



Cold Weather, Animal Cruelty and Neglect | By Vice President, Field Services, Andy Seltz

The last few weeks have brought us the typical cold weather we expect in winter here in Michigan. As we battle below freezing temperatures, winds that stop us in our tracks, and snow that slows us down during our daily drives; one must wonder why we still see animals outside? Are there not laws that protect animals from these conditions? Why are people not abiding by these laws? Although there is never one easy and clear-cut answer, we DO have laws in our state that provide for those answers when we apply them to the totality of circumstances that we are witnessing.

The state of Michigan passed legislation, the Michigan Compiled Laws 750.50, providing for the standard of animal care back in 1931 with the most recent changes being applied in February of 2020. All the mandatory minimum levels of animal care can be found within this statute. I will quote this section as we answer some cold weather questions. The statute in its entirety can be found at <https://bit.ly/2NHMhAA>

When it comes to shelter, animals are required “adequate protection from the elements and weather conditions suitable for the age, species, and physical condition of the animal so as to maintain the animal in a state of good health”. For livestock, shelter may consist of structures such as barns and lean-tos as well as trees and other varying land features such as depressions and hills. Dogs, on the other hand, require one of three forms:

1. “residence of the dog’s owner or other individual”
2. “A doghouse that is an enclosed structure with a roof and of appropriate dimensions for the breed and size of the dog. The doghouse must have dry bedding when the outdoor temperature is or is predicted to drop below freezing.”
3. “A structure, including a garage, barn, or shed, that is sufficiently insulated and ventilated to protect the dog from exposure to extreme temperatures or, if not sufficiently insulated and ventilated, contains a doghouse as provided under subparagraph (ii) that is accessible to the dog.”

In short, a dog must either be allowed access to a house, provided a doghouse or have access to an insulated garage/shed. Notice though that the statute does provide for “appropriate dimensions” when speaking of dog houses. It would be unacceptable to have an extra-large igloo style doghouse for a short haired Chihuahua as that size dog would not be able to sufficiently heat the large amount of surrounding area within that size doghouse. Additionally, when the temperatures drop below freezing, dry bedding is required for the doghouse. The question always comes up of “why straw over blankets for bedding?”. While blankets are nice for you and me indoors, outdoor use causes them to retain moisture and thus are ineffective at insulating and maintaining heat. Straw is hollow and can retain heat while remaining drier for a longer period, which makes it a better choice during cold weather.

Even with the availability of a doghouse or other type of shelter, the law provides that the shelter must also “maintain the animal in a state of good health”. As this can be a very subjective measurement, the State has defined this to be “freedom from disease and illness, and in a condition of proper body weight and temperature for the age and species of the animal, unless the animal is undergoing appropriate treatment.” Dogs that are kept outside still may require additional care beyond just a doghouse with straw, with special attention being paid to food and water.

Another situation that we frequently encounter during the cold winter months are complaints of frozen water and/or lack of food. Our statute does not provide for specifics when it comes to this and that is for good reason, these are not one size fits all situations. However, the statute does provide for adequate care which allows for “the provision of sufficient food, water, shelter, sanitary conditions, exercise, and veterinary medical attention in order to maintain an animal in a state of good health.” Once again, we see the term “state of good health” which can be referenced in the definition section of the statute. Notice that an animal does not require water or food be available at all times. In fact, the law does not even provide timelines in which food and water are appropriate to be provided. Although this may sound crazy, it would be impossible to break down every breed of animal and have basic husbandry practices added to a law. The legislature has provided guidance in that every animal must have sufficient amounts of food and water to “maintain an animal in a state of good health” so we must look at each animal as the individual they are when we investigate complaints. An animal’s level of hydration and body condition score are great indicators if provisions are substantial enough to maintain a state of good health, even though we may not necessarily see these provisions.

Although there may not be clear and concise language within our animal cruelty and neglect laws, the language is written to allow for clear and concise interpretation when applying the law to each individual animal and complaint. The next time you see a dog or other animal outside and you wonder whether there is cruelty or neglect, apply the aforementioned to the totality of circumstances and it should draw a clearer picture. If you still have concerns, I encourage you to contact the local authority having jurisdiction or a member of our own Field Services team to help point you in the right direction.

What does Black History Month Mean to Me | By LVT, VTS-Clinical Practice (Canine/Feline) - Detroit, Clarice Hicks

I love how successful black people are being recognized for their accomplishments! Especially after my ancestors were under oppression for years and unfortunately still going through some of it in different forms. I love knowing and seeing my people being the “First” of something! For example, I’m the first African American woman to have become a Veterinary Technician Specialist in Clinical Practice for Canine/Feline in 12/2019 in the State of Michigan. I’m the second LVT in the State of Michigan with that specialty! I LOVE being able to have a month dedicated to celebrate Black Greatness by reminding others about it! Good and bad.

