed into my lap and did the same thing to my husband," she says. "I said, 'You know what? This is him.' He pretty much picked us."

Since they are living in an apartment while transitioning to a larger home, Marie was initially concerned about the small space. Even though Howie was great with Beckett, the family still wanted him to feel like he had his own space as well. They invested in a very tall cat tree, just so that he can get away for bit if it got too noisy.

They also started out locating him in the bathroom, but with the door ajar. It took Howie very little time to come out, explore and feel comfortable in his new home.

The best part about his new home is the best friend – and human brother – he now has in Beckett.

"The baby was super excited!" recalls Marie. "He was chasing after him, and we had to teach him that Howie needs some space. That took a week, and we reinforce it. But Howie is such a sweet, easygoing cat that he adapted so quickly."

Howie's personality made the transition very easy, but Beckett also contributed to the bond: he would drop food to Howie during dinner time.

"Now he just chills out at the bottom of his high chair and waits for the baby to drop food," Marie jokes.

Now that Beckett is calmer, Howie knows he can come to him and approach him. When the baby goes to sleep, Howie also knows it's his time for alone time with Marie and her husband.

"We couldn't ask for a better fit."



Volunteer (continued from page 1)



He was there for 10 years until he learned about EASEL from a friend who saw the advertisement in the Times of Trenton. Mike was drawn to EASEL because of this organization's commitment to matching its volunteers to tasks associated with their skillset – with the number one mission being the animals. There are no politics, just a consistent focus on providing the best care for its dogs and cats and finding homes for them.

"They found a place for me, and it has worked out great," he explains. "They have jobs for everyone, and they don't try to make someone into something they're not." From electricians to finance professionals to public relations specialists, EASEL has matched each of their volunteers with skills that help the organization in their own way. Mike knows this from first-hand experience. Prior to dog walking, Mike had tried his hand at Habitat for Humanity.

as part of his community service. "That's when I went and checked it out, and I got involved with that shelter," he adds.

"I was so bad at it that they had to spend an entire day undoing what I did," he

laughs. "Dog walking, on the other hand, is a big part of who I am – it's what I like."

Mike walks all types of dogs at the shelter, but some may get more walking than they expected! "I can take the dog for a long walk, and three quarters of the way through the walk, it will look at me like,

'Are we done?'" he explains. Mike has even given some of the more hyperactive dogs at the shelter a run for their money.

It all comes down to helping these dogs get used to being around humans, following commands, and most importantly, getting them to a point where they are adopted.

Mike is extremely dedicated to this mission. Last year, he spent 11 of his 12 vacation days from work at the shelter last year (using only one to visit NYC). He believes his work not only helps the dogs, but their adopters as well. "You see the positive effect the dogs have on the people who adopt them," Mike says.

For him, being part of the EASEL organization provides a community with other like-minded individuals. "Whether you're a dog or cat person, it feels like every person at EASEL is just as committed, if not more, than I am."

Pet Adoptions

We are still holding adoptions by appointment once an adopter is approved. You can fill out an application online by [clicking here](#). A phone interview is conducted prior to meeting pets.

Additionally, our cat habitats at Petsmart are occupied with cats that the public can meet. Social distancing practices are in effect when pet meet and greets take place.

CONTACT US

PHONE / WEB

(609) 883-0540
info@easelnj.org
www.easelnj.org

ADDRESS

4 Jake Garzio Drive
 Ewing, NJ, 08628

(Near Trenton-Mercer Airport off I-295,
 behind the municipal building.)

ADOPTION CENTER

Everyday: 12 noon - 3 p.m.
 Wednesday Evenings:
 5-7 p.m.

Who Will Be Our Next Happy Tail?

Featured: EASEL Pet for Adoption



Carter

*Adult/ Male/ Neutered
Staffordshire Terrier Mix*

Carter is an almost 5-year-old Staffordshire Terrier Mix who came to EASEL as a stray almost a year ago. He was adopted into an amazing home where he received treatment for mass cell tumors, and he was so loved. Unfortunately, he became anxious with so much bustle that comes with a home with kids. Carter was returned to the shelter and is again on the lookout for a new home. He is a caring soul who loves to go walks and give kisses and is doing well in his foster home. Here, spends his time relaxing and having a grand time! Carter has been in playgroup with other shelter dogs, but does best with calmer dogs. Carter would be most successful in a home without young children because he worries so much. Carter is hoping his new family will come for him soon since we know foster homes are not FURever homes.

For our full list of adoptable pets, visit easelnj.org.

Donations Needed!

Not unexpected, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of EASEL's important fundraisers were put on hold or cancelled. Unfortunately, animals coming into the shelter will not be!

If you can find it in your heart, please think about donating a few bucks, food, grocery store/pet store gift cards, or any of the items listed below to EASEL.

Items especially needed during 'kitten season' are:

- Kitten Formula (KMR)
- Dry Kitten Food
- Chicken or Turkey Baby Food
- Kitten Nursing Bottles & Nipples
- Plastic Forks, & Knives
- Old Towels, Sheets, & Blankets
- SnuggleSafe® microwave heating pads

[Click here to donate online!](#)

You can also order items from our Amazon wishlist and have them sent to us or call to arrange a drop-off at our site. **[Click here for our Amazon wishlist!](#)**

Thanks, fellow animal lovers, and be well. Take care of yourselves and each other!

