

Michigan Humane Team Member Statement at Alexander Gerth's Sentencing

Thank you for the opportunity to address the court on the matter of Sterling. My name is Amy and I met Sterling in my role of animal behavior supervisor at MHS. Sterling was adopted from MHS as a puppy into a loving home. Sterling's family found themselves in a position that they could not care for him and made the decision to return him to our care. It was during this time I met Sterling. He was overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of life in the shelter. He was scared, but loved people and wanted to overcome his fears.

You could see in his eyes that he wanted to be okay and needed our help to get there. During his stay with us we worked daily to improve his confidence, overcome his fears and learn how to trust in this strange new world.

After a couple of weeks he blossomed! He loved everyone he met and even if a situation was scary he would look to the humans for reassurance. He was ready to take on the world.

Sterling went up for adoption and we all waited for him to find his forever home. What he found instead was a man who was determined to take him home, even if it meant lying to do it. In Mr. Gerth's home he did not find love and comfort but abuse and ultimately his demise.

The senseless, calculated and malicious actions of Mr. Gerth are beyond comprehension. These actions did not affect just one person or one animal. His brutal actions impact our community, and the animal welfare community as a whole.

Mr. Gerth was unable to adopt and instead enlisted someone else to misrepresent themselves in order to get Sterling. This speaks to a person who is not concerned with truth or trust. He only saw an object he wanted.

The actions of Mr. Gerth stole a bit of trust from everyone who loves animals. His merciless actions will not be forgotten.

The trust he took will be recovered in time by the countless good hearted animal lovers who have reached out in honor and memory of a life gone too soon.

As someone who has dedicated 20 years of life to helping animals in need I believe I speak for many in the animal welfare community when I say that Sterling's senseless and violent death will haunt us. Daily we put our trust in our adopters to care for and love the animals they take home. We take comfort in knowing that for all of the hardships we see in caring for animals that the people who adopt are doing so from a place of love and caring and that our animals are going to be treasured members of the family.

Please know that Sterling did know the love that he deserved every day while in our care and we draw strength from the pain of his death.