Celebrating Black History Month | By Vice President, Communications, Tom Varitek

Thank you, Clarice for sharing what Black History Month means to you! If you would like to share your story please email theconnection@michiganhumane.org.

Please! Send us what Black History Month means to you!

Our third inspiring story from Veterinary history belongs to:

Dr. Frederick Douglass Patterson (1901-1988)

Dr. Patterson was born in 1901 and was raised by his older sister after being orphaned at age two. Overcoming hardship, he went on to attend Iowa State College, where in 1923 he earned his DVM. His academic career also included earning a Master of Science from Iowa State and a second doctorate degree from Cornell University. Dr. Patterson began teaching at Tuskegee University in 1928 and in 1944 he founded the Tuskegee School of Veterinary Medicine, which to this day has graduated an estimated 75% of African American veterinarians. Among his many accomplishments was the founding of the United Negro College Fund, which today remains a major financial supporter of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In 1987, Dr. Patterson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Ronald Reagan.

Edited from the University of Florida website.



Crookshanks Conjures a New Family | By Director of Facility Operations, Livingston and Animal Resource Center, Alicia Bennett

On November 19th, a DTE worker made a call to Michigan Humane about a stray cat that had been found. Field Services responded and brought in the cat that would later be known as Crookshanks. This sweet fella had a cleft lip and palate, an upper respiratory infection, and he was also positive for Feline Leukemia. Crookshanks didn't have an easy road ahead of him, so we got to work!

After a couple surgeries to repair as much as possible and treatment for his upper respiratory infection, he was left with only a slight cleft in his lip on one side and was able to eat and drink normally. Although still having incurable Feline Leukemia, he was asymptomatic and ready to start the search for his new family.

The holidays came and went without Crookshanks finding his perfect match- which was not surprising because the average length of stay for FeLV+ cats is about 6 months- so after the new year he packed his bags to go up for adoption at Livingston. On a snowy Friday in January, his new family walked through the door and could not have fallen in love quicker with this sweet boy.

Often with these happy outcomes we only see or hear about a couple stops in the pathway, but there is so much more that goes into transforming an animal's life. Someone has to support our mission, alert us to the animal in need, bring them in, care for them in shelter, address medical needs, foster them while they recover, clean the blankets and bowls they use, maintain the facility they're housed in, give them exposure on social media, and talk to customers about this wonderful pet. The teamwork we display daily is amazing! The fact that we are in a place where a sick FeLV+ cat that also requires surgery can receive that care and find a forever home is amazing!

Please read the happy update from Crookshank's family:

"Crookshanks is doing WONDERFUL! He's a happy and sassy purr machine! He lounges in bed and watches the birds and squirrels every day. He has more toys than Santa. Crookshanks does not love seeing the bottom of his food bowl and will alert anyone who enters the room that he's in danger of starvation. He is very loved and very happy!"



Jack, adopted from Michigan Humane in 2017 and Gallimimus, my foster, on Valentine's Day.
(Submitted by Jennifer Rekar)



Welcome to the Team! | By President and CEO, Matt Pepper

We recently shared with all of you that a new face is joining our leadership team: Irene Tucker, CPA, CITP, QIAL, PMP, will be joining us as the new Michigan Humane Chief Financial Officer beginning this Monday, February 22, 2021.

Irene has most recently worked on the financial infrastructure of the city of Detroit and prior to that, her professional career included time at DTE, GM/GMAC, Syncreon, Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan, and Grant Thornton. She has a Master of Business Administration degree from Wayne State as well as a BS in Business Administration- Accounting.

Please join me in welcoming Irene to our Michigan Humane family!



Core Values Call Out

Want to recognize a teammate for their commitment to our core values? Submit your call out at michiganhumane.org/values.

WESTLAND ASSISTANT MANAGERS | Value: Collaborative

"The Westland assistant managers dropped what they were doing to make sure that everyone had a chance to get on a list for the COVID vaccine. Additional thank you to Robert and Crystal who put the list together and got it back to leadership in time for the staff to have appointments!"

ANDREA BUCHANAN AND DR. KELLEY MEYERS | Value: Inclusive

"They grabbed the opportunity for the Westland frontline staff to have the option to get the COVID vaccine. Thank you for securing and helping to coordinate this important opportunity!"

JESSICA F. | Value: Collaborative

"We are one team working toward a shared mission and Jessica has embraced asking clients for Telethon donations. She follows the script perfectly while also saying it with sincerity. She has done a wonderful job!"