Children and Pets (continued from page 1)

face, head, and neck area. But animals only do that because that is their defense mechanism, and your child's actions may frighten the dog or cat into that state.

"It is essential that children be calm by not jumping around and screaming to get an animal's attention, as this is annoying and stressful to a pet," the website One Green Planet states. "Pulling at a dog's or cat's tail, yanking paws and sneaking up behind pets is going to get a child nipped at. Never allow your kids to corner a pet, let alone cornering and roughly handling them. Doing this will put pets into a defensive mode (growling, biting, hissing, barking) or could make them always want to hide."

Hugging or getting too physical with the pet may also cause injury, and sometimes death, to your pet, especially if the child is too young to understand how to interact safely.

"Children may not be able to interpret the body language of an animal, which may be a warning sign before a bite occurs," states the ASPCA. A dog that is fearful or anxious may crouch low to the ground, put its tail between their legs or flatten its ears back. An aggressive dog may puff out fur to try to appear bigger or may growl or show teeth in a warning display."

The ASPCA also notes that children sometimes frighten animals just by doing normal "kid things." Loud or rough play may be scary for dogs. Curious kids may try to play with a dog's food, or explore an area a dog considers to be her territory,

such as her bed. These types of behaviors, while normal for children, may be anxiety-provoking for an animal. Teach children not to bother a dog while it's eating or to startle him during sleep, and to handle animals gently and give them space.

Stress for a cat or dog of this nature can have unintended negative consequences on the pet's health. For this reason, teaching safety rules to your child, setting boundaries and ensuring you supervise their interactions is crucial. Start when your child is at a young age. Any physical attacks by a child on a pet like pinching, punching, kicking, and slapping needs to be corrected immediately. It goes the other way, too, as you would never permit your dog or cat to bite or scratch your kid.

"Do not let your children do whatever they want with or to a pet," One Green Planet's website states. "Children are still learning right from wrong and will not understand that a pet may not want to be touched, unless you teach them and reinforce safety rules."

Also be mindful of situations where your child may accidentally feed something harmful to your pet or may accidentally leave a door to the outdoors open. For example, a child may think it is OK to share his or her food with your cat or dog, but some foods aren't safe for pets (chocolate, onions, etc.). In general, sharing food should be discouraged.

Leaving an outside door open as your pet becomes curious can also lead to the pet accidentally escaping and putting itself in danger to predators, cars, or



pesticide ingestion, which is all the more reason to keep a close eye on both your children and your pets.

Another tip to keep in mind is to work with the organization from which you are adopting your pet to match the pet's personality to that of your family's needs. EASEL specializes in this placement and reviews all applications, meets with potential adopting families, learns about the family dynamics, and matches a pet to an environment and family where the best chance for a happy union can occur.

"We have an extensive process for dog and cat adoptions," explains Georgia Arvanitis, VP, Director of Grants at EASEL. "We look at other pets and family members in the household, the individual pet's personality, and more. We consider these factors because it goes a long way to ensuring that the animal goes to the best home and that the union is a success."

Double the Impact!

If your company has a matching gift program, please include a matching gift with your donation. [Click here for information](#)



Holidays (continued from page 2)

cause kidney failure in cats if ingested. Opt for just-as-jolly artificial plants made from silk or plastic, or choose a pet-safe bouquet.”

Meanwhile, with Christmas trees, you will want to make sure your tree is anchored securely to prevent any falling and injury to your pets. Lastly, you will want to make sure to monitor your pets and keep them away from drinking the water if you have a real Christmas tree. The tree water could contain fertilizer as it seeps out of the tree and into the pot.

The bottom line is: have fun and make your holidays special with your furry family members; just exercise caution and avoid giving them food they can't handle!

Become A Monthly Donor!

As a monthly donor, you play a vital role in ensuring that we can care for all of our shelter animals, including veterinary treatments, food, shelter, transportation to adoption events and more.

- Join online: easelnj.org
- Join by phone: (609) 883-0540
- Join by Email: info@easelnj.org

Projected 2020 Success Stats



300 Dogs Adopted



~1000 Cats Adopted



\$100K+ In Veterinary Services Rendered

Join Our Team of Volunteers!

The EASEL Animal Rescue League's Volunteer Program consists of dedicated and compassionate individuals who are looking to match their skills and passions with their love of animals. We couldn't achieve all that we do without volunteers — they are the reason behind our success.

Volunteers are involved in almost all aspects of the shelter and help provide organization, direction, and energy to our efforts and programs. EASEL is active on many fronts and we need motivated volunteers to help us. Volunteers actively help with our day-to-day operations, fostering, adoptions, Adoption Day Events, medications, training, and community education.

Volunteer Opportunities

Organizational Support Opportunities

Fundraising – Community Outreach – Humane Education – Event Organizing – Advertising – Event Promotion – Maintaining Donation Boxes – Collecting Food Donations – Photographer – Grant Writing

Animal Care Opportunities

Cat Adoptions – Dog Adoptions – Cat Socializing – Dog Socializing – Home Fostering – Barn Cat Placement – Dog Walking – Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) – Adoption Events – Medication Administration – Transporting Animals – Dog Training – Grooming – Cat Pawsitive training program