SAM PODORSEK, BETH CHAMBERLAIN, EMILY KLEIN-MAJZLIK, EILEEN SOUTAR AND KATELIN THOMAS | Value: Collaborative

"This team rolled with the punches over the past week dealing with an unusual 'almost' safety net situation that turned into very temporary boarding leading to the reunification of 2 dogs with their owner. The dogs are on their way to a new life in Texas, and we're so glad we could help out in a time of crisis for this family. These dogs were frightened and not terribly friendly, so it was very challenging, and the teamwork they showed while working this out was admirable. Thanks to all of them for making this happen!"

KENT AND LAURA D. | Value: Collaborative

"Kent and Laura D. do an amazing job with each animal, treating them as their own individual person and trying to help them overcome whatever issue they may have so this way they can find a forever home. And they are both always willing to explain our procedures to anybody that wants to know and giving advice and guidance. Is truly a privilege to work and learn from you everyday, thanks for all the amazing things you do!"

Core Values Call Out

JENNIFER PLAYER, DANYELL STEGER, SHERIECE CARRINGTON | Value: Collaborative

“These three wonderful clinic CSR’s have been caring for some pretty scared baby cats. They have been cuddling and socializing them in hopes that we will soon be able to put the cats up for adoption.”

CREE MOORE | Value: Passionate

“Cree has been so supportive in helping us work on a pathway for the hoarding cats. She set up their space and made sure that they had all they need!”

STEPHANIE NOBLE | Value: Compassionate

“Thank you so much for helping me not only get my puppies adopted but keeping me updated on their status! That meant the world to me!!”

KATIE FRANKLIN, JANELIS LOPEZ AND AKIRA HOOD | Value: Collaborative

“Katie, Janelis and Akira were leading the volunteer element at Telethon from early morning and well into the night. They exemplified great teamwork and made sure that the volunteers were properly oriented and welcomed at the event. Kudos for their hard work over a very long day!”

JEREMY COLBORN, SHARON BIGHAM AND SAM EVANS | Value: Collaborative

“The weeks leading up to Telethon require significant animal planning for day of event. Throughout Jeremy has been working closely with the team to ensure we have all the wonderful animals we need to show the important work. Sharon and Jeremy moved the animals on the day of event and made sure they were ready to go. Sam held down the fort and took care of the multiple transfers between our locations on Telethon day. All three exemplify the collaborative value which lead to a highly successful event on all levels.”

SARAH KOTHS | Value: Collaborative

“I was having some trouble with our system on a SUPER busy day. Sarah took the time out of her day to write down and send me detailed instructions on how to resolve my issue and it was extremely helpful during that chaotic day. I really appreciate it!”

AMANDA BLACK | Value: Collaborative

“Amanda is always trying to bring the contact center and other departments together.”

JERVANTE BROWN | Value: Passionate

“Jervante took it upon herself to decorate the break room and put out a variety of snacks for Valentine’s Day. Thank you, Jervante, for going above and beyond to make our weekend just a little bit sweeter!”

DR. BERKSHIRE | Value: Collaborative

“Dr. Berkshire always is willing to let me pick his brain about veterinary medicine! He even lets me watch him do surgeries, as long as I don’t touch anything and am in proper attire. This means a lot to me because I am going to school for veterinary medicine! “

Core Values Call Out

KYLIE LYERLA | Value: Compassionate

"Kylie always makes time for our cats who need some extra attention whether its a kitten who is crying for some extra snuggles or a scared cat who is having a hard time adjusting to shelter life."

ROSIE, SUMI, DANIA, LINDSAY, HEATHER AND MAGDALENA | Value: Collaborative

"Thank you to this group for their seamless and efficient teamwork to process large volumes of donations (via mail) on the Friday after Day of Giving."

Didn't see your call out this week? Stay tuned to next week's issue when we celebrate more teammates embodying our core values!

Training Opportunity Reminder | By Media Manager, Anna Chrisman

The trainings below are only an hour and we encourage all of you to review the full list of opportunities and work with your manager to attend as many as possible. If a training falls on a day you are not scheduled to work, never fear! They will become available in Paycom once the session has passed. If you have questions about any of the sessions, please connect with your manager for further information.

February:

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (**Required for all staff**) - February 23 & 25 at 12:00 & 2:00

March:

- Common Behavior Issues - March 2 at 12:30
- Building Respect in the Workplace - March 16 at 12:30
- Heartworm- March 25 at 12:30

**INTERESTED IN SUBMITTING CONTENT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE
OF THE CONNECTION? SEND YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO**

theconnection@michiganhumane.org